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Scoping study: taking stock of the Amhara Region WASH monitoring & evaluation system

Authors: Joseph Pearce, Gezahegn Lemecha, Girmachew Addisu and Jemal Ibrahim

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Prepared by Joseph Pearce, Gezahegn Lemecha, Girmachew Adissue, and Jemal Ibrahim on behalf of IRC. This report was edited by Tettje van Daalen and laid out by Tsegaye Yeshiwas. For questions or clarifications, contact IRC WASH Ethiopia: ethiopia@ircwash.org

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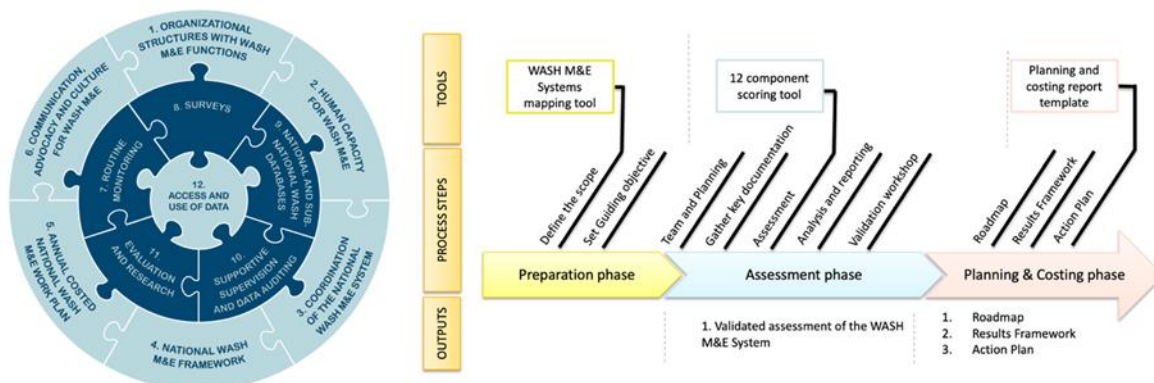
This Scoping Study report provides an analysis of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Monitoring and Evaluation (WASH M&E) system in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The report begins with an introduction that defines the regional WASH M&E system and gives an overview of the background and context. The study then outlines the different components of the regional WASH M&E and explains the framework used to assess the current status of WASH M&E and identifies areas of focus based on the preparatory phase. The report critically examines the separate components of the regional WASH M&E system. This includes organizational structures, human capacity, coordination mechanisms, work plans, communication strategies, monitoring practices, surveys, databases, and data accessibility. The report concludes by summarizing the strengths and challenges of the regional WASH M&E system and provides high-level recommendations for system strengthening. An annex section contains the datasheets collected during the assessment phase.

Executive Summary

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector is a continuous process that tracks progress against objectives. It involves systematically collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to inform management decisions. Monitoring generates data on parameters and indicators, where indicators measure performance and accountability. This data can be transformed into information through analysis and packaging, presented as graphs and maps. Prioritized and disseminated information becomes actionable knowledge. A functional monitoring system includes elements like data purpose, indicators, tools, collection and processing procedures, IT platforms, and sufficient resources. The 'regional WASH M&E system' encompasses multiple individual sub-sector systems (water, health, education and finance). This Scoping Study presents the findings of an assessment of the WASH M&E system in Amhara Region, Ethiopia, and aims to identify strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for the WASH M&E system strengthening.

This Scoping Study utilized the WASH M&E Organizing Framework to assess Amhara regional WASH M&E. The framework provides benchmarks for measuring progress and identifies key components necessary for an effective system. The evaluation focused on nine relevant components and emphasized routine monitoring, data collection, and data utilization at the local level. The purpose of regional M&E is to enable informed decision-making, improve service delivery, and increase accountability. By implementing and strengthening the identified components, the regional WASH M&E system can support intervention tracking, planning, resource allocation, and regulation of WASH services, ultimately leading to improved and sustainable WASH outcomes.

The application of the WASH M&E Organizing Framework in the Amhara region involved a collaborative process led by the regional government and supported by WASH sector stakeholders. The process consisted of three phases. The Preparation Phase involved defining the scope and objectives and using mapping cards to gather information about important regional monitoring systems. The Assessment Phase included gathering documentation, conducting a comprehensive assessment, and analyzing the findings. The assessment findings and recommendations were validated during a workshop. A future phase will focus on Planning and Costing, aiming to develop a regional WASH M&E roadmap, results framework, and costed action plan.



The Scoping Study on WASH M&E in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia involved active participation from key stakeholders representing the Amhara National Regional State, Bureau of Water and Energy (BoWE), Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education (BoE) and Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health (BoH), and other local partners.

The preparation phase identified the water sector employs a monitoring system that focuses on water supply access, utilizing a combination of paper and Excel formats for data storage and access. Core indicators such as coverage, water quality, non-functionality rate, and physical performance are monitored, serving as crucial information for performance evaluation and resource allocation. In the health sector, the DHIS-II system is utilized, enabling electronic data access and analysis. There are a total of 37 WASH indicators which are collected from all health posts. The education sector utilizes the Education Management Information System for monitoring WASH initiatives, which includes indicators for water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Despite differences in systems, all sectors aim for quarterly data updates and monitor core indicators related to the status of WASH services. The water and health sectors utilize the data for performance evaluation, decision-making, and immediate corrective actions, while the education sector places greater emphasis on planning. Harmonizing and strengthening these monitoring systems can enhance WASH interventions by enabling informed decision-making and efficient resource allocation.

The analysis from the preparation phase provided the insights to select three individual sub-sector monitoring systems and approaches to be included in the full assessment using nine components from the WASH M&E Organizing Framework. The results of the full assessment were as follows:

Organizational Structures with WASH M&E Functions: The BoWE lacks clear job descriptions, faces staffing shortages, and has limited expertise in data management. The BoH demonstrates a strong commitment to M&E but struggles with staffing shortages and limited technical support. The Bureau of Education (BoE) stands out with its dedicated M&E unit but can still improve the utilization of evaluation findings. Recommendations include developing comprehensive job descriptions, filling vacant M&E positions, recruiting experts in data supply and database management for BoWE, providing technical support and prioritizing coordination for BoH, and sharing best practices and improving utilization of findings for BoE. Implementing these recommendations will enhance the monitoring and evaluation capacities of each bureau, leading to improved planning, implementation, and impact assessment of WASH programs.

Human Capacity for WASH M&E: The BoWE faces gaps in M&E skills, coordination, and lacks a nationally endorsed training curriculum. The BoH has made progress in capacity building but struggles with budget shortages. The BoE has identified capacity gaps but faces implementation challenges due to inadequate budget planning. Recommendations include developing comprehensive training programs, allocating adequate budgets, establishing clear workflows and tools, strengthening coordination, and enhancing supervision and mentorship activities. These recommendations aim to address the weaknesses and enhance the human capacity for WASH M&E in each bureau.

Coordination of the Regional WASH M&E System: The BoWE has a well-defined role, active participation, and monthly meetings but faces challenges in report exchanging and communication. The BoH struggles with inconsistent meeting schedules and limited resource

allocation but has made progress in promoting a national consensus on reporting forms. The BoE has room for improvement in participation but has an updated stakeholder inventory and established communication mechanisms. Recommendations include establishing effective communication mechanisms, developing an updated stakeholder inventory, addressing challenges in meeting schedules and resource allocation, and enhancing member attendance and partner participation. These recommendations aim to improve the coordination of regional WASH M&E activities and promote effective partnerships among stakeholders.

Annual Costed Regional WASH M&E Work Plan: BoWE faces challenges in planning, budgeting, and resource availability for M&E activities. The BoH shows moderate responsiveness with good cost allocation and time frame allocation, but budget limitations need to be addressed. The BoE demonstrates strong commitment with comprehensive cost allocation, time frame allocation, and alignment with the regional work plan. Recommendations for BoWE include developing a comprehensive M&E plan, enhancing inclusion of M&E activities in the annual plan, and improving resource allocation. Recommendations for BoH involve modifying the work plan based on previous achievements, securing adequate funding, and strengthening coordination. Recommendations for BoE include aligning the entity-specific plan with the regional plan, including specific M&E activities, and advocating for sufficient resources. These recommendations aim to improve planning, budgeting, and implementation of the regional WASH M&E work plan, leading to more effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

Communication, Advocacy and Culture for WASH M&E: BoWE lacks coordination and understanding of advocacy processes, with separate and uncoordinated efforts. Decision makers show interest but have competing priorities, and there is a lack of clear career structures for M&E personnel. The BoH demonstrates a higher level of support, with dedicated staff, regular communication, and utilization of information products. However, challenges exist in attending meetings and discussions. The BoE shows positive engagement, with consistent requests for information and recognition of the importance of M&E personnel. Recommendations for BoWE include strengthening coordination, developing a communication plan, and investing in information products. Recommendations for BoH involve improving information quality and accessibility and advocating for M&E policies. Recommendations for BoE include enhancing information availability and advocating for a dedicated M&E policy. These recommendations aim to improve communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E, addressing the specific weaknesses in each bureau.

Routine Monitoring: BoWE lacks comprehensive regional guidelines, data quality control measures, and necessary supplies for routine monitoring. The BoH and the BoE demonstrate better performance, with available guidelines, data quality control measures, and satisfactory data collection frequency. They also use standardized data collection and reporting forms, verify report completeness, and monitor financial resources for WASH. However, improvements are needed in all bureaus, such as enhancing data quality control measures, ensuring the availability of supplies and equipment, and establishing regional/national databases for better data management. Bureau-specific recommendations are provided to address these weaknesses and enhance routine monitoring practices.

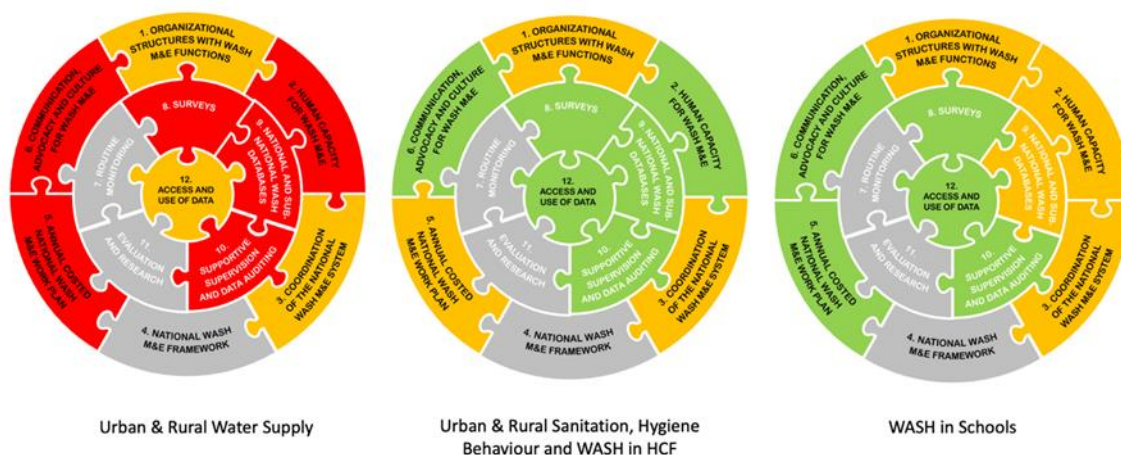
Surveys: BoWE faces challenges in conducting surveys, with a lack of updated records, data quality issues, and absence of surveys contributing to the M&E framework. The BoH demonstrates progress with updated records, surveys aligned with the framework, and regular surveys for behavioral components and healthcare facilities. The BoE conducts surveys aligned with national standards but needs improvement in aligning WASH indicators with SDGs for

schools. The BoH shows the most progress, while the BoWE lags behind. Recommendations include developing guidelines, updating records, designing and conducting surveys, ensuring data quality, and promoting cross-learning. Implementing these recommendations can enhance survey activities and improve WASH M&E in the region.

Regional WASH Databases: The BoWE lacks a database and faces challenges with IT equipment and infrastructure. The BoH has a well-organized database (DHIS-II) with common data standards and mechanisms for data transmission. The BoE also has a functional database (StatEduc2_data base) with common data standards and quality control mechanisms. However, the BoE relies on manual documentation. The BoWE has the greatest weaknesses in this aspect. Recommendations include establishing a functional database for the BoWE, addressing indicator gaps for the BoH, and minimizing reliance on manual documentation for the BoE. Improving these databases will enhance data management and contribute to effective WASH planning and evaluation in the region.

Access and Use of Data: The BoWE lacks a comprehensive assessment of stakeholder information needs, and their data use plans lack detail. They face issues with data quality and provide information products only upon request. The BoH has assessed stakeholder information needs and regularly disseminates information products to data providers, but additional assessment of partner needs is needed, and data/information access is restricted. The BoE has a high level of data access and use, with regular dissemination of information products and receipt of feedback from data processors. However, they need to improve data guidelines. Recommendations include conducting comprehensive stakeholder needs assessments, improving data dissemination mechanisms, enhancing feedback loops, and developing clear guidelines for data analysis and use. Establishing a central database with defined access rights and fostering collaboration among bureaus and stakeholders are also recommended for improved data access and utilization.

The results show, overwhelmingly, that the M&E related to rural and urban water supply faces more significant challenges than other components of WASH. Although there are important distinctions and differences, the M&E practices related to sanitation, hygiene, and WASH in health care facilities score similar to those of WASH in schools. This suggests there are important lessons the BoWE can learn from the Bureaus of Health and Education, in relation to WASH M&E.



Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations
Urban & Rural Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active coordination of regional WASH M&E. - Regular assessments of M&E staff competencies. - Some M&E activities are planned and budgeted in the annual plan. - Surveys from the National Water Inventory customized for new schemes. - Acknowledges the need for experts in data supply and database management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M&E positions are vacant, leading to staffing shortages. - Insufficient expertise in data management. - Lack of data and information access, sharing, and use, hindering comprehensive M&E. - Limited capacity to collect, store, and analyze data. - Gaps in understanding M&E, using tools, and planning. - Lack of report exchanging and communication as per agreed forms. - No updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E. - Lack of updated records for WASH-related surveys. - Lack of MIS tools and processes for capturing, storing and managing WASH data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve capacity to collect, store, and analyze data through training and resource allocation. - Develop comprehensive regional guidelines for data collection procedures. - Strengthen data quality control measures. - Enhance data and information access, sharing, and use through the establishment of a MIS and regular report exchange. - Update records for WASH-related surveys and ensure routine monitoring. - Develop and implement data use plans. - Improve communication and coordination among stakeholders.
Urban & Rural Sanitation , Hygiene Behavior and WASH in HCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a strong commitment to M&E. - Provides clear roles, responsibilities, and training opportunities for the WASH case team. - Participation in regional WASH M&E coordination. - Implementation of DHIS-II. - Functional and well-structured database. - Availability of regional guidelines for data collection procedures. - Updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing shortages within the M&E domain. - Limited availability of technical support for M&E activities. - Limited resource allocation. - Challenges in member attendance in sector coordination. - Limitations with IT equipment and infrastructure. - Occasional dissemination of information products. - Need for additional assessment of partner needs. - Limited access and availability to guidelines. - Restrictions on data/information access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address staffing shortages by recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in the M&E domain. - Provide adequate technical support and resources for M&E activities. - Allocate sufficient resources for M&E activities. - Improve member attendance and partner participation through effective communication and engagement. - Enhance IT equipment and infrastructure to support data management. - Strengthen the dissemination of information products and advocacy efforts. - Conduct comprehensive assessments of partner needs. - Improve data/information access and remove restrictions where possible.
WASH in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has a dedicated M&E unit for monitoring and evaluating WASH in schools. - Comprises specialized professionals responsible for M&E. - Identified capacity gaps and incorporated them into plans. - M&E training provided at various levels. - Updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E. - Data quality system in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for improved data management systems. - Enhanced utilization of evaluation findings for decision-making. - Implementation lags due to inadequate budget planning. - Lack of a regional database of trainers and technical service providers. - Lack of response regarding career moves and opportunities for M&E personnel. - Inadequate supplies and equipment for routine monitoring. - Insufficient well-maintained vehicles for routine monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve data management systems and enhance utilization of evaluation findings for decision-making through training and resource allocation. - Water quality monitoring for schools. - Ensure adequate budget planning and resource allocation to support implementation. - Enhance internal and external coordination for effective implementation of M&E activities. - Develop a separate M&E curriculum and provide career development opportunities for M&E personnel. - Establish a regional database of trainers and technical service providers. - Explore the development of a mobile app for WASH M&E.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys aligned with national standards. - Standardized reporting forms used. - Systematic verification of report completeness and timeliness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited financial resources/investments monitored and reported for WASH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement comprehensive M&E policies and strategies. - Allocate sufficient supplies and equipment for routine monitoring. - Improve vehicle maintenance and availability for routine monitoring. - Enhance financial resources monitoring and reporting for WASH activities.
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Abbreviations

AC	Air Conditioning
BoF	Bureau of Finance
BoH	Bureau of Health
BoWE	Bureau of Water and Energy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EMIS	Education Management Information System
DHIS-II	District Health Information System 2
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OWNP	One WASH National Program
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Introduction

Aim of this Scoping Study

The following report presents the findings of a scoping study conducted to assess the Amhara Region Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Monitoring and Evaluation (WASH M&E) system. The study aimed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for each WASH subsector (Regional Bureaus of Water and Energy, Health and Education), focusing on nine key components related to data collection, management, reporting, and utilization. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the regional WASH M&E system, and to offer recommendations for improvement.

Effective M&E systems are crucial for service delivery and the successful implementation and management of programs and initiatives in the water, health, and education sectors. These systems play a vital role in tracking progress, identifying challenges, and informing evidence-based decision-making. By evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the existing M&E systems, we can identify areas for improvement and provide actionable recommendations to enhance data collection, quality, reporting, and utilization. The study examined each sector individually, considering the specific strengths and weaknesses within the water, health, and education subsectors' monitoring systems, to build an understanding of the entire regional WASH M&E system.

The Regional WASH M&E System

Monitoring in the WASH sector is characterized by its continuous nature and the need to track progress against set objectives. It involves the systematic collection, analysis, and utilization of data to guide management decisions. Monitoring generates different outputs at various levels of the data-information-knowledge-understanding hierarchy. The immediate output is monitoring data on parameters and indicators, where indicators are quantitative metrics used to monitor performance, measure achievement, and ensure accountability. Monitoring data, consisting of facts and figures, can be converted into information through analysis and packaging. Processed monitoring data is presented as information products, such as graphs and maps. Information, when prioritized, synthesized, and disseminated, can be transformed into actionable knowledge. A well-functioning monitoring system encompasses elements such as the purpose and use of data, indicator frameworks, data collection tools, procedures for data collection and processing, IT platforms, and adequate human and financial resources.

Components of the Regional WASH M&E Evaluation

The purpose of regional monitoring and evaluation is to enable effective decision-making through the use of continuous, reliable and relevant data and indicators which can be processed, analyzed and used to inform decisions. Regional M&E has the potential to inform intervention tracking, inform corrective actions, inform planning and resource allocation, increase accountability of service providers and authorities towards citizens, and inform regulation of services and service providers. Ultimately regional M&E can and should result in improvements to, and the sustainability of, WASH service delivery.

To assess the regional WASH M&E system in the Amhara Region, an organizing framework for a functional WASH sector M&E system was used. The framework is the basis for the Regional WASH M&E System Strengthening Tool (Figure 1) that was used in this evaluation by IRC WASH in coordination and participation with the Amhara National Regional State, Bureau of Water and Energy (BoWE), Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education (BoE) and Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health (BoH), Amhara Regional State Bureau of Finance (BoF), the Amhara Region OneWASH National Programme Coordination Office, and the Bahirdar Water Utility, and other local partners.

The framework provides a description of the main components of a functional regional WASH M&E system, and benchmarks against which to assess progress in establishing such a system. It is important to note that not all components need to be implemented at all levels of the system, and for this Scoping Study the implementing team reviewed and modified the tool, selecting nine (9) components relevant for the evaluation in the Amhara Region. The separate components of the regional WASH M&E system need to be present and work to an acceptable standard for the regional WASH M&E system to function effectively.



Figure 1: Monitoring Framework

Application of the WASH M&E Assessment Framework

Several departments from the Amhara regional government were provided with facilitation, technical support and tools to lead a process in which WASH sector stakeholders evaluated the regional WASH M&E system. The process begins with a Preparation Phase which includes defining the scope and setting the guiding objectives. This was a participatory process and was supported by using a series of cards designed to map key regional systems and identify high-level factors about their use. The second phase was a detailed Assessment Phase which involved gathering key documentation, undertaking a comprehensive assessment using the WASH M&E Organizing Framework during a multi-day workshop setting, and the analysis of the findings in

advance of the Scoping Study write-up. The findings of the assessment and recommendations for WASH M&E strengthening were validated during a workshop in July 2023. A third, future phase, is focused on Planning and Costing, with the intended outputs of a regional WASH M&E roadmap, results framework and costed action plan.

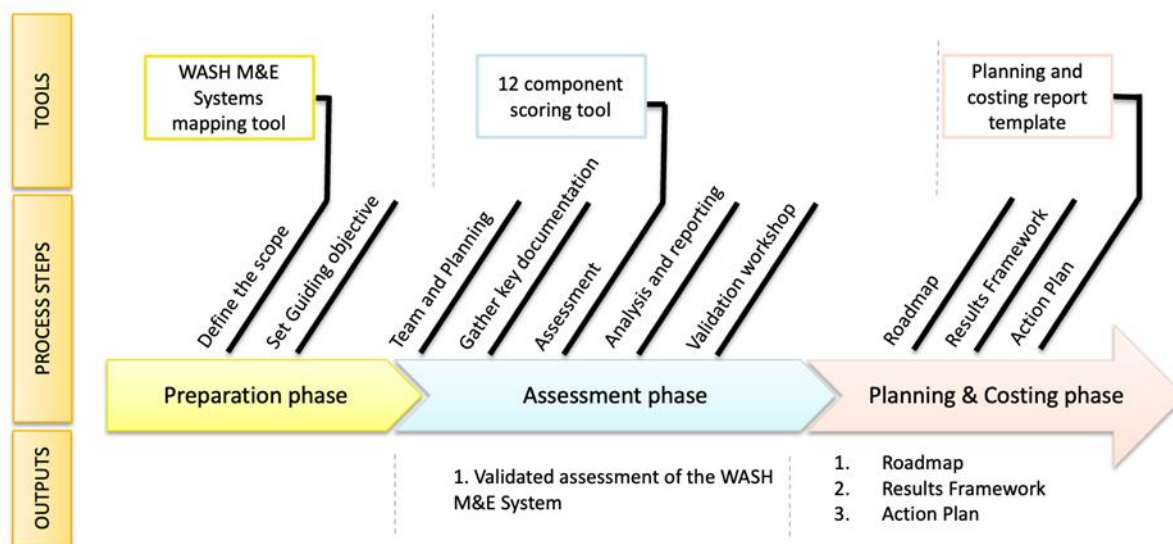


Figure 2: WASH M&E roadmap

Participation in the Amhara Region Regional WASH M&E Scoping Study

The Scoping Study on WASH M&E in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia involved active participation from key stakeholders representing the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy (BoWE), Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education (BoE) and Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health (BoH), and other local partners.

The BoWE played a vital role in the scoping study. The participation of Mamo Yalew, the Director of Scheme Administration, ensured the inclusion of high-level strategic insights and guidance. Mekonnen Gizachew from the Information Technology Department brought valuable expertise in data management and technology, contributing to the development of effective data systems for WASH M&E. Habamu Yimer, an expert in Water Resource Management, provided insights into the monitoring of the region's water resources and their impact on WASH interventions. Maru Alem, the Coordinator of the Amhara Region One WASH National Programme (OWNP), shared valuable experiences and lessons learned from implementing WASH program monitoring in the region. Tilaye Alene, as the Planning and Database Core Process Owner at Bahirdar Water Utility, contributed with practical knowledge on planning and database management. Fikre Tsega, the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Director from BoWE, provided expertise in monitoring and evaluation frameworks and methodologies. Adugnaw Amare, serving as Emergency WASH Coordinator, brought valuable insights into emergency response and the specific monitoring-related challenges faced in those situations. Adugna Amare, also serving as Emergency WASH Coordinator, contributed with expertise in emergency response and the specific challenges faced in emergency situations.

The BoH made significant contributions to the scoping study through the active participation of its members. Samuel Khali, the WASH Case Team Leader, provided valuable expertise and insights into WASH interventions monitoring within the health sector. Zewdu Zegeye, the WASH Focal based in the Health Bureau, brought practical knowledge and experiences in monitoring WASH programs within health facilities. Helina Ferede, a University Lecturer, shared academic perspectives on WASH M&E monitoring, enriching the study with research-based insights.

The BoE also played an essential role in the scoping study. Gebre Birara, a Hygiene and Sanitation Expert, shared valuable insights into hygiene and sanitation practice monitoring in educational institutions. Zemene Abeje, a Statistician and Data Management and Analysis Expert, contributed expertise in data management and analysis, ensuring the availability of reliable and accurate data for the study. Tigist Kefale, serving as the CSO M&E Officer from Bureau of Finance (BoF), provided insights into the role of civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluation processes within the WASH sector.

The active participation of stakeholders from the regional government in the development of the Scoping Study on regional WASH M&E was crucial in ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Their diverse roles, expertise, and experiences enriched the study and provided valuable insights into the regional WASH M&E landscape. The collaborative efforts of these stakeholders will serve as a solid foundation for the continued improvement and effectiveness of WASH M&E systems in the Amhara Region.

Preparation Phase: Identified focus areas for strengthening regional WASH M&E

In advance of the Assessment Phase a mapping of the existing WASH M&E systems was undertaken. The results, presented in the table below, show the full scope of WASH subsectors and their coverage by corresponding monitoring systems. In summary, the urban and rural water supply data are covered by paper and Excel-based systems, whilst urban and rural sanitation and hygiene data are covered by DHIS-II and programmatic Excel systems. Similarly, WASH in health care facilities is covered in DHIS-II and programmatic Excel systems. The Education MIS managed by BoE covers aspects related to WASH in schools.

Table 1: Results of the mapping of existing WASH M&E systems

WASH subsectors	BoWE	BoH	BoE
Urban water supply	Paper & Excel system, BiT Billing Solutions	X	X
Rural water supply	Paper & Excel system	X	X
Urban sanitation	X	DHIS-II, programmatic Excel	X
Rural sanitation	X	DHIS-II, programmatic Excel	X
Urban hygiene behavior	X	Programmatic Excel	X
Rural hygiene behavior	X	Programmatic Excel	X
WASH in schools	X	X	EMIS
WASH in health facilities	X	DHIS-II, programmatic Excel	X

Regional Subsector WASH Monitoring Systems

The monitoring system in the water sector primarily focuses on monitoring water supply access. The system utilizes a combination of paper and Excel formats for data storage and access. The users of this system include the regional and woreda water sector offices, and NGOs. The data is updated quarterly and core indicators such as coverage, water quality, non-functionality rate, and physical performance are monitored. The information collected through this system is crucial for performance evaluation, decision-making, and resource allocation at the regional level.

Within the health sector, the DHIS-II system is utilized for monitoring community WASH indicators. This electronic system allows the Regional Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, woreda health offices, and other relevant institutions to access and analyse data. The system, including DHIS-II and programmatic Excel, is updated quarterly, and core indicators such as Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, latrine availability in health institution, and solid waste management for households are monitored. The information gathered through this system serves multiple purposes, including provider and government performance evaluation, immediate corrective actions, and regulation.

The education sector employs the Education Management Information System (EMIS) which includes indicators and parameters for monitoring WASH in schools. Data is primarily stored in a database at the regional level, but the process of data collection from schools to woreda and zone levels is paper based. The Ministry of Education and regional authorities access and utilize the information stored in the system. Core indicators, such as the availability of water, functionality of facilities, and disaggregated toilet availability by gender, are monitored. While this system is not directly used for immediate corrective actions, it plays a crucial role in planning the construction of toilets and water supply schemes in educational institutions.

Comparing the findings from the three sectors, it is evident that each sector employs different management information systems and data storage methods. While the water sector relies on a combination of paper and Excel formats, the health sector utilizes the DHIS-II system, and the education sector utilizes EMIS, both supported by additional Excel-based systems. This diversity reflects the unique characteristics and requirements of each sector. However, there is an opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration and learning to enhance data collection and analysis processes.

Commonalities can be observed in terms of data updates, with all sectors aiming for consistent and regular updates. Frequency ensures that the information remains relevant and up to date for decision-making and planning purposes. Core indicators related to water supply coverage, water quality, sanitation facilities, and functionality are monitored across the sectors.

The utilization of information also varies across the sectors. In the water sector, the collected data is used for performance evaluation, decision-making, immediate corrective actions, regulation, and resource allocation at the regional level. Similarly, the health sector utilizes the information for performance evaluation, immediate corrective actions in response to changes in disease burden, and regulation through interventions by medical teams. In contrast, the education sector primarily uses the data for planning purposes, specifically for the construction of WASH facilities in schools.

In conclusion, the analysis of the three monitoring systems in the water, health, and education sectors highlights the significance of robust data collection, analysis, and utilization processes in assessing the progress and impact of WASH initiatives. While each sector has distinct requirements and approaches, there is potential for knowledge sharing and collaboration to enhance monitoring systems across sectors. Regular data updates, monitoring of core indicators, and the utilization of information for performance evaluation, planning, corrective actions, and resource allocation are critical elements for ensuring effective WASH interventions. By strengthening and harmonizing these monitoring systems, policymakers and practitioners can make informed decisions and allocate resources efficiently to improve WASH outcomes at both regional and national levels.

Component 1: Organizational Structures with WASH M&E Functions

Performance Goal

Establish and maintain a network of organizations responsible for WASH M&E at the national, sub-national, and service-delivery levels, with an overall harmonization, consolidation and leadership role for the national government.

The BoWE M&E capacity for WASH programs is currently limited. There is a Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate at regional, zonal and woreda level, but their function is to consolidate plans, and report and evaluate progress of the activities. There are no clear and well-defined job descriptions for M&E functions. The lack of a specialized and well capacitated M&E unit hinders the bureau's ability to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of their WASH programs. Three M&E positions remain vacant. These shortages further contribute to the bureau's challenges in carrying out comprehensive monitoring and evaluation activities. Furthermore, the BoWE acknowledges the need for additional experts in data supply and database management. Insufficient expertise in data management affects the bureau's capacity to collect, store, and analyze WASH data effectively. External technical assistance is only partly available when needed.

The BoH has made efforts to establish a WASH case team responsible for monitoring and evaluation functions. This team consists of 15 individuals, including government and NGO staff, and is responsible for overseeing the M&E activities related to WASH programs. The bureau demonstrates a strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation by providing clear roles, responsibilities, and training opportunities for the WASH case team. There are written job descriptions for individual M&E workers. However, the BoH also faces challenges in terms of staffing shortages within the M&E domain. These shortages may strain the workload of the WASH case team and impact the effectiveness and timeliness of monitoring and evaluation activities. Additionally, there is limited availability of technical support for M&E functions, which further adds to the challenges faced by the bureau in monitoring and evaluating their WASH programs.

The BoE has established a dedicated M&E unit that also focuses on monitoring and evaluating WASH programs in the education sector. The M&E unit comprises a director, three senior officers, and four officers who are responsible for overseeing monitoring and evaluation activities related to WASH programs in educational settings. This set-up provides a strong basis for monitoring and evaluation within the bureau. However, the School Improvement Directorate, which is expected to monitor the WASH indicators together with other indicators which can measure school improvement activities, is not functioning well: the directorate is not yet formally established and is led by an acting director.

Reflecting on the three bureaus, it is evident that each of them has unique strengths and faces challenges in their WASH monitoring and evaluation efforts. The BoWE experiences a lack of clear job descriptions and appropriate human resources, in addition to staffing shortages, which impede their ability to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of their WASH programs. The absence of specialized expertise in data management further adds to their challenges. The BoH, on the other hand, has established a WASH case team and demonstrates a strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation. However, staffing shortages within the M&E domain and limited technical support pose challenges to the bureau's monitoring and evaluation functions. The BoE stands out with its dedicated M&E unit comprising specialized professionals responsible for monitoring and evaluating WASH programs in the education sector. This provides a solid basis for their monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Table 2: Reflections on human capacity for WASH M&E in the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledges the need for experts in data supply and database management. - Recognizes the importance of M&E for WASH programs. - Recognizes the need for job description for the team/department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M&E positions are vacant, leading to staffing shortages. - Insufficient expertise in data management. - Limited structures established to collect, store, and analyze data. -Lack of job descriptions. - No costed plans for data collection and management and capacity building.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a strong commitment to M&E. - Provides clear roles, responsibilities, and training opportunities for the WASH case team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing shortages within the M&E domain. - Limited availability of technical support for M&E activities.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has a dedicated M&E unit with WASH expert. - Comprises specialized professionals responsible for M&E. - Strong foundation for monitoring and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A dedicated WASH-focused M&E unit has not yet been established.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Development of comprehensive job descriptions: The bureau should prioritize developing detailed job descriptions upon which required human resources can be identified.
2. Fill the vacant M&E positions: Staffing shortages in the M&E domain hinder the bureau's capacity to monitor and evaluate WASH programs. It is essential to prioritize filling these vacant positions with qualified professionals who have expertise in M&E and data management.
3. Recruit experts in data supply and database management: The bureau should consider recruiting experts who specialize in data supply and database management. These professionals can ensure the availability, accuracy, and reliability of WASH data, and establish efficient systems for data collection, storage, and analysis.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Strengthen technical support for the WASH case team: The BoH should collaborate with external partners, such as research institutions or NGOs, to provide additional technical support to the WASH case team. This can include training opportunities, mentoring, and knowledge exchange to enhance their capacity in monitoring and evaluation.
2. Prioritize coordination among different departments: To overcome staffing shortages, the BoH should prioritize coordination among different departments within the bureau. This can help distribute the workload effectively and ensure that M&E functions are not compromised.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Dedicated WASH M&E unit: The bureau should strengthen WASH-focused M&E through the establishment of a dedicated unit.
2. Share learning and best practices: The bureau should document and share lessons relating to their M&E structures and practices.
3. Improve the use of evaluation findings: The bureau should emphasize the use of evaluation findings for policy and programmatic decisions. This can be achieved by promoting a culture of evidence-based decision-making, organizing regular meetings to discuss evaluation results, and involving relevant stakeholders in the interpretation and application of evaluation findings.

By implementing these expanded recommendations, each bureau can address the specific challenges they face and enhance their WASH monitoring and evaluation capacities. This, in turn, will contribute to improved planning, implementation, and impact assessment of WASH programs and interventions.

Component 2: Human Capacity for WASH M&E

Performance Goal

Ensure adequately skilled human resources at all levels of the M&E system are available, to complete all tasks defined in the annual WASH monitoring work plan.

The BoWE reported that the M&E-related skills and competencies of their staff have been assessed within the past three years. However, the assessment process is not comprehensive and lacks a checklist. It is generally reported on an annual basis as a capacity building requirement. The staff involved in M&E have some gaps in understanding M&E, using tools, and planning. There is also a lack of clear workflow and supervision. The BoWE has developed plans to support training by private consultants and the recruitment of additional analysts, IT specialists, and database managers, but these plans often lack budget allocations. They do not have a nationally endorsed M&E training curriculum, and the capacity building offered is not effectively coordinated. There is no regional database of trainers and technical service providers capable of building M&E capacity. However, external support is frequently available, and the Ethiopia Water Technology Institute and WaterAid have jointly provided training, and Addis Ababa Water and Sewerage Authority has supported with utility business planning.

The BoH has made progress in M&E capacity building. They conduct monthly, quarterly, and yearly assessments of the skills and competencies of their M&E staff. The M&E staff at the BoH and the WASH case team possess the skills and competencies needed to fulfil the entity's WASH M&E mandate. However, there is still room for improvement in the general BoH M&E or planning section. The bureau faces budget shortages for M&E-related training, new technology adoption, innovation implementation, and human resources fulfillment. They provide M&E training from the regional level to Health Extension Workers.

The BoE has identified capacity gaps in M&E skills and competencies and incorporated them into their Human Capacity Building Plan. However, the implementation of these plans lags behind due to inadequate budget planning. The bureau offers training on EMIS at various levels, including woredas, zones, regions, and EMIS experts. There is a lack of coordination internally

and externally for M&E human capacity building efforts and there is no regional database or register of M&E training recipients or trainers and technical service providers.

Reflecting on the three bureaus, the BoWE faces significant gaps in M&E skills and competencies, coordination, and the availability of a nationally endorsed M&E training curriculum. The BoH has made progress in M&E capacity building, but budget constraints remain somewhat of a challenge. The BoE has identified capacity gaps and incorporated them into their plans, but implementation lags behind due to budget issues. The BoH shows the strongest capacity in terms of skills and competencies, while the BoE has made more progress in incorporating capacity gaps into their plans.

Table 3: Reflections on the coordination of the regional WASH M&E system within the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	- Regular assessments of M&E staff competencies	- Gaps in understanding M&E, using tools, and planning - No nationally endorsed training curriculum
Health	- Monthly, quarterly, and yearly assessments of M&E staff - Skilled WASH case team	- Budget shortages for M&E-related training and resource fulfillment
Education	- Identified capacity gaps and incorporated them into plans - Training provided at various levels - Internal communication and information dissemination	- Implementation lags behind due to inadequate budget planning - Lack of a regional database of trainers and technical service providers

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Develop a comprehensive M&E training program that addresses the identified gaps in understanding M&E, tool usage, and planning.
2. Allocate adequate budgets for capacity building initiatives to ensure effective implementation.
3. Establish a clear workflow and provide necessary tools to M&E staff.
4. Strengthen coordination and collaboration between the Water Bureau and other relevant entities for enhanced effectiveness.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Allocate sufficient budgetary resources for M&E-related training, including long-term and short-term training, adoption of new technologies, innovation implementation, and human resource fulfillment.
2. Enhance supervision and mentorship activities to provide timely support and on-the-job training for M&E staff.
3. Improve coordination both internally within the BoH and externally with other stakeholders to ensure effective M&E capacity building.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Align budget planning with the identified capacity gaps and ensure that the necessary resources are allocated for comprehensive capacity building.
2. Develop detailed capacity building plans that address the specific needs of experts in areas such as SDG indicators for WASH in schools.
3. Strengthen internal and external coordination to promote effective M&E capacity building initiatives.

These recommendations aim to address the weaknesses identified in each bureau and provide actionable steps to enhance their human capacity for WASH M&E.

Component 3: Coordination of Regional WASH M&E

Performance Goal

Establish and maintain partnerships among in-country and international stakeholders who are involved in planning and managing the regional WASH M&E.

A regional WASH technical and steering committee exists, functional at various levels, which was established for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation for the One WASH National Programme Consolidated WASH Account. This committee is led by the BoWE at the regional and woreda levels. The bureau participates actively in the regional WASH M&E technical and steering committee and ensures that meetings are held monthly. They have a well-defined role in approving documents, providing technical leadership, and coordinating regional WASH M&E. However, it is the Water Supply Directorate and not the Scheme Administration Directorate who participates, and this is seen as a key issue and critical factor limiting the effectiveness of coordination. The BoWE follows a consensus-building process for decision-making. While they have made progress in promoting development of a regional consensus on forms for routine reporting of WASH data, there are challenges such as lack of report exchanging and communication as per the agreed forms, and there is no platform for scheme administration and post-construction management. The bureau does not have an updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E, and communication mechanisms for WASH M&E activities and decisions need improvement.

The BoH identifies inconsistencies in their participation in the regional WASH technical and steering committee meetings due to workload and other office assignments. The bureau partly participates in the committee and faces challenges such as limited resource allocation, different assignments of members, and lack of motivation, which may affect meeting attendance. The committee makes decisions via a consensus-building process, but not all members consistently attend each meeting. The BoH has made progress in promoting the development of a consensus on forms for routine reporting of WASH data. They have an inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E, which is periodically updated. Communication mechanisms for WASH M&E activities and decisions are mostly in place, including evaluations of progress between partners and the WASH case team. However, out of 25 partners working in the sector only nine actively report to the bureau. The bureau didn't allocate budget for strengthening platforms. The WASH unit attempted to coordinate using the budget from NGO support but this has not yet been successful.

The BoE participates in most One WASH coordination meetings. They actively participate in the regional WASH M&E coordination, but there is room for improvement. The bureau has made progress in promoting the development of a consensus on forms for routine reporting of WASH data. They have an updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E. Communication mechanisms for WASH M&E activities and decisions are completely established.

When reflecting on the three bureaus regarding the coordination of the regional WASH M&E system, the BoWE stands out with its well-defined role and active participation. They conduct regular monthly meetings and make decisions via a consensus-building process. The BoH faces challenges such as inconsistent meeting schedules and limited resource allocation, while the BoE has a satisfactory level of participation. All bureaus have made progress in promoting the development of a national consensus on forms for routine reporting of WASH data, but communication mechanisms vary in their effectiveness. The BoWE has updated their WASH stakeholder mapping of actors but it is not comprehensive and does not exhaustively include the WASH M&E mapping, while the BoH and BoE have put effort into maintaining an updated list.

Table 4: Reflections on the coordination of the regional WASH M&E system within the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active participation in the regional WASH M&E system. - Well-defined role in approving documents and providing technical leadership. - Monthly meetings at the regional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of participation by the Scheme Administration Directorate. - Lack of report exchanging and communication as per agreed forms. - No updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly meetings of the regional WASH M&E Technical Working Group /TWG/committee. - Progress in promoting a national consensus on forms for reporting WASH data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inconsistent meeting participation. - Limited resource allocation. - Challenges in member attendance and partner participation.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly meetings of the regional WASH M&E TWG/committee. - Room for improvement in participation.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Establish mechanisms for effective report exchanging and communication as per agreed forms:
 - Implement a centralized reporting platform or system that allows for efficient sharing of WASH data and reports among stakeholders.
 - Provide clear M&E coordination guidelines and expectations to ensure timely and accurate reporting, emphasizing the importance of data quality and consistency.
 - Conduct regular training sessions for staff and partners on the proper use of reporting forms and data submission procedures.
2. Develop and maintain an updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E:
 - Conduct a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise to identify all relevant actors involved in WASH activities within the region.
 - Establish a systematic process for periodically updating the stakeholder inventory, taking into account new organizations or changes in roles and responsibilities.
 - Foster collaboration and engagement with stakeholders by sharing the updated inventory and promoting inclusivity in decision-making processes.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Address the challenges related to inconsistent meeting schedules and limited resource allocation:
 - Prioritize the regularity and timeliness of meetings by setting a fixed schedule and adhering to it as much as possible.
 - Allocate adequate resources, both human and financial, to support the activities of the regional WASH M&E TWG/committee.
 - Explore potential partnerships or collaborations to secure additional resources for the smooth functioning of the TWG/committee.
2. Enhance member attendance and partner participation through motivation and incentive mechanisms:
 - Recognize and appreciate active participation by members and partners through certificates of appreciation or other forms of acknowledgment.
 - Offer capacity-building opportunities, such as training workshops or knowledge-sharing sessions, to enhance the skills and knowledge of TWG members.
 - Foster a sense of ownership and commitment among members by involving them in the decision-making processes and seeking their input and feedback.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Increase the participation in the regional WASH M&E TWG:
 - Transition from quarterly meetings to monthly or bimonthly meetings to ensure more frequent engagement and discussions.
 - Set clear agendas and objectives for each meeting to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the sessions.
 - Encourage active involvement of Education Bureau representatives by assigning specific responsibilities or tasks related to WASH M&E.

Component 5: Annual Costed Regional WASH M&E Work Plan

Performance Goal

Develop an annual costed WASH monitoring work plan, including the specific and costed regional WASH M&E activities of all relevant stakeholders and identified sources of funding. Use this plan for coordination and assessing progress of M&E implementation throughout the year.

In the BoWE, while there are activities planned and budgeted in the annual plan, there is a notable gap in information access, sharing, and use. Although some activities in the plan have been costed, there is a lack of specific cost allocation for many WASH activities including M&E, which may affect the accuracy of financial planning. Furthermore, while activities in the plan have been allocated time frames for implementation, there is a need to improve the alignment of the entity-specific costed M&E work plan with the regional M&E work plan. However, the most pressing concern for the bureau is concerning resource availability, as there is a lack of budget and resources for logistics to support M&E activities including post-construction support.

In contrast, the BoH demonstrates a more positive response to planning and costing M&E activities. Most of the activities in the plan have been costed for the current year, indicating a commitment to financial planning. Time frames have been allocated for implementation, ensuring a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation. The allocation of activities to at

least one lead responsible for implementation also facilitates accountability. Moreover, the costs of the plan are mostly included in the official government budget, signifying strong financial support. The entity-specific costed M&E work plan is aligned with the regional M&E work plan, indicating coordination and synergy. While there may be some gaps in resource availability and budget limitations during implementation, overall, the BoH shows a moderate level of responsiveness.

The BoE on the other hand, shows a highly positive response to the M&E activities. Activities in the plan have been completely costed for the current year, ensuring comprehensive financial planning. Specific time frames have been allocated for implementation, enabling efficient monitoring and evaluation processes. Each activity is allocated to at least one lead responsible for implementation, promoting accountability and ownership. The costs of the plan are completely included in the official government budget, with a specific allocation mentioned in the 5-year plan. The entity-specific costed M&E work plan is also fully aligned with the regional M&E work plan, emphasizing coordination and consistency. Although there are limitations in resources, the bureau shows strong commitment and responsiveness to the M&E activities.

In comparing the three bureaus, it is evident that the BoWE faces the most significant challenges in terms of planning, budgeting, and resource availability for M&E activities. The BoH shows a moderate level of responsiveness, with relatively good cost allocation, time frame allocation, and resource availability. However, there are still areas for improvement, such as addressing budget limitations and strengthening human resource fulfilment. The BoE stands out as the most responsive, with complete cost allocation, time frame allocation, and alignment with the regional M&E work plan. While resource limitations exist, the bureau's commitment to M&E activities is commendable.

Table 5: Planning, budgeting and resource availability of the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	- M&E activities are only partly planned and budgeted in the annual plan, - WASH M&E activities not planned & costed	- Lack of data and information access, sharing, and use, which hinders comprehensive monitoring and analysis.
Health	- Activities in the plan have been costed for the current year, ensuring financial allocation for M&E activities.	- Budget limitations for M&E activities may hinder the effective implementation of the work plan and compromise data collection and analysis.
Education	- Activities in the plan are completely costed for the current year, ensuring adequate financial resources for M&E activities.	- Limited resources may restrict the bureau's ability to fully meet the requirements outlined in the work plan, impacting monitoring efforts.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Develop a comprehensive regional WASH M&E plan that aligns with the national guidelines and includes specific activities related to surveys, data collection, databases, and audits.
2. Enhance the inclusion of M&E activities in the annual plan, ensuring that they are budgeted and costed adequately.
3. Allocate specific time frames for the implementation of M&E activities and assign clear responsibilities to individuals or teams for effective implementation.
4. Improve resource allocation for M&E, including budgetary provisions for logistics such as technology items and transportation.

5. Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders and partners in the development of the regional WASH M&E work plan, ensuring their active participation and input.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Ensure that the M&E work plan is developed or modified based on the achievements and progress of the previous year's activities.
2. Facilitate active involvement of stakeholders and partners in the development of the current year's work plan, including construction enterprises, zone administrations, and NGOs.
3. Enhance the inclusion of M&E activities related to surveys, data collection, analysis, and reporting in the annual costed work plan.
4. Secure adequate funding for the current year's work plan, considering both government and development partner contributions.
5. Strengthen coordination and communication between the regional bureau and health offices in the implementation of the work plan.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Align the entity-specific costed M&E work plan with the regional M&E work plan to ensure consistency and synergy.
2. Include activities in the work plan that focus on surveys, data collection, databases, and audits related to WASH monitoring in educational institutions.
3. Ensure that the annual costed work plan includes specific activities with allocated time frames and assigned leads for implementation.
4. Advocate for sufficient resources, both human and financial, to meet the requirements of the work plan.
5. Enhance the participation of partners and stakeholders in the development of the work plan, including regular coordination meetings and information sharing.

These recommendations aim to address the identified weaknesses and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the annual costed regional WASH M&E work plan. By implementing these recommendations, the bureaus can enhance the effectiveness of their M&E activities, strengthen coordination and collaboration with stakeholders, and ensure the availability of necessary resources for successful plan implementation.

Component 6: Communication, Advocacy and Culture for WASH M&E

Performance Goal

Ensure knowledge of and commitment to regional WASH monitoring among policymakers, decision makers, national and sub-national WASH practitioners, service providers, data collectors and other stakeholders.

At the BoWE, there is a partial level of advocacy, support and coordination. While there are advocates at the national level, including the OWP through providing the guidance and manuals on having the WASH M&E as part of the OWP Program Operational Menu (POM), their efforts are separate and not fully coordinated. The bureau acknowledges the usefulness of information products but does not have sufficient understanding of advocacy processes, or capacity or tools available to support efforts. Decision makers within the BoWE show interest and support for WASH M&E activities but highlight a lack of attention and focus due to competing priorities. The website has not been updated or used for communication products for

over three years. The bureau also indicates that career moves for M&E personnel are challenging to implement due to a lack of clear career structures outlined in the HR manual. Additionally, while the regions align their regulations, manuals, guidelines, and proclamations with the national policy, there is no separate policy specifically dedicated to the M&E section.

The BoH response reflects a higher level of support and understanding regarding communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E. There are existing staff members dedicated to advocacy for WASH M&E activities, and communication on the WASH M&E performance occurs quarterly using agreed report formats and schedules. The bureau recognizes the usefulness of information products, creating clarity and common understanding among stakeholders and partners. Decision makers, directors, and managers within the BoH use information from the WASH M&E section for decision making and improving performance. M&E personnel are actively involved as part of the management and planning team, with two dedicated personnel allocated for this purpose. However, challenges may arise due to existing assignments and tasks, which could limit their attendance in both lateral and vertical meetings and discussions. The bureau's M&E section follows regulations, guidelines, and strategies cascaded from the regional WASH policy and development plan, but there is no separate policy specifically for the M&E section.

The BoE response indicates a positive outlook on communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E. Decision makers, directors, and managers consistently request WASH-related information before and during WASH review, planning, and costing processes. M&E personnel are considered an integral part of the management and planning team within the bureau. The bureau confirms the usefulness of information products, including various channels such as websites, emails, magazines, tables, charts, maps, and dashboards. The primary concern for the bureau staff relates to the possibility for M&E personnel to have opportunities for lateral and vertical career moves within the entity.

When comparing the three bureaus, it is evident that there are varying levels of support and coordination regarding communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E. The BoH demonstrates the highest level of understanding and involvement, with dedicated staff, active utilization of information products, and strong integration of M&E personnel into the management and planning team. The BoE also shows positive engagement, with consistent requests for WASH-related information and recognition of the importance of M&E personnel in the management and planning team. The BoWE shows a partial level of support, with separate advocacy efforts, manual-based reporting, and a lack of attention and focus on WASH M&E activities.

Table 6: Levels of support and coordination regarding communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E in the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy support from OWNP, national level PME, and some NGOs - Acknowledgment of the usefulness of information products - Interest and support from decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate and uncoordinated advocacy efforts - Lack of understanding and capacity for advocacy and communications - Lack of attention and focus due to competing priorities - Lack of clear career structures for M&E personnel
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing staff dedicated to advocacy for WASH M&E activities - Quarterly communication using agreed report formats and schedules - Recognition of the usefulness of information products in creating clarity and common understanding - Decision makers utilize information from the WASH M&E section for decision making and performance improvement - Active involvement of M&E personnel as part of the management and planning team with dedicated personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited attendance in meetings and discussions due to existing assignments and tasks - Lack of clear career structures for M&E personnel - No separate policy specifically for M&E
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent request for WASH-related information during planning and costing processes - M&E personnel considered part of the management and planning team within the bureau - Usefulness of information products (websites, emails, magazines, tables, charts, maps, and dashboards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited career opportunities in M&E

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Strengthen coordination and collaboration among ONWP, national-level Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) NGOs, and other stakeholders to address the lack of coordinated efforts in advocating for regional WASH M&E.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to address the absence of routine monitoring and reporting, ensuring regular and timely communication of performance and progress in WASH M&E activities.
3. Invest in the development of information products such as dashboards, mobile apps, and website content to address the limited availability of useful WASH M&E system information products.
4. Provide necessary support and resources to ensure decision makers, directors, and managers prioritize and utilize WASH M&E information products effectively.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Improve the quality and accessibility of WASH M&E information products to address the reliance on non-updated or incomplete information during WASH review, planning, and costing processes.
2. Strengthen the involvement of M&E personnel in management and planning teams to address the limitations in attending relevant meetings and discussions.
3. Advocate for the inclusion of M&E policies and strategies within regional WASH policy and development plans to provide a clear framework and direction for WASH M&E activities.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Enhance the availability of information products such as dashboards, reports, and maps to address the lack of comprehensive WASH M&E system information products. Promote the

use of updated and reliable information for decision making by addressing the reliance on outdated or incomplete data due to time constraints.

2. Advocate for the development of a specific M&E policy to address the absence of a dedicated policy for the M&E section.

These revised recommendations directly target the identified weaknesses in each bureau, aiming to improve communication, advocacy, and culture for WASH M&E. By implementing these recommendations, the bureaus can overcome the challenges and enhance their performance in the respective areas.

Component 7: Routine Monitoring

Performance Goal

To produce timely and high-quality routine administrative WASH monitoring data. To guide decision-making at all levels, the data needs of different stakeholders should be determined, and routine data made available in a timely fashion. Standardized data include inputs (resources, such as staff, funds, materials, WASH facilities, supplies), activities (implementation of interventions and services, such as hygiene promotion, drilling, training, etc.) and outputs (facilities installed/rehabilitated, pits emptied, waste treated etc.). Standardized data from all providers, including private and community-based service providers, should be collected on a routine basis.

The BoWE has several areas of routine monitoring that require attention and improvement. According to the bureau, there are no regional guidelines available for data collection procedures, and data quality control measures are inadequate. Data collection frequency is highly limited. There is a lack of necessary supplies, equipment, vehicles, fuel, and allowances for routine monitoring. Standardized data collection and reporting forms are not widely used, and discrepancies in reports are not systematically reconciled. However, the bureau demonstrates strengths in monitoring financial resources/investments for WASH and collating and reporting data to appropriate levels.

The BoH shows better performance in routine monitoring. They have developed regional guidelines and use them for data collection procedures. Data quality control measures, such as a data quality system, are in place, although there are occasional gaps. Data collection frequency is mostly satisfactory, with reports being submitted quarterly and sometimes monthly. Supplies and equipment, including water test kits, are partly available. The bureau acknowledges the use of standardized data collection and reporting forms. Mechanisms for verifying report completeness and reconciling discrepancies are established. Outputs of routine program monitoring contribute to the indicators defined in the national/regional M&E framework. The bureau also monitors and reports financial resources and investments for WASH.

Similar to the BoH, the BoE demonstrates a more satisfactory performance in routine monitoring compared to the BoWE. They have available regional guidelines and employ them for data collection procedures. Data quality control measures, such as software systems, are in place, although occasional gaps exist. Data collection frequency meets the requirements, with regular reporting based on guidelines. While supplies and equipment are partly available, the bureau ensures the availability of budget and vehicles for routine monitoring. They use standardized data collection and reporting forms and have mechanisms for verifying report completeness and reconciling discrepancies. Outputs of routine program monitoring contribute to the national/regional M&E framework, and financial resources and investments for WASH are monitored and reported.

When comparing the three bureaus' responses, it is evident that the Bureaus of Health and Education outperform the BoWE in most aspects of routine monitoring. They have developed and use regional guidelines, employ data quality control measures, meet data collection frequency requirements, and use standardized data collection and reporting forms. They also demonstrate better mechanisms for verifying report completeness, reconciling discrepancies, and monitoring financial resources/investments for WASH. However, all three bureaus still have areas for improvement, such as enhancing data quality control measures, ensuring the availability of necessary supplies and equipment, and establishing regional/national databases for improved data management.

Table 7: Performance of routine monitoring in the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	- Monitoring financial resources and reporting	- Lack of comprehensive regional guidelines for data collection procedures. - Inconsistent implementation of data quality control measures. - Insufficient supplies and equipment for routine monitoring.
Health	- Availability of regional guidelines for data collection procedures. - Data quality system in place. - Vehicles and fuel available for routine monitoring.	- Limited allowances for routine monitoring. - Lack of standardized data collection forms across entities delivering the same services.
Education	- Data quality system in place. - Standardized reporting forms used. - Systematic verification of report completeness and timeliness.	- Insufficient well-maintained vehicles for routine monitoring. - Limited financial resources/investments monitored and reported for WASH.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Develop and implement regional guidelines for data collection procedures to ensure standardized and consistent monitoring practices.
2. Strengthen data quality control measures by establishing regular review mechanisms and incorporating technical consciousness for data quality.
3. Allocate resources to improve the availability of necessary supplies and equipment for routine monitoring.
4. Provide training and capacity-building programs for staff to enhance their skills in data collection, collation, and reporting.
5. Establish a regional/national database for better data management and accessibility.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Continuously update and utilize regional guidelines for data collection procedures to ensure consistent and standardized monitoring practices.
2. Strengthen the existing data quality control system to address gaps and ensure data accuracy and reliability.
3. Ensure the availability of sufficient supplies and equipment, including water test kits, for routine monitoring activities.
4. Conduct regular training sessions for staff on the use of standardized data collection and reporting forms.
5. Strengthen the feedback mechanisms for reconciling discrepancies in reports and improving data quality.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Develop and disseminate regional guidelines for data collection procedures to ensure consistent and standardized monitoring practices.
2. Enhance the data quality control system, including regular monitoring and gap identification, to maintain high-quality data.
3. Allocate resources to ensure the availability of necessary supplies, equipment, budget, and vehicles for routine monitoring.
4. Conduct training programs for staff to ensure proper utilization of standardized data collection and reporting forms.
5. Establish effective coordination mechanisms with other stakeholders to ensure data quality and improve monitoring processes.

By implementing these bureau-specific recommendations, each bureau can address their weaknesses and enhance routine monitoring practices in line with the requirements of the WASH M&E framework.

Component 8: Surveys

Performance Goal

Produce timely and high-quality data from surveys. The need for surveys as well as the specific focus and content of each survey should be considered within the context of each country. Protocols and data collection tools should be based on international standards for survey and standard tools, such as the Demographic and Health Survey, and the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey. Adherence to standards is important to obtain high-quality data and to ensure that results from repeated surveys can be compared over time within a given country, as well as across countries. Where appropriate, survey protocols should include data collection to support the construction of the standardized national indicators defined in the national WASH M&E framework. This can help prevent the need for additional data collection efforts and additional costs.

The BoWE has encountered several challenges in the implementation of surveys for WASH monitoring and evaluation. There is a lack of updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months. The bureau primarily relies on the National Water Inventory (NWI) for surveys, but customized surveys based on NWI-II have only been updated for new schemes and suffer from data quality issues since there is not a mechanism for verification and validation for data quality. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of surveys contributing to the national/regional M&E framework. The bureau does not conduct regular surveys for behavioral components in the general population, non-household WASH facilities, household sanitation facilities, and water quality at service points. However, woredas do perform sampled sanitary surveys.

The BoH has made progress in the implementation of surveys for WASH monitoring and evaluation. They have updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months. Surveys conducted align with the national/regional M&E framework, contributing to the indicators. Quarterly surveys with a behavioral component in the general population are conducted using a report format and checklist. Similar quarterly surveys are conducted for non-household WASH facilities.

The BoE demonstrates commitment to WASH monitoring and evaluation through their survey activities. They have updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months, which align with national standards. Surveys conducted annually contribute to the indicators in the national/regional M&E framework. The bureau conducts regional surveys with a behavioral component among the general population once per year. Surveys of WASH facilities

in schools are conducted on an annual basis. However, water quality at service points is not tested.

When comparing the survey activities of the three bureaus, it is evident that the BoH shows the most progress. They have updated records of surveys, contribute to the national/regional M&E framework, and conduct regular surveys for behavioral components and WASH in healthcare facilities. The BoE also demonstrates commitment by conducting surveys aligned with national standards. However, the BoWE lags behind in various aspects, with limited records, lack of designed surveys, and no regular surveys in several areas.

Table 8: Survey activities of the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys customized from the National Water Inventory (NWI) for new schemes - Attempt to collect data on new schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of updated records for WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months - Data quality issues in customized surveys
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months - Surveys contributing to the indicators in the national/regional M&E framework - Water quality included 	
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated records of WASH-related surveys conducted within the past 12 months - Surveys aligned with national standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WASH indicators are not comprehensively aligned with SDG indicators for WASH in schools

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Develop guidelines and manuals for data collection in surveys to ensure consistency and quality.
2. Establish a system to regularly update records of WASH-related surveys.
3. Design and conduct surveys for behavioral components, water quality at service points, and fecal sludge management.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Ensure data collected in surveys adhere to standardized protocols and are of high quality.
2. Share best practices and lessons learned with other bureaus to promote cross-learning and collaboration.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Further develop WASH indicators to align with SDG for WASH in schools.
2. Maintain the alignment of surveys with national standards.

By implementing these recommendations, the bureaus can enhance their survey activities, thereby improving the monitoring and evaluation of WASH-related aspects in the region.

Component 9: Regional WASH Databases

Performance Goal

Develop and maintain national and sub-national WASH databases that enable stakeholders to access relevant data for policy formulation and program management and improvement.

The BoWE does not have any database for capturing and storing data. This absence raises concerns about their ability to effectively monitor and evaluate WASH programs in the region. They also face challenges related to IT equipment and infrastructure, including limitations in server capacity, lack of essential equipment like Air Conditioning (AC) and Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS), and a shortage of tablets and computers at the woreda level.

In contrast, the BoH demonstrates a more positive stance towards regional WASH databases. They have a functional and well-organized database system (DHIS-II). There are repositories used to avoid duplication in the report format system. There are common data standards, and the database contains the latest collected data, and there are structures, mechanisms, procedures and a time frame for transmitting, entering, extracting, merging data to be entered into the database.

Similarly, the BoE has a functional database (StatEduc2_data base) that is well structured and organized. The bureau highlights the use of common data standards and codes in their database, promoting consistency and compatibility of data across the education sector. They confirm that the database contains the latest collected data, specifying that it includes information from 2015 EFY. The bureau has implemented quality control mechanisms to ensure accurate data capture and analysis, utilizing data cleaning and verification processes.

When comparing the bureaus in terms of databases, notable disparities emerge. The BoWE lacks a functional database altogether, faces challenges in IT equipment and infrastructure, and lacks quality control mechanisms. On the other hand, both the BoH and BoE have functional databases that are well structured and organized. They employ common data standards and ensure the currency of data. While the BoH emphasizes the existence of structures and mechanisms for data transmission and merging, the BoE emphasizes the implementation of quality control mechanisms.

Table 9: Availability of regional WASH databases

Lead institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Water	- None	- No database for capturing and storing data
Health	- Functional and well-structured database	- Gaps in WASH indicators, IT equipment and infrastructure availability
Education	- Functional and well-structured database	- Reliance on manual documentation

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Establish a functional database for capturing and storing data related to WASH programs.
2. Improve IT equipment and infrastructure, including server capacity, essential equipment, and computers at the woreda level.
3. Implement quality control mechanisms to ensure accurate data capture and analysis.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Address WASH indicator gaps in DHIS-II.
2. Enhance data security and IT policies to ensure the protection and integrity of data.
3. Strengthen user support services to enhance the accessibility and usability of the database.

4. Address gaps in equipment and infrastructure availability.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Develop strategies to minimize reliance on manual documentation and promote the use of digital platforms for data sharing and communication.
2. Ensure adequate support services for maintaining and updating the IT equipment and infrastructure.

By implementing these recommendations, the bureaus can enhance their regional WASH databases, improve data management and analysis, and ultimately contribute to more effective planning, monitoring, and evaluation of WASH programs in the region.

Component 12: Access and Use of Data

Performance Goal

Disseminate and use data from the WASH M&E system to stakeholders for sector learning and to track progress against national and sub-national targets, to support policy formulation, and to guide annual planning, improvement of WASH services, and corrective actions at all levels. There are a range of strategies to promote data dissemination and use, including: ensuring ownership of data; ensuring dissemination of good quality data in a timely manner; determining appropriate information products for different users; allocating sufficient resources for data dissemination; and providing assistance for data use.

The BoWE shows a mixed picture to data access and use. The bureau has assessed the gap in the WASH sector but has not specifically addressed the information needs of stakeholders. They have a regional strategic plan with data use plans, although these plans lack detail and clear process definition. While reports are regularly disseminated to data providers, there are issues with data quality, and reports are not shared unless requested. Information products are mostly sent to selected stakeholders, while feedback from those who process reported data is received but reports are rarely sent back. In terms of meeting WASH stakeholders' information needs, the bureau primarily relies on regular reports and provides information products only upon request.

As with several other components of the assessment, the BoH indicates a more positive state of data access and use. They have assessed the information needs of WASH stakeholders and have a regional strategic plan in place. Information products are regularly disseminated to data providers through the use of the Telegram platform. Additionally, a wide variety of stakeholders receive information products occasionally, including social media, leaflets, Telegram, and posters. Feedback and information products from those who process reported data are regularly received at the ground level. The bureau demonstrates a stronger commitment to meeting WASH stakeholders' information needs and has guidelines in place to support data analysis, presentation, accessibility, and use at the regional level.

The BoE indicates a high level of data access and use. They have assessed the information needs of WASH stakeholders and have a regional strategic plan that includes data use plans. Information products are regularly disseminated to data providers, with reports being uploaded to the bureau's website and annual abstracts being made available. The bureau also ensures that information products are regularly sent to a wide variety of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, World Bank, and several others. They receive information products from those who process reported data, particularly through annual abstracts. The bureau's commitment to

meeting stakeholders' needs is further exemplified by the availability of EMIS tools and guidelines for data analysis and use.

When comparing the three bureaus in terms of data access and use, it is evident that the BoH and BoE have made significant progress in meeting stakeholders' information needs. The BoWE, on the other hand, lags behind in certain areas, such as the assessment of stakeholder information needs and the regular provision of information products. The BoH demonstrates a robust approach to data dissemination and has clear guidelines in place, while the BoE excels in ensuring widespread access to information products and utilizing data for decision-making. However, all three bureaus face challenges related to data quality, reporting feedback, and the alignment of information products with stakeholders' needs.

Table 10: Access and use of data in the three bureaus

Lead institution	Strength	Weakness
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed WASH sector gap - Has regional strategic plan - Regularly disseminates reports to data providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did not address stakeholder information needs - Data use plans lack detail - Data quality issues - Provides information products only upon request.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed stakeholder information needs - Has regional strategic plan - Regularly disseminates information products to data providers - Receives feedback from data processors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occasional information product dissemination - Need for additional assessment of partner needs - Limited guidelines on data use - Restrictions on data/information access.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed stakeholder information needs - Regional strategic plan with data use plans - Regularly disseminates information products - Receives information products from data processors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited data guidelines - Restricted access to data/information products.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Water and Energy:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of WASH stakeholder needs to ensure that information products are tailored to their specific requirements.
2. Enhance the data collection, management and dissemination process by implementing a systematic and regular reporting mechanism, addressing data quality issues, and actively sharing reports with stakeholders.
3. Establish mechanisms to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the usefulness and relevance of information products.
4. Develop and implement guidelines for the analysis, presentation, accessibility, and use of data to improve data utilization at the regional level.
5. Strengthen the use of technical and financial M&E data in assessing performance and making informed management decisions.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health:

1. Expand the dissemination of information products beyond data providers to reach a wider variety of stakeholders regularly.
2. Improve the feedback loop by actively encouraging stakeholders to provide insights on the reports and information products received.
3. Enhance the assessment of partner needs and explore effective mechanisms for disseminating information based on those needs.
4. Develop comprehensive guidelines to support the analysis, presentation, accessibility, and use of data at the regional level.

Recommendations for the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Education:

1. Ensure that regular information products meet the information needs of WASH stakeholders, based on a thorough assessment.
2. Strengthen the dissemination of information products through various channels such as social media, leaflets, posters, and other appropriate means.
3. Utilize MIS tools effectively to enhance the accessibility and utilization of data and information products.
4. Continuously update and improve the MIS manual/guideline to provide clear guidance on data analysis, presentation, and use.
5. Foster collaboration with other bureaus and stakeholders to enable access to their data/information products and promote data sharing practices.

Overall, it is recommended for all bureaus to establish a central database with defined access rights, ensuring easy access to data/information products for lead agency staff and government stakeholders. Additionally, encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing among the bureaus can contribute to the improvement of data access and use across the sector.

Findings and Recommendations

Summary of findings

In total, over 20 individuals helped determine the responses to over 100 questions across the nine components used in this Scoping Study. A simple traffic-light scoring for each component and across each of the WASH service delivery areas has been used to generate a graphic. This shows, overwhelmingly, that the M&E related to rural and urban water supply faces more significant challenges than other components of WASH. Although there are important distinctions and differences, the M&E practices related to sanitation, hygiene, and WASH in health care facilities score similarly to those of WASH in schools. This suggests there are important lessons that the BoWE can learn from the Bureaus of Health and Education, in relation to WASH M&E.

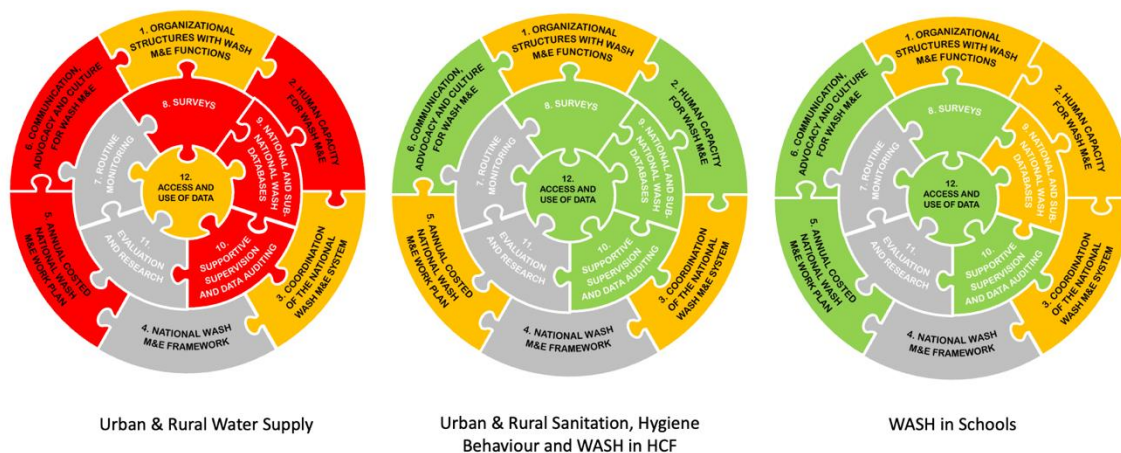


Figure 3: Result of the enabling environment assessment

The scoping study on the WASH M&E system in the Amhara Region has provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. Many successes were observed throughout the study, including the commitment and active participation of key stakeholders from BoWE, BoE, BoH, BDU, BoF and other local partners. The study also highlighted the presence of monitoring systems in each sub-sector, with core indicators being monitored to assess the performance of WASH services. While successes were evident, the study also identified a number of challenges within the WASH M&E system. Common challenges across the sub-sectors include human capacity limitations, coordination issues, data management deficiencies, and inadequate utilization of evaluation findings.

Recommendations

A number of opportunities for future improvement and system strengthening have been identified. Based on the findings of the scoping study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the WASH M&E system in the Amhara Region:

1. Enhance organizational structures: Each bureau should address staffing shortages and recruit experts in data management to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation capacities.
2. Invest in human capacity development: Comprehensive M&E training programs should be developed, adequate budgets allocated, and clear workflows established to enhance human capacity for WASH M&E in each sub-sector.
3. Improve coordination and communication: Effective mechanisms for report exchanging, stakeholder communication, and meeting frequency should be established to enhance coordination among the bureaus involved in the regional WASH M&E system.
4. Enhance planning and resource allocation: Develop annual costed WASH M&E work plans with specific cost allocations for monitoring and evaluation activities, ensuring adequate resources are secured for effective implementation.
5. Strengthen communication and advocacy: Implement comprehensive communication plans, develop information products, and provide support to decision makers to improve communication, advocacy, and the culture of WASH M&E within each bureau.
6. Enhance routine monitoring and surveys: Develop regional guidelines, improve data systems and processes, strengthen data quality control measures, and ensure the availability of necessary supplies and equipment for routine monitoring. Additionally, expand surveys, aligning them with the national/regional M&E framework, to gather essential data for monitoring and evaluating WASH programs.
7. Establish functional databases: Develop a functional database for the Bureau of Water, improve IT equipment and infrastructure, explore the possibility of a sector-wide database or joint reporting function, and minimize reliance on manual documentation for the Bureau of Education. These actions will improve data management and contribute to more effective planning and evaluation of WASH programs.
8. Promote access and use of data: Conduct stakeholder needs assessments, improve data dissemination processes, establish feedback mechanisms, develop guidelines for data analysis and use, and establish a central database with defined access rights. These measures will enable policymakers, planners, and practitioners to utilize data effectively for evidence-based decision-making and improved WASH service delivery.
9. Costed WASH M&E Plan: The results of this Scoping Study should be used as the basis for the development of a costed WASH M&E action plan for the Amhara Region. The cost planning should be a participatory process to collectively plan for addressing the critical gaps highlighted in this report. The contents of the costed action plan should include details of the regional WASH M&E plan, costed activities, detailed implementation instructions, and a framework for use in monitoring the M&E plan. The document should include detailed estimated costs and financial needs in a format which can be readily used by individual bureaus and departments.

Specific, sector-level recommendations from each of the nine components are presented below.

Table 11: Summaries of the detailed recommendations within each of the nine components discussed

	BoWE	BoH	BoE
Organizational Structures with WASH M&E Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of comprehensive job descriptions. • Fill the vacant M&E positions. • Recruit experts in data supply and database management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen technical support for the WASH case team. • Prioritize coordination among different departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share learning and best practices. • Improve utilization of evaluation findings.
Human Capacity for WASH M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive M&E training program. • Allocate adequate budgets for capacity building initiatives. • Establish a clear workflow and provide necessary tools to M&E staff. • Strengthen coordination and collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate sufficient budgetary resources for M&E-related training. • Enhance supervision and mentorship activities. • Improve coordination both internally within the BoH and externally with other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align budget planning with the identified capacity gaps and ensure that the necessary resources are allocated. • Develop detailed capacity building plans. • Strengthen internal and external coordination.
Coordination of the Regional WASH M&E System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanisms for effective report exchanging and communication. • Develop and maintain an updated inventory of stakeholders for WASH M&E. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address challenges related to inconsistent meeting schedules and limited resource allocation. • Enhance member attendance and partner participation through motivation and incentive mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the participation in the regional WASH M&E TWG.
Annual Costed Regional WASH M&E Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive regional WASH M&E plan that aligns with the national guidelines. • Enhance the inclusion of M&E activities in the annual plan. • Allocate specific time frames for the implementation of M&E activities and assign clear responsibilities. • Improve resource allocation for M&E. • Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders and partners in the development of the regional WASH M&E work plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop M&E workplan based on the achievements and progress of the previous year's activities. • Facilitate active involvement of stakeholders and partners. • Enhance the inclusion of M&E activities related to surveys, data collection, analysis, and reporting in the annual costed work plan. • Secure adequate funding for the current year's M&E workplan. • Strengthen coordination and communication between the regional bureau and health offices in the implementation of the work plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the costed M&E work plan with the regional M&E work plan. • Include activities in the work plan that focus on surveys, data collection, databases, and audits. • Ensure the annual costed work plan includes specific activities with allocated time frames and assigned leads for implementation. • Advocate for sufficient resources, both human and financial capacities. • Enhance the participation of partners and stakeholders in the development of the work plan.

Communication, Advocacy and Culture for WASH M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen coordination and collaboration among ONWP, national-level PME, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan. Invest in the development of information products. Provide necessary support and resources to ensure decision makers, directors, and managers prioritize and utilize WASH M&E information products effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and accessibility of WASH M&E information products. Strengthen the involvement of M&E personnel in management and planning teams. Advocate for the inclusion of M&E policies and strategies within regional WASH policy and development plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the availability of information products. Promote the use of updated and reliable information for decision making. Advocate for the development of a specific M&E policy to address the absence of a dedicated policy for the M&E section.
Routine Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement regional guidelines for data collection procedures. Strengthen data quality control measures. Allocate resources to improve the availability of necessary supplies and equipment. Provide training and capacity-building programs for staff. Establish a regional database for management and accessibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and implement regional guidelines for data collection procedures. Strengthen the existing data quality control system to address gaps and ensure data accuracy and reliability. Ensure the availability of sufficient supplies and equipment. Conduct training sessions for staff on the use of standardized data collection and reporting forms. Strengthen the feedback mechanisms for reconciling discrepancies in reports and improving data quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and disseminate regional guidelines for data collection procedures. Enhance the data quality control system, including regular monitoring and gap identification. Allocate resources to ensure the availability of necessary supplies, equipment, budget, and vehicles. Conduct training programs for staff to ensure proper utilization of standardized data collection. Establish effective coordination mechanisms to ensure data quality.
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines and manuals for data collection in surveys to ensure consistency and quality. Establish a system to regularly update records of WASH-related surveys. Design and conduct surveys for behavioral components, water quality at service points, and fecal sludge management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure data collected in surveys adhere to standardized protocols and are of high quality. Share best practices and lessons learned with other bureaus to promote cross-learning and collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the alignment of surveys with national standards. Conduct surveys for water quality at service points in schools.
Regional WASH Databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a functional database for capturing and storing data related to WASH programs. Improve IT equipment and infrastructure, including 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance data security and IT policies to ensure the protection and integrity of data. Strengthen user support services to enhance the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies to minimize reliance on manual documentation and promote the use of digital platforms for

	<p>server capacity, essential equipment, and computers at the woreda level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement quality control mechanisms to ensure accurate data capture and analysis. 	<p>accessibility and usability of the database.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address gaps in equipment and infrastructure availability. 	<p>data sharing and communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate support services for maintaining and updating the IT equipment and infrastructure.
Access and Use of Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive assessment of WASH stakeholder needs. • Enhance the data collection, management and dissemination process. • Establish mechanisms to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the usefulness and relevance of information products. • Develop and implement guidelines for the analysis, presentation, accessibility, and use of data. • Strengthen the use of technical and financial M&E data in assessing performance and making informed management decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand dissemination of information products beyond data providers to reach a wider variety of stakeholders regularly. • Improve the feedback loop by actively encouraging stakeholders to provide insights into the reports and information products received. • Enhance the assessment of partner needs and explore effective mechanisms for disseminating information based on those needs. • Develop comprehensive guidelines to support the analysis, presentation, accessibility, and use of data at the regional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular information products meet the information needs of WASH stakeholders, based on a thorough assessment. • Strengthen the dissemination of information products. • Utilize MIS tools effectively to enhance the accessibility and utilization of data and information products. • Update and improve the MIS guideline to provide clear guidance on data analysis, presentation, and use. • Foster collaboration with other bureaus and stakeholders.

In conclusion, the scoping study has provided a comprehensive assessment of the WASH M&E system in the Amhara Region. It has highlighted the successes and challenges within the water, health, and education sub-sectors, and proposed recommendations to strengthen the system. By implementing these recommendations, the regional WASH M&E system can be enhanced, leading to improved monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making in the Amhara Region. The findings of this study should serve as a basis for further research, collaboration, and action to ensure sustainable and equitable access to WASH services for all communities in the region.

Visiting address

Golagul Towers Building
Bole Sub-city
Woreda 4
House No. 813/814
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Ethiopia@ircwash.org

www.ircwash.org/ethiopia