

IRC

JUNE 2022

Monitoring Report 2021

As submitted by IRC to the Directorate-General for International Cooperation of The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Supporting water sanitation
and hygiene services for life

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Abbreviations

A4C	Agenda for Change	PLANASA	National Water Supply and Sanitation Plan
AFD	Agence Française de Développement	PTPS	Para Todos, Por Siempre (Everyone, Forever)
ANAM	Asutifi North Amonidie Mpontuo initiative	QIS	Qualitative Information System
CBO	Community Based Organisation	RWSN	Rural Water Supply Network
CN-CIEPA	Coalition Nationale pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement, Mali	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CRS	Catholic Relief Services	SNNP	Somali and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
CWSA	Community Water and Sanitation Agency	ToC	Theory of Change
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ECG	Espace Culturel Gambidi	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning	UWASNET	Uganda Water and Sanitation Network
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
HEWASA	Health through Water and Sanitation	WASH FIT	Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool
HPMA	Hand Pump Mechanics Association	WFP	Water For People
HR	Human Resources	WHO	World Health Organization
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative	WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control	WSUP	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management	WWW	World Water Week
JJM	Jal Jeevan Mission		
JMP	Joint WHO/UNICEF Monitoring Programme		
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		
NWSC	National Water and Sewerage Corporation		
O&M	Operations and Management		
ODF	Open Defecation Free		
ONEA	Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement		
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation		

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Executive summary

In the fifth and final year of our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the fruits of collective impact are coming to bear.

Despite increasing fragility in several of our focus countries, and the unrelenting stress on health and governance systems posed by COVID-19, our local and national partnerships have persevered to attain short-term wins and position ourselves for accelerating progress in the years to come.

Our partner districts have demonstrated that collective action, joined-up planning processes and empowered local government can redirect resources where they are needed most, while increasing spending efficiency and collaboratively seeking out additional resources. While staff turnover and competing priorities are still a challenge, master plans and the better monitoring of both expenditure and service delivery have helped local leadership to better direct investments toward the pursuit of SDG 6 while ensuring that annual activities are supportive of multi-annual and long-term goals. There is still a shortage of funding in government budgets as well as inadequate external support.

In Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Uganda, our partner districts have been heralded as examples by national level leaders; here and in Ethiopia, Niger, and Mali, IRC has been tapped to support regional and national institutions to transform in order to meet national objectives and to better respond to districts' needs. In Honduras, we invested in documenting the local systems change achieved with Para Todos Por Siempre (PTPS) to prepare for more evidence-based national influencing efforts in the years to come. These partner districts provide proof that local governments, when supported, can champion a movement to provide universal and sustainable WASH services. Furthermore, our experiences in these districts have helped us pilot and prove innovations, policies, and models that can be implemented and scaled across entire regions or countries.

In Ghana, Asutifi North District is on track to achieve SDG 6, but nationally there is still a long way to go. In Uganda and Burkina Faso, partnership and expansion of professional, utility provided, services are rapidly accelerating access to safely managed water services for significant parts of the population. In India, where there is high-level political commitment to achieving safely managed water and sanitation services, there is still much to learn about translating this commitment into genuine reform and change at decentralised levels where service delivery ultimately takes place.

Despite the progress in professionalising water services, the critical sanitation services which are essential to securing the full-scale health benefits that come with a water source are still lacking. Inequality persists and across our partner districts, at least one third of the population still lacks reliable access to an even basic water source near the home or at school and in the local health care centres.

We know that technical support is not enough; that we need to move beyond supporting systems strengthening and towards driving genuine lasting systems change; and that the professionalisation of the sector is the only long-term solution to chronic under-funding, poor service quality and lack of sustainability. In 2021 we formalised our programme for political influencing and invested in building our own skills in campaigning to increase the political status and public investment in water and sanitation services. We have formalised our partnerships with civil society networks, media outlets, and major public institutions while also strengthening our contribution as a member of Sanitation and Water For All (SWA).

Regional and global partnerships have increased IRC's impact and broadened our expertise. We have also become more ambitious. Building on the momentum from the Agenda For Change, in 2021 we formalised the Destination 2030 Alliance with Water For People whereby we will deliver a shared strategy based on a shared Theory of Change and targets for local, country, and global impact over the coming years. To accelerate progress in Africa, IRC and Water For People have partnered with UNICEF to drive systems strengthening across 22 countries.

While signs of change are many, with only eight years to go, the world is off track to deliver its 2030 targets. Through collective action in IRC's areas of investments, the work of IRC is as important as ever – to challenge the status quo, to develop and test viable models, to demonstrate replicable success, and to call for a radical increase in commitment and action from global leaders.

1. IRC at a glance

WHO'S INVOLVED AND WHAT DID WE INVEST?	WHAT DID WE DO AND WHAT DID WE PRODUCE?	HOW MANY PEOPLE DID WE REACH?
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8 focus country programmes **1** global programme
1 Africa regional programme

15 partner districts, and **16** Para Todos Por Siempre (PTPS) partner municipalities

10 offices around the world

130 staff in our flexible workforce: **35** international staff, **61** in focus countries, **4** interns and **30** associates

115 active programmes and projects, in more than **20** countries as well as at regional and global levels

10,484 days of staff expertise, including **1,285** IRC Consult advisory days spread over **47** assignments

€8.7 million invested from **37** donors and **54** clients

19 district WASH master plans supported

207 capacity-building events co-organised worldwide

107 working groups and learning platforms supported in our focus countries

11 new WASH Systems Academy courses launched and **7** blended learning trainings facilitated

57 research outputs, **4** journal articles published

128 news items and **47** blogs published on our website

18 newsletters and **48** videos

3.6M people in our partner districts

355K people had their basic or safely managed water and **300K** their basic or safely managed sanitation services sustained in our partner districts in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda

16K people who stepped up the water ladder; **6.4K** people who received a higher level of sanitation service

8.7K people attending knowledge sharing and capacity-building events

1,099 participants in WASH Systems Academy courses in **87** countries

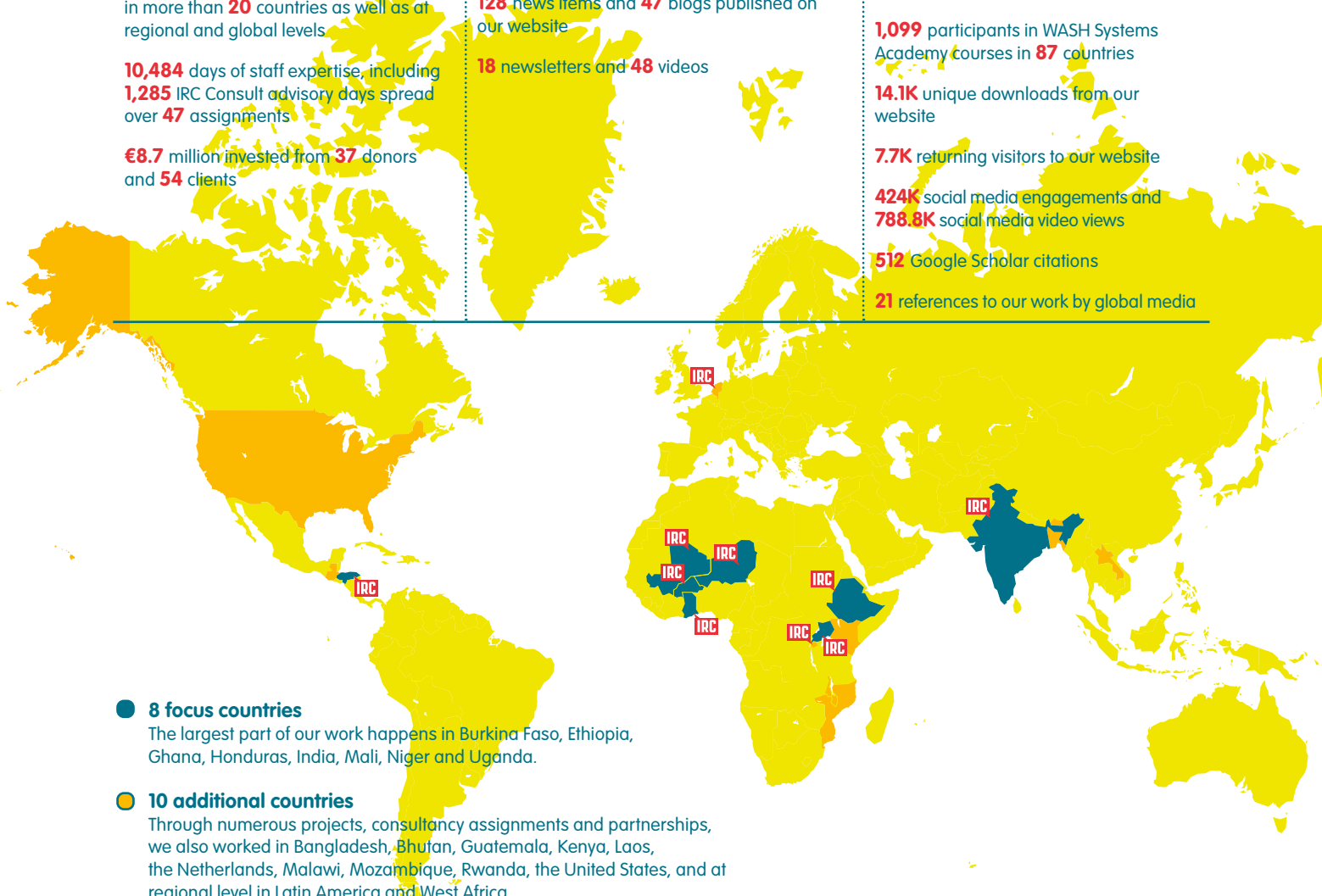
14.1K unique downloads from our website

7.7K returning visitors to our website

424K social media engagements and **788.8K** social media video views

512 Google Scholar citations

21 references to our work by global media



- 8 focus countries**
 The largest part of our work happens in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Mali, Niger and Uganda.
- 10 additional countries**
 Through numerous projects, consultancy assignments and partnerships, we also worked in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Guatemala, Kenya, Laos, the Netherlands, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, the United States, and at regional level in Latin America and West Africa.
- 10 offices around the world**
 We have offices in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Mali, Niger, Rwanda and Uganda, as well as the Netherlands.

2. An introduction to our results framework and monitoring methodology

IRC is dedicated to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6—Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all—and in particular targets 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 (safe water, sanitation and waste water). The SDGs aim to ensure that no one is left behind whilst also lifting the level of services offered.

The year 2021 marked the fifth year in our Strategic Framework 2017-2030, and the final year of our 2017-2021 five year strategy cycle. It was thus dedicated to the strategic reflection on our progress toward 2030 goals, and posed the opportunity to adjust our course through developing our new Destination 2030 strategy. Using IRC's online dashboard and complementary internal dashboards, staff across the organisation were involved in critical analysis, reflective inquiry, and deliberation about the path forward.

This report gives the key results from 2021 and shares some high level insights about the progress and changes made between 2017 and 2021.

IRC's 2017-2021 strategy, and our new Destination 2030 strategy, are guided by a long-term Theory of Change (ToC) and backed by a praxis¹ developed over 54 years of experience. These are founded on the understanding that only strong local and national WASH systems² can provide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services universally and sustainably. IRC's work is focused on developing and strengthening these systems, which in turn improve service quality and sustainability. Figure 1 shows IRC's ToC at its highest level.

IRC works to transform and uplift local systems in districts, communities, and municipalities where service delivery ultimately takes place. As systems thinkers, we understand that these local systems are intertwined with larger regions, watersheds, national and international actors, policies, and markets. IRC intervenes at each of these levels to ensure that our actions achieve maximum leverage to achieve lasting results in both our partner districts as well as at country and international levels. Systems change is neither bottom-up or top-down – it is both.

1. The word praxis means 'theory informed by practice, and practice based on theory' – we find it a useful word to describe our underlying philosophy as a think-and-do-tank.

2. By system we mean much more than just pumps, pipes and concrete. We mean all the people (actors) and things (factors) that need to work together to provide a service over time. A systems based approach is about building and strengthening those systems to the point where they can manage on their own: the true definition of sustainability.

IRC's results framework is designed to assess our impact at each of these levels, while also acknowledging that our interventions should always contribute to a larger change process. Ultimately, all our vertically-integrated systems strengthening work contributes to a more effective service delivery system, improving the health, education and livelihoods of the people in the districts and countries where we work, and around the world (Figure 1).

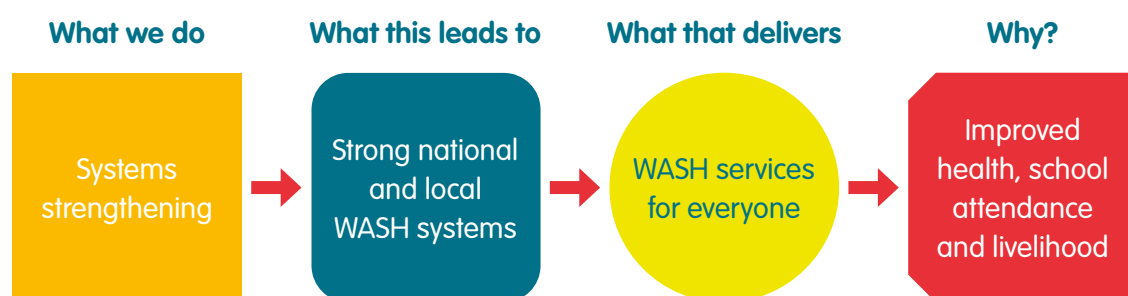


Figure 1: High level Theory of Change for IRC from our 2017-2021 strategy. The detailed Theory of Change is in Annex 1. Also see Figure 3.

Our results framework assesses progress across the spectrum from activities to outputs to outcomes. Internal monitoring in IRC is embedded in our approach to strategy, planning, and adaptation, as well as supporting our horizontal and vertical accountabilities to our partners, funders, and the constituents in the areas where we work.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of our results framework and monitoring methodology under our 2017-2030 Strategic Framework. Chapter 4 gives an overview of progress against these results for each programme in 2021. Chapter 5 focuses specifically on the results achieved with contributions from DGIS funding. Chapter 6 gives an overview of our business performance metrics in 2021, with a focus on the inputs and resources that made programme delivery possible. This report is also publicly available in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), where the financial flows of the DGIS programme funds are reported.

3. Our approach to monitoring

IRC's complete Theory of Change 2017-2030 (Annex 1) describes our vision and guides our actions for achieving the SDG 6 targets. It maps out the intermediate outcomes that we think are most critical for the sector to deliver WASH services, and our proposed contribution to those outcomes. A simplified version is shown in Figure 2.

Theory of change: an overview

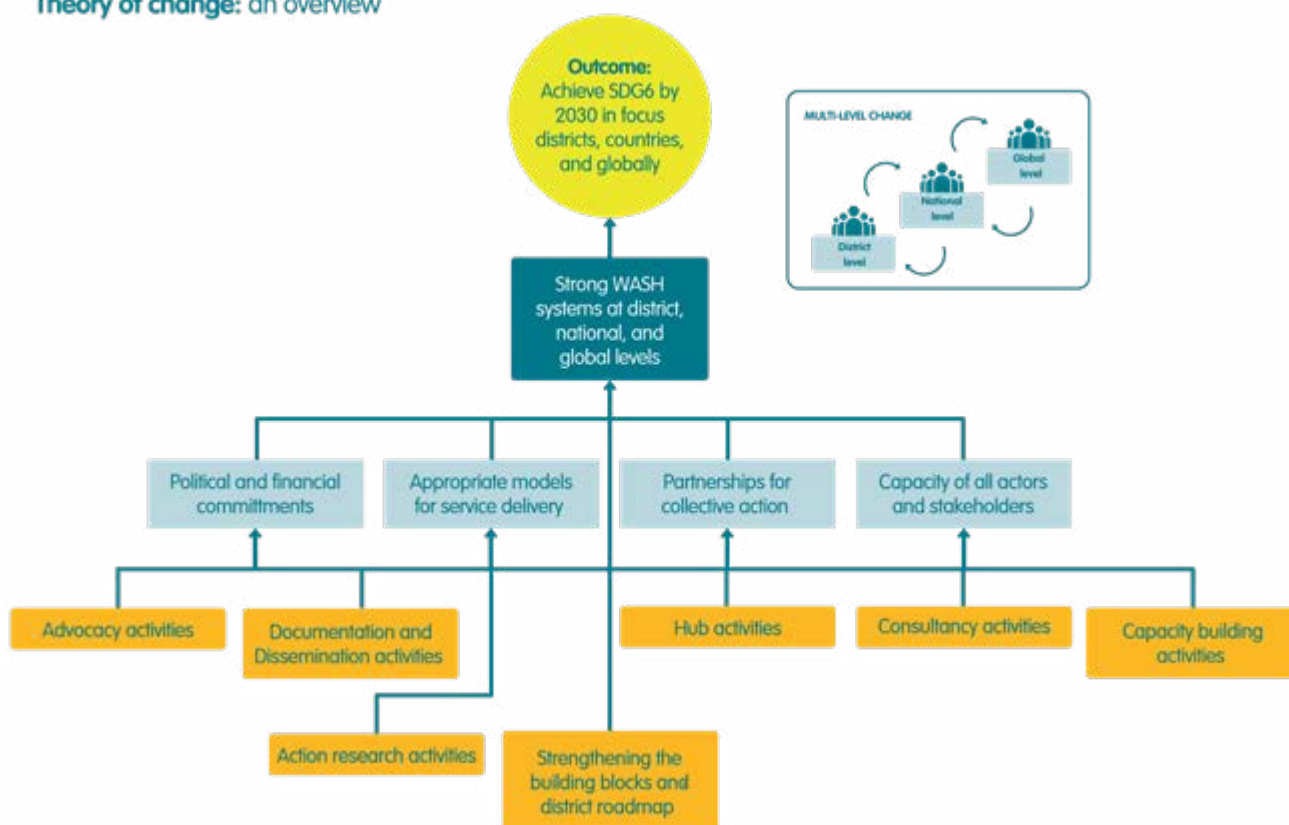


Figure 2: The core elements of the IRC Theory of Change. Activities (yellow boxes) lead to intermediate outcomes (blue) to the outcomes of WASH services for all, in partner districts, focus countries, and globally.

Given the understanding that sector strengthening requires collective action by multiple WASH actors, much of our impact will be in the form of contributing to shared outcomes. In terms of measuring the overall impact of our work, contribution is more important to us than attribution. Our praxis suggests that in order to drive change in a complex system, the actors involved (like ourselves), must hold one another mutually accountable for achieving results that are beyond the control of any single actor.

To ensure IRC is accountable, and to enable us to reflect on our own successes and failures, our results framework assesses our contributions to these results through both qualitative inquiry and assessment of the delivery of key activities and outputs in our annual plans.

We also acknowledge that true systems change takes time – it is often only several years later that the definitive outcome(s) of a set of activities becomes clear. Effective systems strengthening involves ‘driving using the rear-view mirror’ as much as it requires a forward-looking vision. The ToC is both an anchor and a means to describe and systematically question our implementation model.

Following 2021, we will begin reporting against the results framework from our new strategy—Destination 2030—which builds on lessons learned so far while doubling down on our commitment to national, local, and global systems change.

3.1 Programme-level reporting

IRC runs a decentralised family of eight country programmes and a global programme.³ These are delivered by a network of staff in those eight countries and a global team of staff and consultants. In addition, IRC has a ‘New focus countries’ programme that oversees early-stage work in countries to which we are considering expanding.

Each of these programmes has an annual plan that includes key activities and outputs, and an indication of how these support the achievement of annual and medium-term targets. In addition to IRC’s programme-level annual plans, we also have planning frameworks specific to the individual projects⁴ that make up our family of programmes. These are specific to each donor or project and may be used and referenced in this report, but they are IRC’s main focus.

Each programme team reports and reflects on the implementation of its annual plan through a process of collaborative reflection. These reflections are founded on the results delivered by IRC’s monitoring tools as described in the following sections and are complemented by analysis of national and global data sources and the information and insights obtained from different projects.

In the following sections we describe the main components of our monitoring approach that form the foundation of our reporting.

3. In 2021 a regional programme in Africa was initiated and regional programming in South Asia and Latin America is expected to be initiated in 2022.

4. IRC is a 100% project-funded organisation. In 2021 this was € 8,684,320. At the core of our social enterprise business model is aligning these projects (and the clients and donors behind them) to our country and global strategies. As such, our clients and donors form part of our broader programme partnership (and we of theirs).

3.2 Activity and output monitoring

All programmes report on the implementation (successes and failures) of their key activities and outputs for the year. In addition, all programmes report on a set of numeric output indicators that help us track our scope and reach as an organisation. These output indicators include: published outputs, people trained, platforms and networks facilitated, and several indicators on the audiences reached through our communications. These results are summarised in the 'IRC at a glance' table (chapter 1).

Annex 3 gives details on progress with key activities and outputs of IRC programmes in 2021.

3.3 Outcome monitoring

In view of our Theory of Change, both country and global programmes measure progress against annual and medium-term outcome targets. These are the intermediate steps, and the necessary changes, which we deem necessary parts of the process of public systems transformation. The specific targets vary among countries, but all align with our organisational Theory of Change.

Progress in country programmes is measured according to the outcomes listed below. The first four are seen as intermediate outcomes, in service of achieving the higher level outcomes of strong WASH systems, and sustainable and universal WASH services as reflected in our Theory of Change.

- Strong political and financial commitment⁵.
- Strong partnerships for change.
- Strong service delivery models.
- Strong capacity of key actors.
- Strong WASH systems (the blue box in Figure 1), measured using nine building blocks at district and national level.
- Sustainable and universal WASH services, measured using service levels within partner district at national level (green box in Figure 1).

Progress in IRC's global programme is measured against three main outcomes.

- Strong political and financial commitment (global actors).
- Presence of a range of fit-for-purpose service delivery models.
- Strong capacity of the key actors.

Monitoring of these outcomes is undertaken using four main methods.

5. In addition to QIS, quantitative indicators are used to track financial commitment and the availability of resources for WASH in focus districts.

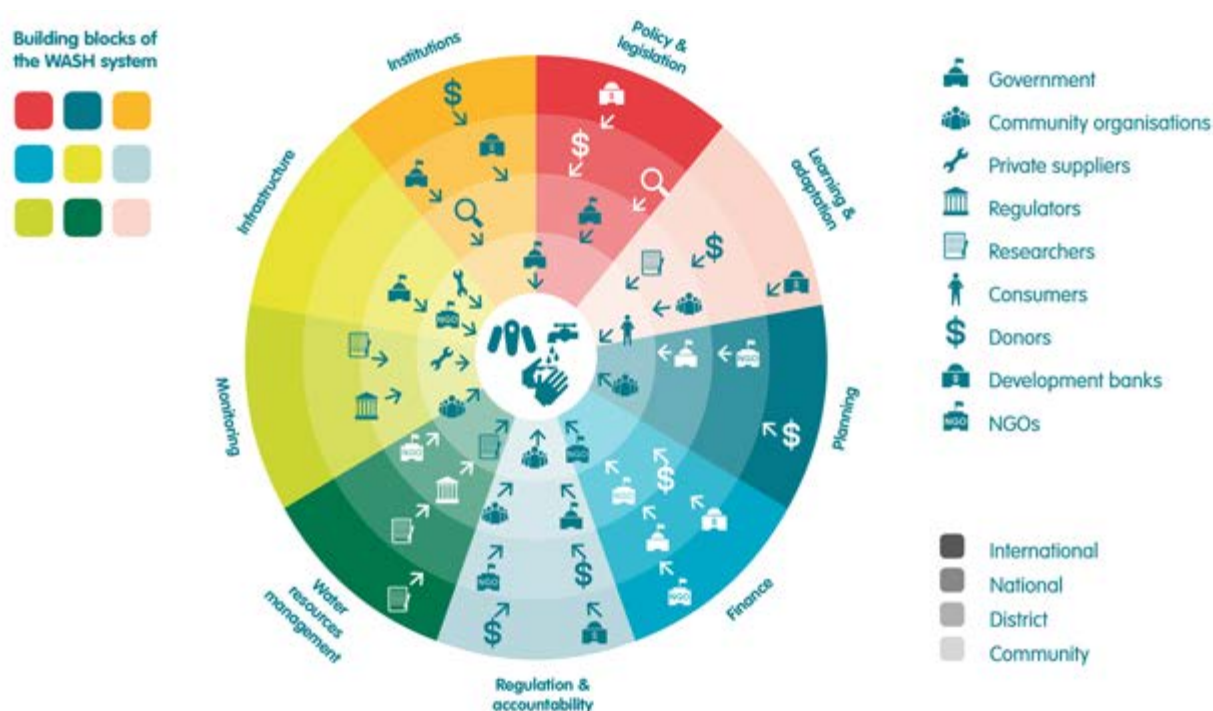
Method 1: Qualitative Information Systems

The first four intermediate outcomes are measured using Qualitative Information System (QIS) ladders² and are scored separately at both district and national levels. Modified indicators are used for global level. The QIS ladders use ordinal scoring scales to convert qualitative information (from participatory appraisals) into numbers, enabling capture of rich descriptive information as well as semi-quantitative scores to help track change over time. These are the 'how' of delivering strong WASH systems and change within the WASH system.

Method 2: Monitoring the strength of national and district WASH systems: scoring the WASH system building blocks⁶

The fifth outcome of the IRC Theory of Change is the overall strength of the WASH system. The building blocks are a way of breaking down the complexity of the WASH system and looking at it through different lenses that allow it to be more easily understood and measured. Each of the nine WASH system building blocks is evaluated and scored at the district and national level using a set of 3-5 Likert scale⁷ indicators (benchmarks representing the key aspects of that building block). An abbreviated set of indicators is used to specifically assess the systems for hygiene and extra-household settings.

Figure 3: The building blocks of the WASH system involve a complex network of stakeholders at local, national, and international levels.



Aligning stakeholders toward sustainable service in 6 Focus countries and 9 partner districts: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Uganda. And in 12 Other countries through IRC Consult and Global Hub based in the Netherlands

- The nine WASH building blocks as defined by IRC are: institutions and coordination; policy and legislation; regulation/accountability; finance; planning; monitoring; infrastructure; water resource management; and learning and adaptation. For more information, see [Huston and Moriarty \(2018\)](#).
- A Likert scale is a common rating scale which enables balanced response, in our case, ranging from 0 to 5. The benchmark statements for the building blocks elements are scored from 0 (non-existent) to 5 (exists, and fully applied).

Method 3: WASH services monitoring

In partner districts and focus countries, IRC programmes strive to follow the SDG 6 indicators using the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) definitions and methodology, and to align with national monitoring systems wherever possible. The JMP identifies a service ladder whose rungs consist of five distinct service levels: surface water; unimproved; limited; basic; and, safely managed. Like the JMP, we use a combination of household surveys, infrastructure, water quality, and administrative data to estimate the proportion of the population being served at each level. Criteria include technology type, protection from contaminants, distance from home, and availability.

Each level up from 'surface water' or 'no access' **represents a significant improvement in the safety and security of the supply**. There are several models and tools that can contribute to service improvement, so we monitor with the aim to understand the effectiveness of different strategies, and to identify gaps where services are not improving. We are driving progress towards universal access to safe services, and eventually 'safely managed' services by using a variety of context-appropriate strategies. Safely managed services are in theory more sustainable, but it is by evaluating these services in the context of their wider support systems (Method 2) that we have sight of their long term sustainability and the likelihood that they will receive continuous upgrading.

The JMP definitions do not always perfectly match national norms and standards. Despite this, we believe that for consistency and ease of comparison across countries and programmes, it makes sense to use JMP wherever possible. At national level, we draw our data from the country-led monitoring system using both asset and household data. We collect this data from both JMP and national data sets (from ministries responsible for water and sanitation and/or national statistics agencies).

At district level, we work with government partners in the focus districts to adapt support and strengthen their own monitoring systems, and to bring these in line with JMP and national methodologies to enable the most resource-efficient and accurate methodology possible. Where the data from these sources is insufficient, we supplement government monitoring with our own survey data.

For more information on the JMP methodology, go to <https://washdata.org/monitoring/methods>.

Method 4: Outcome Harvesting

Starting in 2019, our programmes use Outcome Harvesting to supplement the monitoring against predefined indicators. Outcome Harvesting is a tool that helps us identify the unexpected and emergent changes we are contributing to. Outcome Harvesting is part of the solution that helps to fill in data between the big-picture overview that other methods give (e.g. service levels, building block analysis etc.) by capturing narratives around systems change.

Outcome Harvesting categorises changes into outcomes, significance of the outcome and the contribution of a certain partner. It is done through facilitated reflection to identify the major programme results (positive or negative) followed by a rigorous follow-up process to interrogate, validate, quantify, and document evidence for the identified outcomes. A summary of the scores and outcomes harvested are presented in Annex 4.

In the next chapter, integrated findings from activity, output, and outcome monitoring are presented in narrative form to highlight programme progress and challenges from 2021. Tabulated data are available in the Annexes, and you can interact with the data directly using our online dashboard at <https://www.ircwash.org/data-behind-our-work>.

4. Progress against outcomes in 2021

This chapter discusses the status of the overall progress of WASH systems strengthening and service level improvements in IRC's focus countries and globally. This is followed by a brief section on each country programme and the global programme.

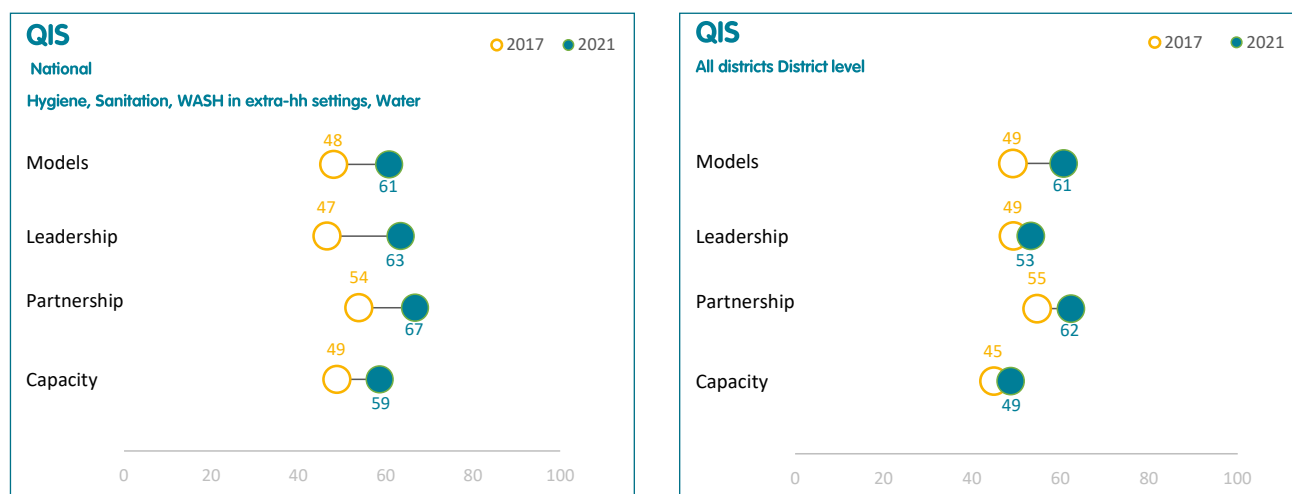
4.1 Progress on WASH Systems Strengthening

We know that systems change takes time. IRC has measured the strength of district systems in its partner districts and focus countries since 2017. In 2020 we launched our [results dashboard](#) and in 2021 we upgraded it while continuing to champion its internal use for planning and reflection processes.

In the fifth year of our 2017-2021 Strategic Framework, we are excited to see measurable changes across many of our focus countries. These shifts started to appear in the past two years and, though still further along than 2017, we see some regression from 2020 to 2021 which we associate with the challenges and shifts in national priorities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Figures 4 and 5 show progress on our intermediate outcomes which reflect the behaviours and dynamics that influence how change takes place. Figures 4 and 5 show the strength of the WASH systems building blocks, which reflect essential parts of the system. These are the *what* of the system which must be strengthened in order to achieve sustainable service delivery.

When looking at the combined results for the intermediate outcomes at national level in focus countries (Figure 4) and in partner districts (Figure 5), the greatest progress can be seen in the strength of partnerships in achieving SDG 6. This is evidenced in new partnerships to improve monitoring and data use such as that with the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, UNICEF, WHO, and the National Institute of Statistics in Niger, and the development of more collaborative and inclusive budgeting processes in Uganda. **In its Hub role, IRC has helped facilitate partnerships by convening diverse actors, presenting evidence and justification for new ways of working, and helping to empower actors to take the initiative to formalise new relationships.**

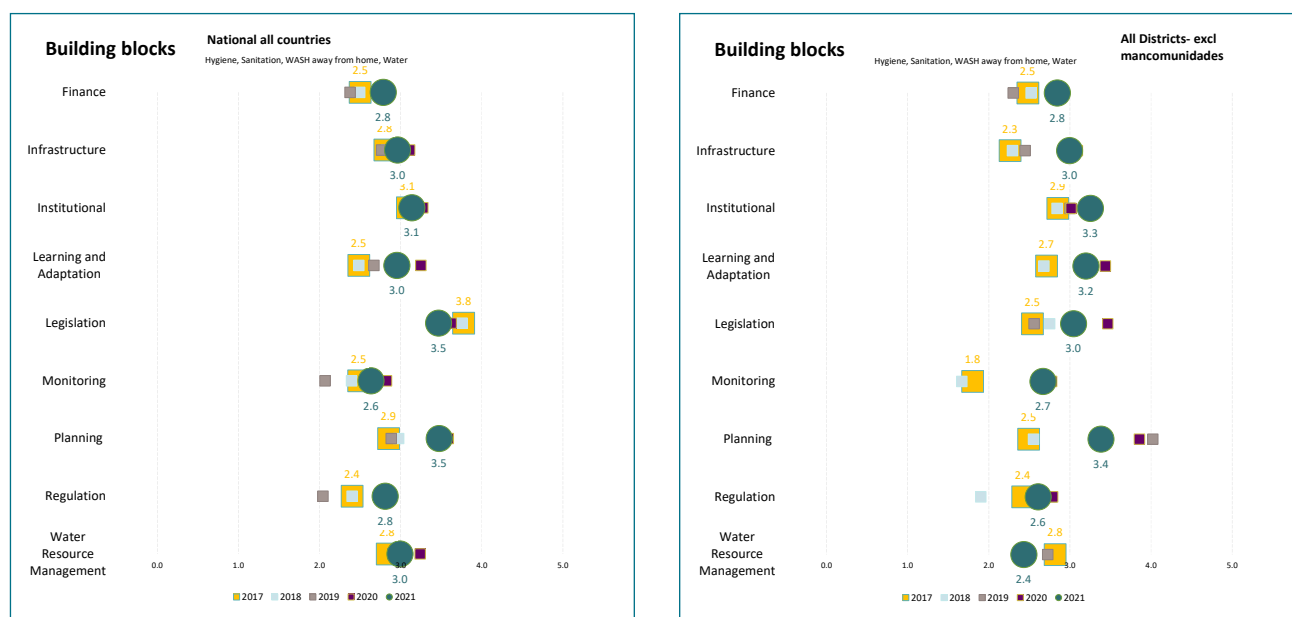
A positive trend is also seen in political and financial commitment to WASH (leadership) and in the capacity of key actors. However, this is still inadequate given the drastic increases required. We are surprised to see that proWe sees a gap between verbal commitments and the ability to back them with financial resources and action. Even where high level commitment is available, capacity constraints prevent its translation into improved performance and efficiency.



Figures 4 and 5: The average score of IRC intermediate outcome indicators for the capacity of key actors, political and financial commitment from leaders, strong partnerships, and the availability and use of service delivery models that are capable of delivering on SDG 6. These are measured using Qualitative Information Systems at national (Figure 4) and district (Figure 5) levels.

From 2017 to 2021, there is a positive trend showing improvements in the WASH systems building blocks at both national and district levels (Figures 4 and 5). In particular, district monitoring systems and processes for learning and adaptation have measurably increased in partner districts, which is associated with IRC's interventions and support in this area. Various aspects of infrastructure development and maintenance have also improved, and the longer-term impact on service levels is starting to show, especially in Asutifi North (Ghana), Banfora (Burkina Faso), and Kabarole (Uganda). Regulation has improved at national level but its implications on service delivery and decentralised implementation in districts is slower to change - but is still moving in the right direction.

Across IRC's focus countries, progress in our partner districts is being made at a faster rate than at the national level. This is particularly true for partner districts in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Uganda, where the combination of political commitment and long-term IRC support and partnership have catalysed change. Still, decentralised implementation of national policies and plans is a persistent systems challenge, meaning that national change can take time to materialise, as can concrete changes in resource allocation, capacity, and behaviour within district service delivery systems.



Figures 6 and 7: The average score of the WASH systems building blocks at national (Figure 6) and district (Figure 7) levels in IRC focus countries from 2017-2021.

The largest improvements in IRC partner districts are seen in infrastructure, monitoring, and planning. While IRC's research, technical assistance and influencing work varies across contexts, these building blocks have been a priority in our district master planning approach and are in line with the Agenda For Change [District Roadmap](#). Our interventions at both district and national levels are based on our 2017 baseline assessments and on the periodic updates and progress reviews that we conduct with government and partners in each context.

There are also some examples of no progress being made, for example as a result of promising monitoring initiatives in 2017 not coming to fruition by 2021, or changes in legislation. This has also been affected by the strain on resources and shifts in political attention associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

A positive trend in structural aspects of financing is promising, but has not yet been matched by quantitative increases in financing for WASH services, making this a key priority for advocacy. Water resource management and monitoring are two of the building blocks that have been either most resistant to change or neglected in IRC's focus countries. While IRC continues to champion these efforts, many monitoring initiatives have struggled to become operational at scale.

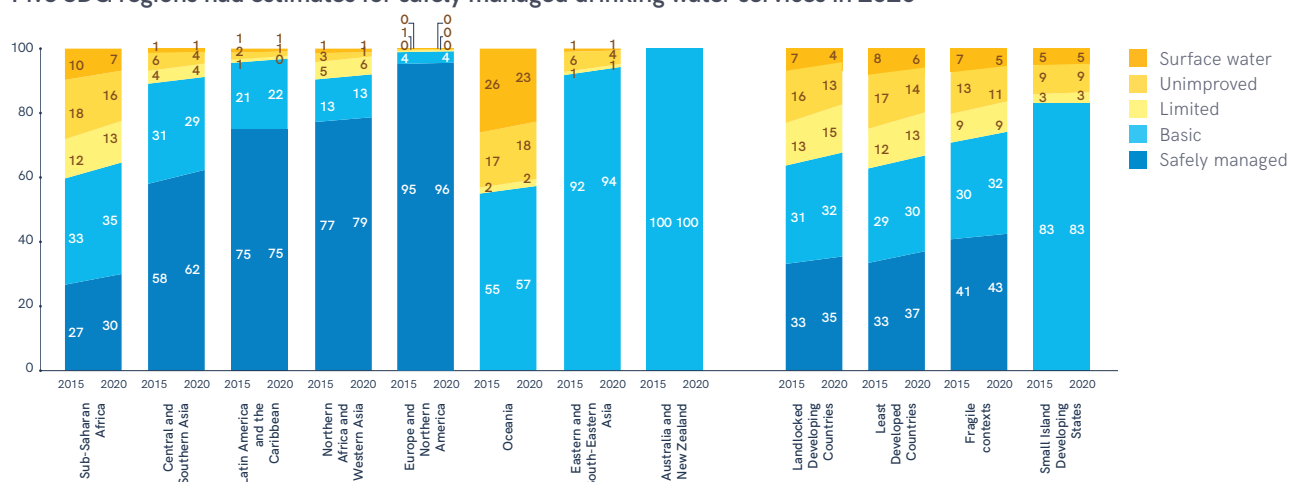
The following country sections elaborate on specific results and challenges in each country from the year 2021.

4.2 Progress in WASH service delivery

The goal of strengthening WASH systems is always to improve the water, sanitation, and hygiene services that citizens are accessing and using. We work to achieve universal and sustainable services in line with the SDG 6 commitments in our partner districts and at national and global levels where we work.

In 2021, the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme published an update report on progress toward SDG 6 at household level. While positive trends are visible in most contexts, sub-Saharan Africa stands out as particularly off-track to reach the 2030 targets (Figure 6).

Five SDG regions had estimates for safely managed drinking water services in 2020



Regional drinking water coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

Figure 8: From JMP 2021 Update report. Available file:///D:/Downloads/jmp-2021-wash-households_3.pdf.

Zooming in to IRC’s partner districts we can see that progress toward SDG 6 can be made within just a few years, where there is the required commitment, capacity, partnerships, master plans and resources. In Asutifi North, Ghana, Kabarole, Uganda, and Banfora, Burkina Faso, there have been increases in both basic and safely managed water services while the total amount of people who are unserved has been reduced. The service level improvements in our partner districts are faster and more significant than those seen at national level—evidence that our investment is working.



Figure 9: Progress towards achieving the 2030 vision in IRC partner districts.

In Asutifi North, we are confident in saying that the district is on track to achieve SDG 6, whereas in Kabarole and Banfora it is still too soon to say if these ambitious goals can be met. For sanitation, Asutifi North is also making rapid progress but none of these districts has yet secured the resources nor developed an operational plan that will put them on track to achieve sanitation service level targets.

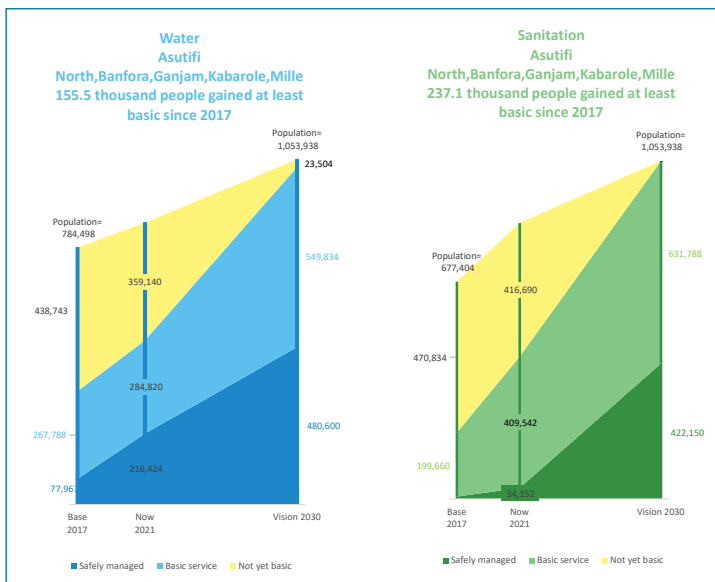


Figure 10: Progress towards achieving the 2030 vision in Asutifi North District, Ghana.

One service delivery model stands out as a clear path toward rapid improvement in water service levels—the drinking water utility with piped services. As described in our [September 2021 paper](#), both public and private utilities are increasingly expanding into the rural milieu formally fraught with handpumps and community management.

By nature, piped networks can increase the efficiency of service delivery and bring it closer or even into the home; and professional operators have the potential, mandate, and motivation to improve operational efficiency and deliver water as a service worthy of payment. In addition to districts and watersheds, we are increasingly looking to the mandates and service areas of utilities as a critical level of the system. Pro-poor policies and public subsidy become essential considerations when looking to tap the rapid growth of utilities and harness it for the mission of reaching unserved populations.

Service delivery models for sanitation, and strategies to support resilient and growth-oriented market systems will be a continued learning area and priority in the years to come.

4.3 Strengthening WASH Systems in IRC focus countries

4.3.1. Burkina Faso



Madame Sika Kaboré, First Lady of Burkina Faso

Partner district
Banfora

IRC BURKINA FASO AT A GLANCE

11 staff, **15** projects, **10** donors,
10 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 1.570 million total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 2,274**
Human Development Index: **rank 182, score 0.452**
Renewable water resource per capita: **683.5m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):

Water: **47%** • Sanitation: **22%** • Hygiene: **9%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Banfora district

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

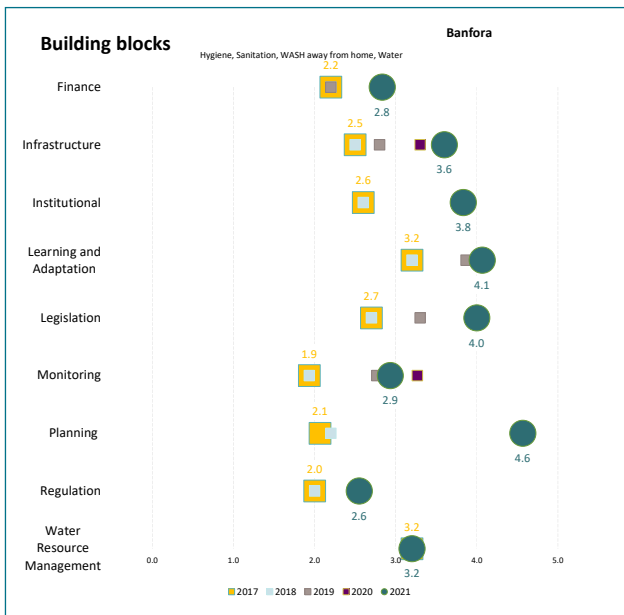


Figure 11: Changes in the scores for WASH Building Blocks in Banfora 2017-2021.

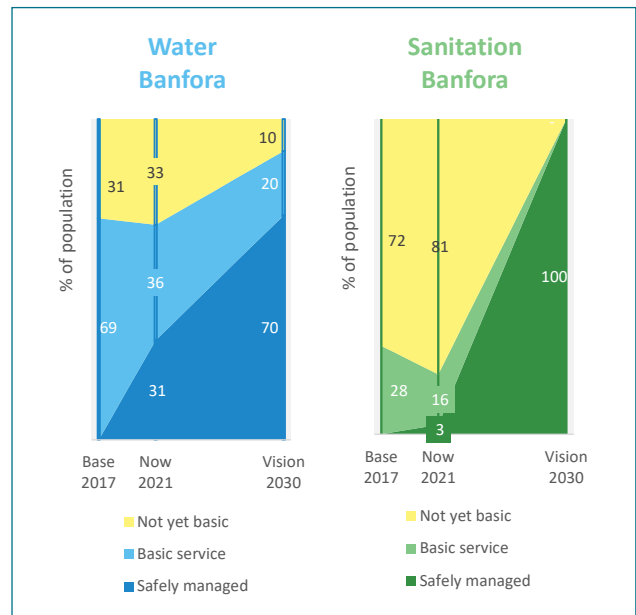


Figure 12: Progress towards the 2030 vision of Banfora district, Burkina Faso (household service levels).

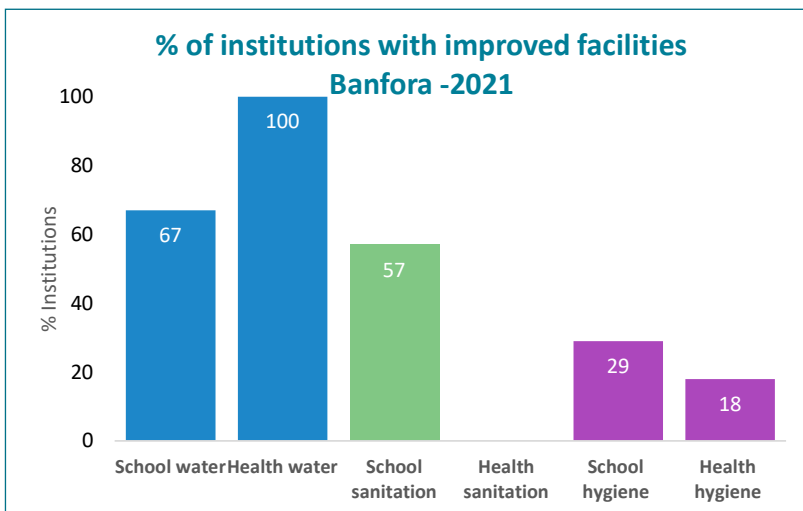


Figure 13: Progress towards the 2030 vision of Banfora district, Burkina Faso (school and health care facility service levels).

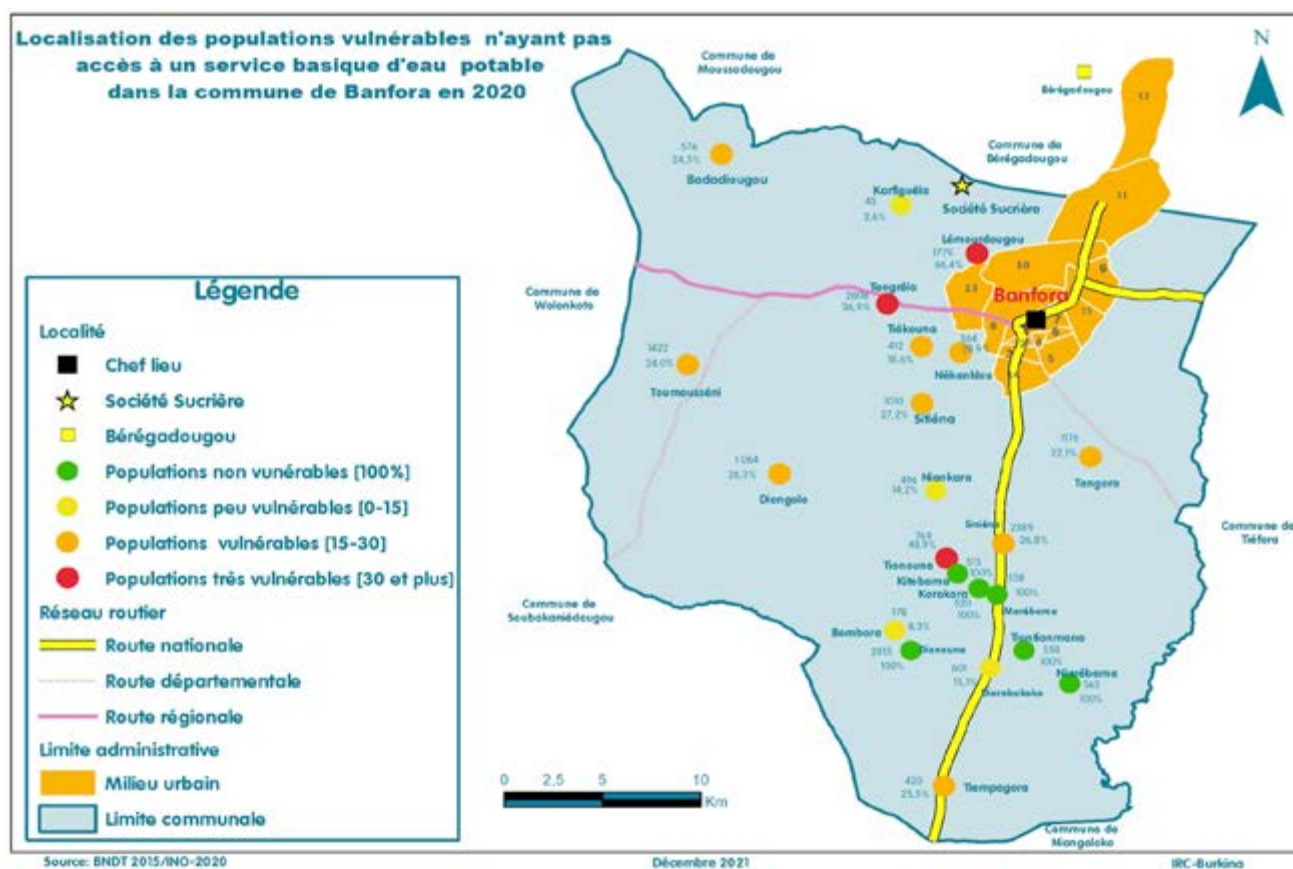


Figure 14: This map visualises people considered vulnerable according to their levels of access to services—limited, unimproved or no service at all—in Banfora, Burkina Faso.

Context

IRC has supported WASH systems strengthening in Burkina Faso with a permanent presence since 2012. IRC Burkina Faso is a consistent, heard and respected voice in supporting local and national level systems change in the country.

Unfortunately, the security situation in Burkina Faso continues to deteriorate and the trajectory toward the SDG 6 2030 agenda showed a downward trend in basic services from 2000-2020 (JMP, 2021). Democratic governance has regressed over the past five years and is coupled with significant capacity gaps in the national public utility ONEA (Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement).

IRC Burkina Faso is now having to adjust its targets and ToC for 2030 since earlier assumptions on minimum levels of governance are not holding up.

District level results

Despite the challenges, from 2018 to 2021 IRC had several successes with the local government in our partner district, Banfora. Our partnership and capacity support helped Banfora's political leadership to launch a master plan for WASH in 2018. The district government is committing its own funds to achieving its 2030 vision, is actively

mobilising resources from financiers, and is aligning the investments of NGOs and partners. Figure 14 shows the positive progress measured in several WASH systems building blocks in Banfora over the past five years.

A 2020 IRC service monitoring shows that the collective action in Banfora helped reach 31% of the district's population with safely managed water services. This was achieved primarily through service provision by the public utility ONEA, with simplified piped water provided by a private operator in one village. Basic supplies are managed by community committees. In terms of sanitation, although there has been a 3% increase in access to a safely managed service, only 28% of the population has access to a basic service and low spending means progress is likely to be outpaced by population growth. Effort is also needed in the area of good hygiene practices.

WASH services in schools and health centres are still a problem and a priority for IRC's intervention. Only 57% of schools and none of the health centres have basic sanitation. In collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), we have tested and documented solutions to improve WASH services in schools and health centres. Continued investment must be prioritised over the next two years to achieve 100% access to basic WASH services in these institutions. While improvements continue, service levels will again be updated to reflect progress by the end of 2022.

Regional and national level results

IRC's campaigns and national influencing initiatives have resulted in public commitment to WASH in health centres and schools from the then First Lady of Burkina Faso and high officials at the Ministries of Water and Sanitation, Health, and Education. In collaboration with UNICEF and WHO, we have championed the codification of international standards for access ramps for people with disabilities, separate male/female latrines, and menstruation hygiene management in national initiatives.

The challenge is translating high level commitment and initiatives into ground level realities and behaviours of implementing actors. IRC and UNICEF supported the Ministry of Water and Sanitation in developing a 2021-2025 plan for knowledge management and capitalisation. In the first stages, Ministry staff were trained to implement and scale up good practices on WASH in schools and health centres, and IRC is supporting the Ministry to update its website and disseminate key information to all stakeholders.

Another success of our national influencing and technical assistance can be seen in ONEA's new medium-term programme. The scope of ONEA's work has been extended to include small towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants. Though not in its formal contract, our work in Banfora shows that this is instrumental in expanding safely managed services throughout the country.

Even with key actors on board, the change in systems for drinking water services, as measured using IRC's building blocks framework (Figure 11) has been slow. Progress on sanitation and hygiene systems has either remained static or declined. While we expect some lag in a systems change process, Burkina Faso's WASH sector shows a large gap between commitment and results. This raises the issue of the sector's efficiency, which suggests the need for a profound reform of the Ministry of Water and Sanitation. Whilst IRC Burkina Faso is respectfully leading the sector toward this understanding, its strengthened working relationship with ONEA has enabled concrete progress to be made even in the shorter term.

Strengthening WASH systems: IRC Burkina Faso’s Change Hub role and what’s next

In 2021, our Hub role for collective action was solidified by shared successes with partners in government, utilities, and with development partners and community based organisations (CBOs). Our expertise in communication, knowledge management, service delivery models, and planning has added value.

In 2022, we hope to: complete the national roadmap for WASH in health centres; finalise district WASH master plans for five new districts; complete four regional strategic plans; and, continue improving water service levels in Banfora. The five master plans were developed with financing from and in partnership with ONEA as part of an agreement between IRC and ONEA to support 16 districts to develop master plans toward universal services by 2030. IRC is also supporting the development of three regional strategic plans for the Centre East, Centre South, and Centre West regions, encompassing a total of 87 districts.

Output in focus

IRC produced a short film that highlights the progress to date in the implementation of Banfora’s WASH strategic plan. Read more and watch the film here: [Towards SDG 6 in Banfora: film highlights progress made :: IRC \(ircwash.org\)](https://www.ircwash.org)

4.3.2 Ethiopia



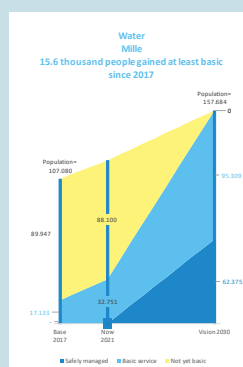
EWTI staff celebrating the completion of their WASH Systems Academy training in Ethiopia

IRC ETHIOPIA AT A GLANCE

13 staff, **20** projects, **11** donors,
34 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 992 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 2,423**
 Human Development Index: **rank 173, score 0.485**
 Renewable water resource per capita: **1,117m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):
 Water: **50%** • Sanitation: **9%** • Hygiene: **8%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Mile district

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

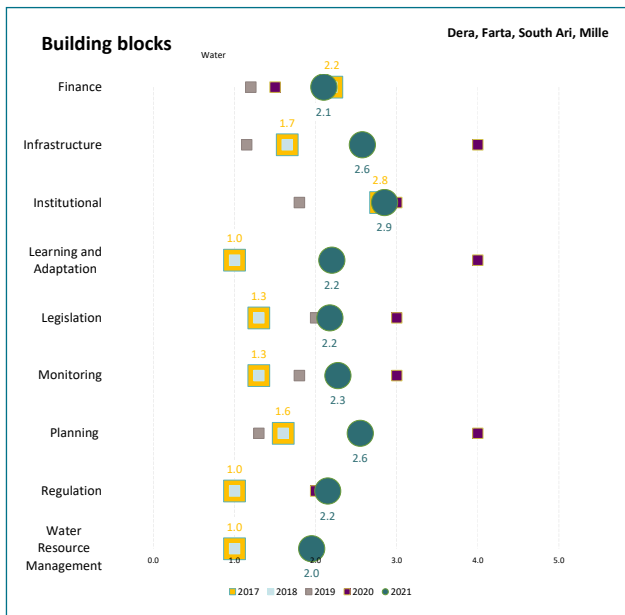


Figure 15: District building block scores from 2017-2021 in Dera, Farta, South Ari, and Mille (combined). For a disaggregated look at each district, see the Annexes or use the filters in our online dashboard.

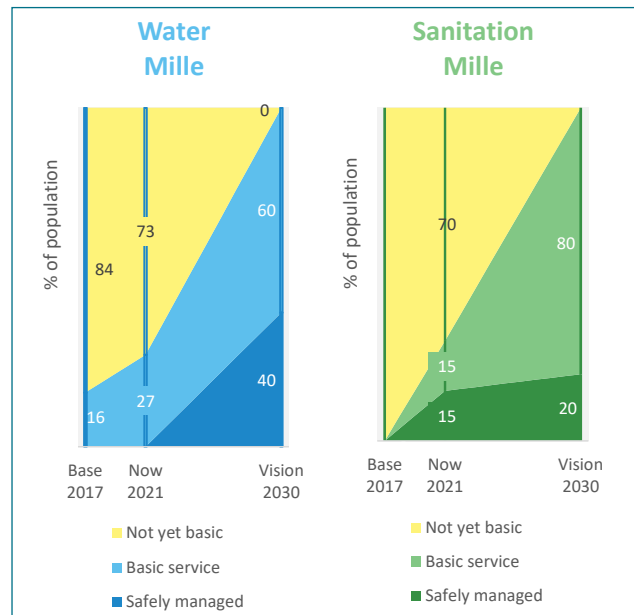


Figure 16: Progress towards the 2030 vision of Mille district, Ethiopia (household service levels).

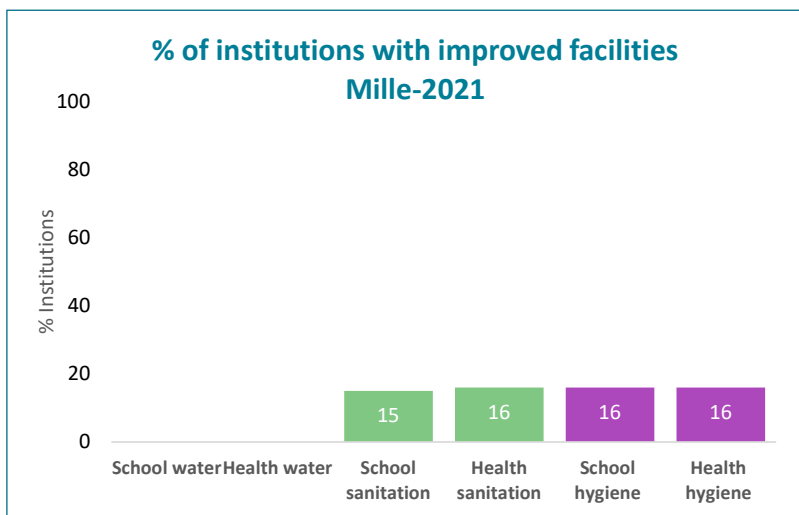


Figure 17: Progress towards the 2030 vision of Mille district, Ethiopia (school and health care facility service levels).

Context

IRC has supported WASH systems strengthening in Ethiopia for over a decade and has had a registered office since 2019. IRC is a trusted partner at national, regional, and district levels. It supports local learning alliances in six districts and plays a key role in national initiatives. These include the National WASH Financing Working Group, the Initiative on Strengthening Water Supply System Management with the Water Development Commission, and the National WASH System Strengthening Working Group.

The challenges in Ethiopia's WASH sector are significant. In 2021, conflict and instability, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, shifted focus away from WASH. However, most of the technical initiatives continued.

Overall, IRC Ethiopia achieved most of our 2021 objectives and results. We believe that our ToC is still valid as the country level strategy and results reflect those of IRC overall.

District level results

In previous years, IRC's district systems strengthening work included initiatives in nine districts across Ethiopia. This enabled the rapid accumulation of experiences and testing of our approach in diverse contexts, and also meant that our efforts and resources were dispersed. In 2021, we selected two of the nine districts — South Ari (170,000 inhabitants) and Negelle Arsi (230,000 inhabitants) — to continue as full-scale partner districts where we commit to long term partnership and comprehensive systems building toward SDG 6 targets. In 2017-2020, South Ari was already a priority partner in the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership while IRC's work in Negelle Arsi began in 2018 as part of the WASH SDG Consortium.

IRC will continue offering targeted support on specific building blocks to other districts as part of other projects and initiatives, and our overall impact model in Ethiopia will continue to be built on the expertise gained in all zones of intervention in the focus districts. Six focus districts have finalised WASH master plans and developed resource mobilisation strategies, with validation and endorsement by the district authorities.

Between 2017 and 2021, positive progress in systems strengthening was visible in planning, monitoring, infrastructure management, legislation, and the learning and adaptation of the building blocks (Figure 15). However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil war have caused slippage in several building blocks.

Similarly, insufficient investment and human resource capacity in the districts have caused finance, institutions, infrastructure development and water resource management to stagnate. For the other four districts—Negelle Arsi, Shashamane, Baka Dawla and Woba Ari—we have a baseline on service levels and infrastructure that were used for district WASH master planning.

In Negelle Arsi, a service level analysis was done in 2019 using secondary sources. It concluded that 57% of the population is served with at least a basic water service and 43% has no access to clean water. For sanitation, 56% has access to improved sanitation services and 34% to unimproved sanitation, while 10% practice open defecation.

In South Ari, the percentage of the population with at least a basic service level rose from 13% to 23% between 2017 and 2019. While promising, it cannot be read as an absolute increase since the district was divided into three after the baseline, changing the boundaries for the analysis.

Regional and national level results

Beyond districts, IRC Ethiopia is increasing its impact through regional initiatives. In partnership with government and non-government actors (including UNICEF, USAID, Ethiopia Water Technology Institute), we have strengthened government monitoring systems and related capacities in Afar, Somali and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's (SNNP) regions covering around 7.5 million people.

We have also helped strengthen market systems for improved sanitation in eight regions through strengthening the supply chain for improved sanitation products, promoting public-private collaboration and the uptake of sanitation marketing innovations, and the development of local market-based sanitation initiatives.

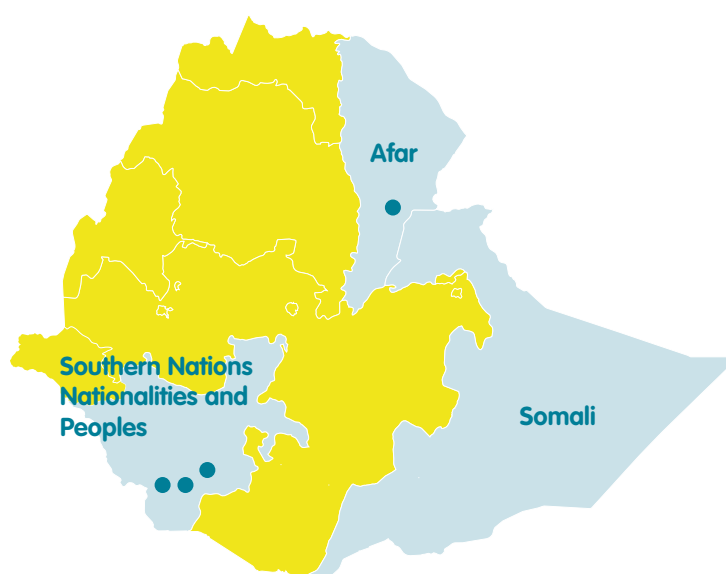


Figure 18: Afar, SNNPR and Somali regions seen on the map of Ethiopia with focus districts in blue dots.

Government ownership for the national and regional sanitation marketing multi-stakeholder platform is improving. Local government frequently initiates and engages in learning events, often covering the costs of these events. The multi-stakeholder platform is key in influencing policies at national level as well as in disseminating best practice models at national and regional levels.

These initiatives have contributed to measurable improvements in outcomes in the national sanitation system, especially the building blocks of planning, legislation, and learning and adaptation (Figure 15). The launch of the Ministry of Health's 2021-2025 Health Transformation Plan has been instrumental in the observed shifts. The Plan clearly states sanitation and hygiene targets, goals, and the strategy for the coming years.

Ensuring no one is left behind

Social inclusion is paramount for IRC Ethiopia. All initiatives put effort into ensuring that everyone engages, participates, and benefits from WASH services equally and fairly. In 2021, we assessed the national Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) practices, challenges and opportunities, and drafted a GESI strategy for our country programme office to systematically mainstream GESI in all our interventions, planning and operations.

Strengthening WASH systems: IRC Ethiopia's Change Hub role and what's next

IRC Ethiopia's Change Hub role is demonstrated through our vertically integrated work at different administrative levels. It is reflected in our approach to strengthening the WASH enabling environment, and our communications and coordination efforts with national and international stakeholders.

In 2022, we will continue convening and facilitating different sector platforms at national and subnational levels, and strengthening our engagement with our new focus partner districts and towns. Our Strategic Plan 2022-2025 reflects our: established role as a change agent in the WASH sector; commitment to partner districts; and, our targeted scaling work across the country. Together they comprise a multi-pronged approach to systems change. We are excited about our long term commitment to South Ari and Negelle Arsi and look forward to supporting them to become key centres for learning, innovation, and inspiration for the country. With our new strategy for equity and inclusion we will support the Government of Ethiopia to achieve its WASH goals, and scale and level up our role as an advocate for social inclusion and equity.

In partnership with UNICEF, we are strengthening WASH systems in small and medium sized towns by working with municipalities and town water utilities. Our engagement includes support to develop comprehensive town-wide sanitation roadmaps and action plans, and strengthening town water utilities to improve their performance.

Output in focus

The finalisation of six **district WASH master plans** for publication, and the quarterly bilingual (English and Amharic) SANIMARK newsletter were some of our key outputs this year.

4.3.3 Ghana



Still image from the video, 'Five hard to reach communities celebrate the flow of water for the first time'

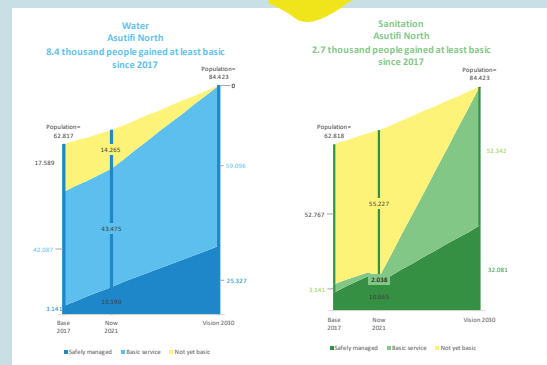
Partner district
Asutifi North

IRC GHANA AT A GLANCE

16 staff, **13** projects, **6** donors,
10 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 738 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 5,744**
Human Development Index: **rank 138, score 0.611**
Renewable water resource per capita: **1,888m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):
Water: **86%** • Sanitation: **24%** • Hygiene: **42%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Asutifi North district

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

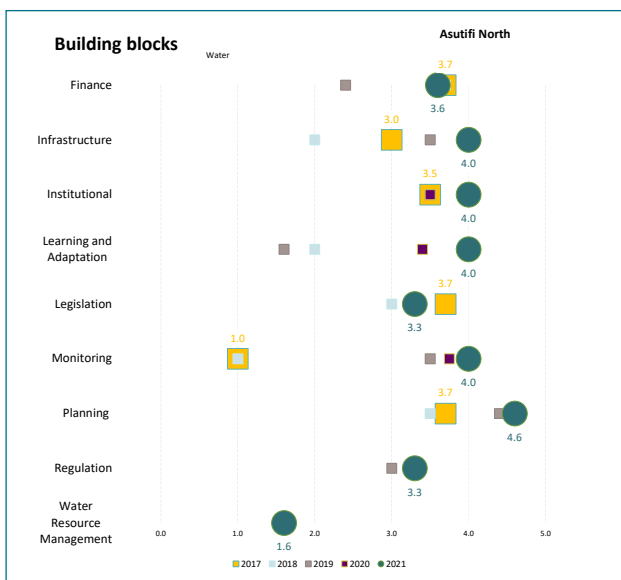


Figure 19: District building block scores from 2017-2021 in Asutifi North district, Ghana. For a disaggregated look at each district, see the Annexes or use the filters in our online dashboard.

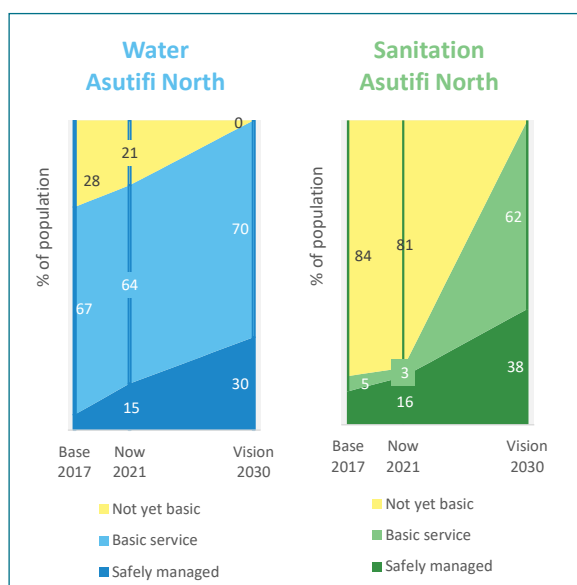


Figure 20: Progress towards the 2030 vision in Asutifi North district (household service levels).

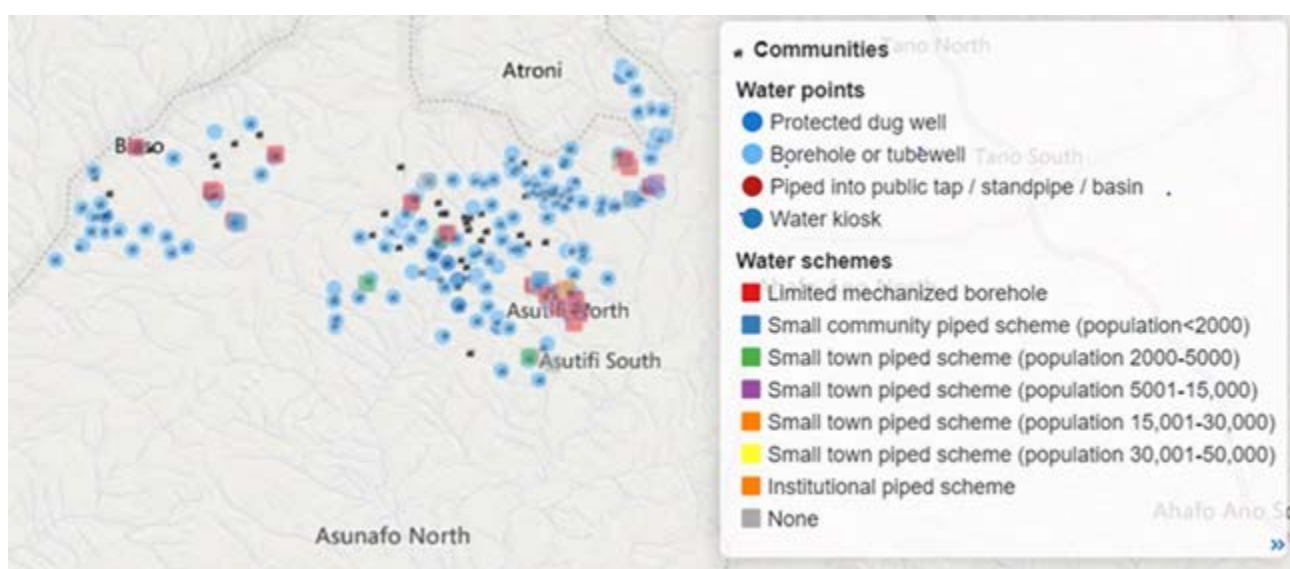


Figure 21: This map visualises served and unserved populations in Asutifi North District.

Context

The WASH sector in Ghana is charting a new course: formulating new national development policy frameworks, revising sector policies and strategies, and reforming institutions. This includes our long-term partner, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), which is piloting a new rural utility model with a view to transforming itself over the coming years. Processes around the development of the model are creating opportunities for the sector to engage and clarify the roles of local government, the private sector, and communities in water service delivery in the future—many of which remain unclear, contested and undecided.

IRC Ghana’s core objective—to build national and local systems to deliver SDG 6—is on course. At both national and district levels, there is evidence that the highest national executive levels are committed to implementing

the national strategic plans in line with the 2030 Agenda, and in our partner districts we are seeing measurable change that reflects these commitments.

Over the years, the country has seen an improvement in water services, with safely managed services increasing by 5% between 2017 and 2020. However, 8% of the population still rely on unimproved and/or surface water sources.

The improvements in sanitation services have been low—75% lack basic sanitation services (47% rely on shared facilities considered as limited under the JMP). Open defaecation is high and has barely changed (0.6%) since 2017 (2017-2020).

District level results

Asutifi North District continues to provide leadership and remains committed to the Asutifi North Amonidie Mpontuo (ANAM) initiative. ANAM seeks to achieve district-wide access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for all—approximately 84,423 people—by 2030. Guiding this vision is a 12 year WASH master plan specifying the vision, programmes, and strategies of the District Assembly and partners to meet their targets. Framed within the guidelines of the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana, the master plan has helped align the efforts of partners toward this vision, resulting in progressive improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene service levels over the past four years (Figure 20).

The mid-term assessment of the ANAM initiative was conducted in 2021. The assessment identified strong leadership by the District Assembly, traditional authorities and ANAM implementing partners as a key enabler of the success to date. It also noted the flexibility of the partnership and the presence of genuine grassroots community support in enabling agile adaptation of the initiative to the changing contexts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support master plan implementation, IRC has provided resources and technical assistance for budget tracking, service monitoring, and partner coordination. WASH accountability has improved in the district as synergies have been found to leverage resources. Resources for obtaining universal drinking water services have been secured and the pursuit of additional funding to meet universal sanitation targets is ongoing.

Though the Asutifi North District Assembly and World Vision have also invested in sanitation, the funds are inadequate to meet the set targets. Further efforts are required to obtain more funds for sanitation and investments in water resource management to ensure that the full spectrum of targets for SDG 6 are met.

In 2021, we also worked on addressing some training gaps identified in an institutional capacity gaps assessment conducted for Asutifi North. The district staff was trained on applying national WASH sector guidelines/policies at local level; asset management; and, using the Life Cycle Cost approach.

As Figure 20 shows, at the district level, the medium-term water services targets have been achieved: 79% of the population have at least basic water services; a 3% increase in those with access to basic services between 2020 and 2021; and, a 10% increase in those with safely managed water since 2017. However, the medium-term targets for basic sanitation were off track with only 19% of the population having access to at least basic services. Since

2017 there has been a 4% increase in the use of safely managed services and a slight reduction in the already low numbers practicing open defecation (from 4% in 2020 to 3% in 2021).

National level results

The building of national systems for SDG 6 is on course. In 2021, IRC focused on strengthening WASH policy and planning. With IRC's support, the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources updated a national water policy and national WASH plan which reflects greater ambition and sharpened targets for the sector. Through our collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission and building on lessons from Asutifi North, the Government of Ghana launched a WASH planning toolkit which demonstrates how district assemblies can improve their planning practices.

Ghana is placing greater emphasis on improving the quality and access to WASH services in health care facilities. In 2021, we worked with the Ghana Health Service to study current Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practices in health care facilities in the country in preparation for a review of the National WASH/IPC policy.

Strengthening WASH systems: IRC Ghana's Change Hub role and what's next

We will continue maintaining our Hub role and partnerships with other development partners. We have grown and solidified the ANAM partnership including bringing in Latter-day Saint Charities specifically support service delivery in hard to reach areas. To leverage lessons learned and drive toward scale, we formed a new partnership with the rural Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) utility that leverages the partnership of the Hilton Foundation, the Safe Water Network, and Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) to improve water supply across the whole Western Region of Ghana. Similarly, our partnership with the CONIWAS NGO platform and the Ghana Health Service is helping to improve national policies and address cross-cutting issues like equity in services.

Output in focus

The Asutifi North District has already achieved its mid-term target for 2021 and is on track to achieving its 2030 water target well ahead of time. One highlight of 2021 was the documentation on the expansion of water and sanitation services to deprived schools, communities and vulnerable households in hard-to-reach areas in the Asutifi North District – including a note on the process launch with the ANAM initiative, and a video documenting the experience and life-changing impact for the over 2,849 people reached within the year.

4.3.4 Honduras



Sarahí Morales, coordinator of the Intermunicipal Technical Unit of MAMCEPAZ (Mancomunidad de Municipios del Centro de La Paz)

IRC HONDURAS AT A GLANCE

1 staff, **1** associate, **5** projects, **5** donors

5 partners*, collaborations or working groups

€ 180 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 5,420**

Human Development Index: **rank 132, score 0.634**

Renewable water resource per capita: **9,613m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP): Water: **96%** • Sanitation: **84%** • Hygiene: **84%**



Population of PTPS municipalities: **285K**

Drinking water service levels in PTPS municipalities: ranging from **37% to 91%**

Sanitation service levels in PTPS municipalities: ranging from **46% to 94%**

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

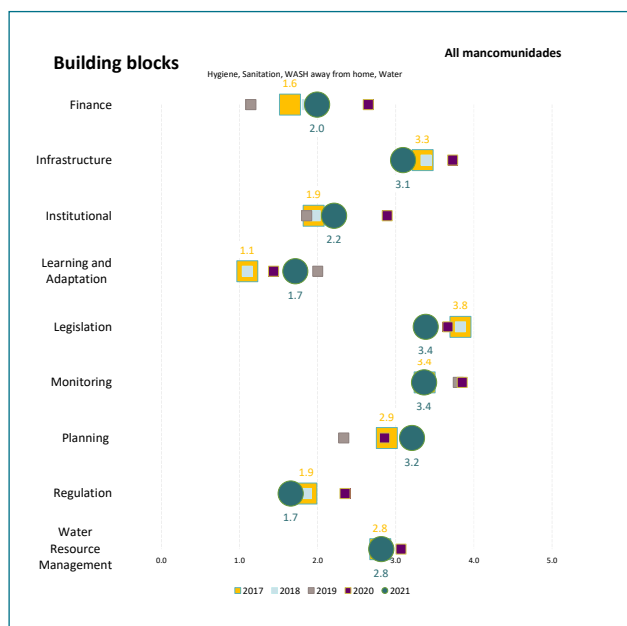


Figure 22: District building block scores from 2017-2021 in Para Todos Por Siempre districts in Honduras. For a disaggregated look at each district, see the Annexes or use the filters in our online dashboard.

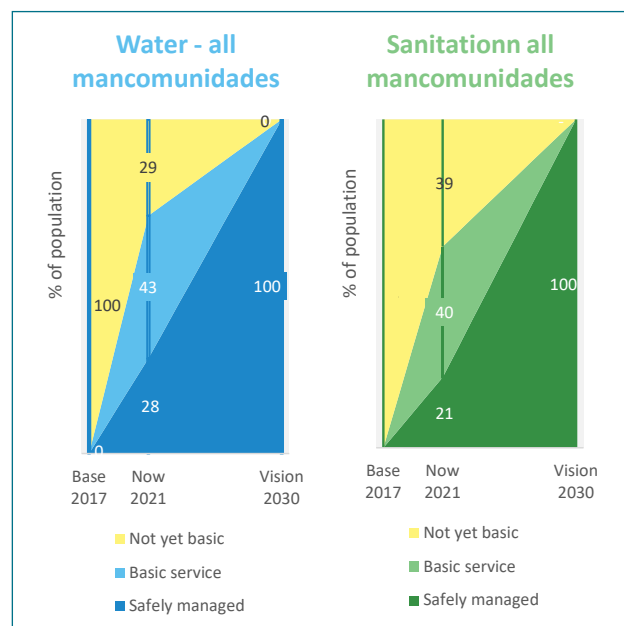


Figure 23: Progress towards the 2030 vision in all Para Todos Por Siempre districts in Honduras.

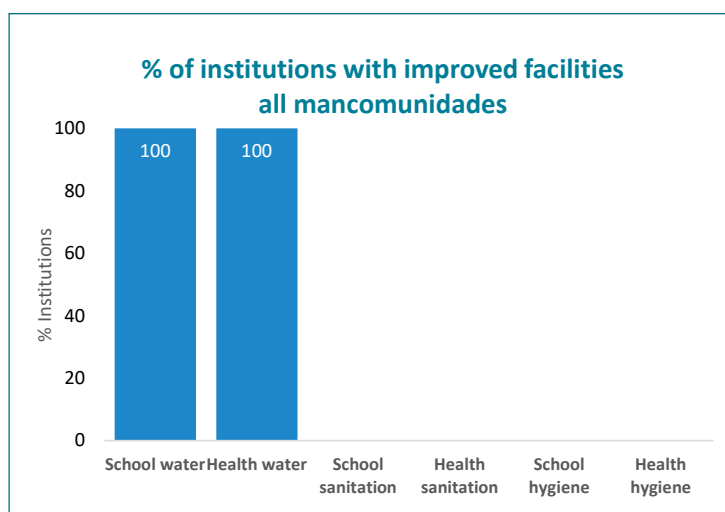


Figure 24: Progress towards the 2030 water vision in Para Todos Por Siempre districts (in schools and health care facilities).

Context

The national government of Honduras has defined three water and sanitation related targets – for both basic and safely managed services – and included these in its overall national SDG programme.

National service level metrics over the past several years suggest that Honduras is on track to reach the SDGs in terms of basic services. There is insufficient data on its progress towards safely managed services, which is arguably the most pressing challenge for WASH in the country.

In spite of numerous attempts by the Para Todos Por Siempre (Everyone Forever - PTPS) partnership and by the Government, there is no systematic tracking of service level data at municipal level. Using the [Sistema de Información de Agua y Saneamiento Rural](#), efforts often remain one-off exercises as and when partners have funding.

Municipal level results

With Water For People, progress was made in strengthening the systems in three scaling mancomunidades (associations of municipalities), under the joint Destination 2030 strategy⁸ in La Paz. IRC helped establish an intermunicipal water and sanitation commission, as well as a delegated regulatory body at intermunicipal level.

These intermunicipal bodies in turn have improved the process of monitoring, planning and provision of support to water committees. IRC also undertook the documentation of the first year of strengthening the intermunicipal systems in La Paz.

At the municipal level, improvements in the system have been observed in municipalities such as Chinda, El Negrito, and San Antonio de Cortes, where partners facilitate the entire system strengthening roadmap. Where members only work on part of the roadmap, there is less progress. Or worse, there is little to no information on progress, if the partners do not support critical building blocks such as monitoring or institutional strengthening.

National level results

In 2021, IRC continued its approach of advocating for national systems strengthening through the PTPS network. A key success was the updating of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Plan (PLANASA). We supported the facilitation of the consultation process around it and provided technical input. PLANASA provided, and continues to provide, strong analyses and directions for further sector development.

A second achievement was facilitating the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) network in Honduras. In the coming year it will focus on mobilising high level political support from the newly elected government and strengthening the financial framework for the sector.

At the national level, the main changes observed are in the building blocks of: 1) planning, 2) monitoring, and 3) learning and adaptation. The PLANASA update in 2021 marks a big step forward, but it will need to be accompanied by a sector finance strategy in order to ensure the plan has the resources to be implemented as intended.

In terms of monitoring, after years of our advising and influencing, several Government entities have explicitly acknowledged that the monitoring system needs to go beyond data collection to include a structural and instructional process of analysis and planning/response to the data. In Learning and Adaptation, PTPS has become the main platform for the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and operational coordination between sector players.

8. IRC and Water For People have joined forces to drive exponential progress in the delivery of WASH and reach 200 million people with strengthened systems in the next decade. Through our newly formed alliance, we have established 'Destination 2030', our collective effort to hasten progress toward SDG 6. More here: [Destination 2030 - Water For People](#).

The best intermediate result is partnerships. New members have joined PTPS and are applying the system strengthening roadmap. This alliance has made partners see that the WASH sector is not just infrastructure, but that work must also be done on the sustainability of services. PTPS has also achieved coordination between the different institutions. Finally, PTPS has served as a platform for joint advocacy activities.

Our partnerships in targeted influencing have resulted in increases in political and financial commitments over the past three years. There have been some achievements such as: the Government prioritising some of the objectives of SDG 6; greater involvement of Secretaría de Desarrollo Comunitario, Agua y Saneamiento, the Secretary of Finance and the Secretary of Governorate in updating PLANASA; and the TrackFin results that have been carried out in the country.

Output in focus

This video explains the mancomunidad approach whereby mancomunidades are strengthened in several water and sanitation related technical roles. In the video, various stakeholders from mancomunidades share their perspectives on how the model works and the benefits it brings: [Cobertura total para siempre impulsada por las mancomunidades | La Paz, Honduras - YouTube](#).

4.3.5 India



Shipra Saxena, WASH Specialist, UNICEF Odisha

IRC INDIA AT A GLANCE

2 staff, **8** projects, **5** donors,
22 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 120 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 6,504**
 Human Development Index: **rank 131, score 0.645**
 Renewable water resource per capita: **1,413m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services
 (JMP, 2020): Water: **91%** • Sanitation: **71%** •
 Hygiene: **68%**

Population of Ganjam district: **3.5m** (Census 2011)
 Population of partner block: **136k**

Water coverage in Ganjam district: **99%**
 Data comes from the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India

Sanitation coverage in Ganjam district: **100%**
 Data comes from the SBM dashboard, Ministry of Jal Shakti,
 Government of India

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

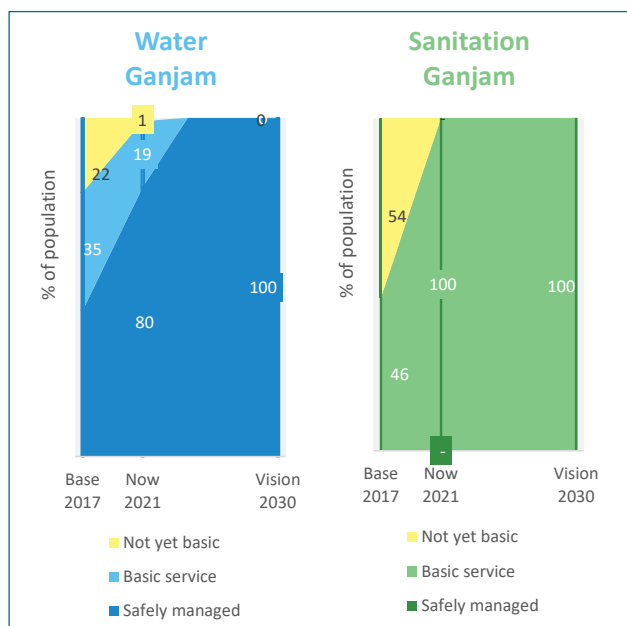


Figure 25: Service level progress in Ganjam from 2017-2021, based on recent IMIS government data and interpolation.

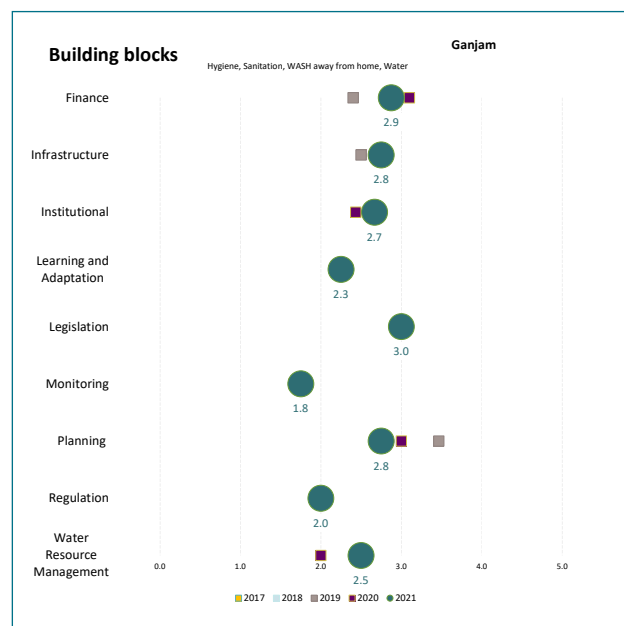


Figure 26: WASH systems building blocks as assessed in Ganjam, India from 2019-2021.

Context

In India, since 2020, the political and financial commitment to water supply is backed by the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), a national rural drinking water programme that assists, empowers and facilitates states/union territories in planning participatory rural water supply strategies to ensure that each household will have a functional tap (i.e. household connections to piped water supply) by 2024.

This is a huge commitment, not only in terms of infrastructure, but also in terms of the capacity of institutions to deliver and, more importantly, maintain these schemes.

Apart from its commitment to provide a functional tap to every household by 2024, the national level JJM is also accelerating efforts towards meeting the SDGs. In Odisha the Buxi Jagabandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitations scheme has the same objective. The result is a reported increase in the coverage of piped safe water supply at:

- the national level (from 16.79% in 2019 to 29.85% in February 2022);
- state level (from 3.52% in 2019 to 42.39% in February 2022); and,
- district level (from 7.37% in 2019 to 44% in February 2022).

The coverage of basic sanitation in India is close to 100%. Swachh Bharat Mission Phase 2 has recently started focusing its efforts on achieving safely managed sanitation for all.

The IRC India team remains mighty but small. In 2021 we worked closely with Water For People India to scope opportunities for joint work, in particular on a joint influencing strategy. This exploration will continue in 2022. We also strengthened partnerships with UNICEF and WaterAid, and national and state-level partners like the State Department for Water in Odisha, with the objective of leveraging our expertise and experience for greater impact.

District, state and national level results

COVID-19 challenges and opportunities

In 2021, we mostly worked online with our partners. The second wave of COVID-19 delayed the implementation of planned activities. These have been modified according to the local context.

Despite COVID-19 challenges, we were able to carry out capacity assessments of local urban bodies in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

Our focus on supporting the COVID-19 response provided us the opportunity to work on hygiene influencing at the national level with the UNICEF India Country Office. As part of this project, we worked on tracking budgets for hygiene from national through state, to district level and below. In addition, we worked on putting together a hygiene monitoring framework with the aim to foster longer term hygiene change beyond initial emergency response.

To commemorate International Women's Day and World Water Day, we organised a webinar with partners to celebrate women's leadership in WASH during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Political and financial commitment at national level

At the national level, with the focus on sanitation during the Swachh Bharat Mission, and now on water with the JJM, there have been significant budgetary allocations to the WASH sector.

Both the missions focused on infrastructure and coverage. While there is an inventory of public toilets and public water points with the line departments, the functionality of these is unknown. Similarly, at the household level, while there has been a significant rise in coverage, the actual use of the toilets is still a challenge in some places.

In terms of institutions, there is a ministry dedicated to water and sanitation. However, hygiene being multi-sectoral, a parent ministry is lacking.

The Swachh Bharat Mission and JJM, followed by the pandemic, have given impetus to WASH discussions. However, the learning exchanges are primarily development organisation driven, rather than government driven. The two national missions have led to centrally sponsored programmes on sanitation and water respectively. Similarly, there have been programmes related to WASH in schools. However, one on hygiene outside an institutional WASH perspective is lacking. Public participation in planning for WASH has been established by the Indian Constitution. In practice, however, participation of the marginalised needs to be strengthened.

Strengthening systems at the state and national levels

Our focus in India has been on systems strengthening the building blocks of finance and institutions. To increase budget awareness and advocacy, we worked on the UNICEF India Country Office project to track government budgets for hygiene at the national, state and district levels. We also invested in grassroots capacity building, in partnership with UNICEF Odisha State Office, to develop training modules for elected representations responsible for national rural water supply and sanitation programmes. To support non-government actors to play their roles, we trained members of women's self-help groups on hygiene and leadership, to be able to more effectively raise their concerns in the local development decision making platforms. This was achieved through the Waterloo and She Makes Change projects.

At the national level, we have organised webinars on the SuSANA platform to learn about the institutional capacities in the implementation of the national programmes. As for the future, we have been exploring with the India Sanitation Coalition and other partners a 100 district multi-stakeholder initiative for SBM. We have proposed being the knowledge partner for this.

Going ahead we are also exploring options of expanding IRC's presence in the South Asia region by taking up the form of a think and do tank for the region, to influence states and countries in the region to move or move faster towards safely managed WASH services.

Output in focus

We took our experience from the Watershed project to put together a manual on budget tracking. The manual documents the steps to track budgets from the central to rural local governments, with WASH as an example. The manual can be used by anyone interested in tracking budgets from central to local governments, in any sector, and it can even be adapted to the urban context.

4.3.6 Mali



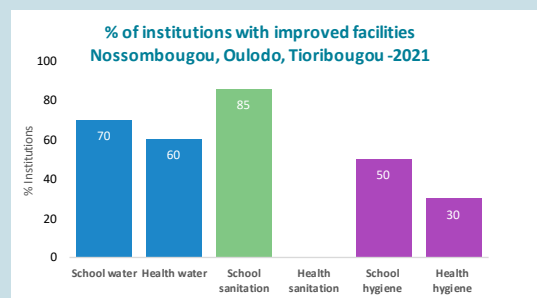
Group photo at Maternity Hospital of Dourako, municipality of Nossombougou staff and partners

IRC MALI AT A GLANCE

4 staff, **6** projects, **3** donors,
3 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 315 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 2,348**
 Human Development Index: **rank 184, score 0.434**
 Renewable water resource per capita: **6,290m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):
 Water: **83%** • Sanitation: **45%** • Hygiene: **17%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Nossombougou, Oulodo and Tioribougou districts in schools and health care facilities

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

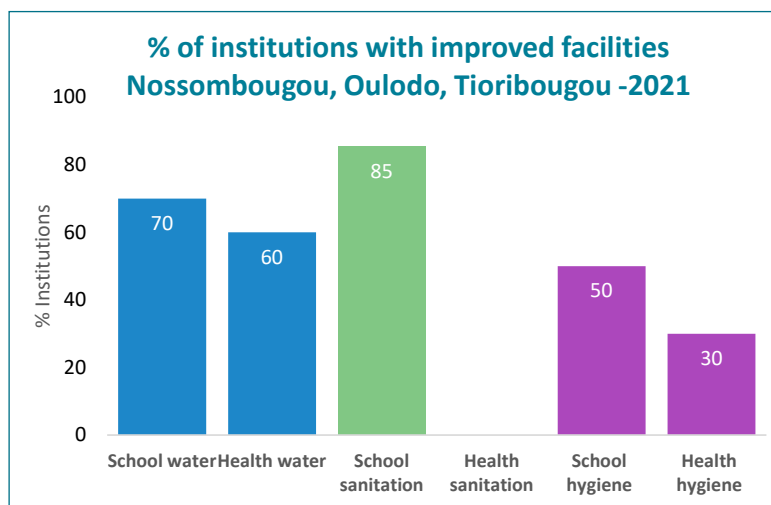


Figure 27: Progress towards the 2030 vision in Nossombougou, Oulodo, Tioribougou districts, Mali (schools and health care facility service levels).

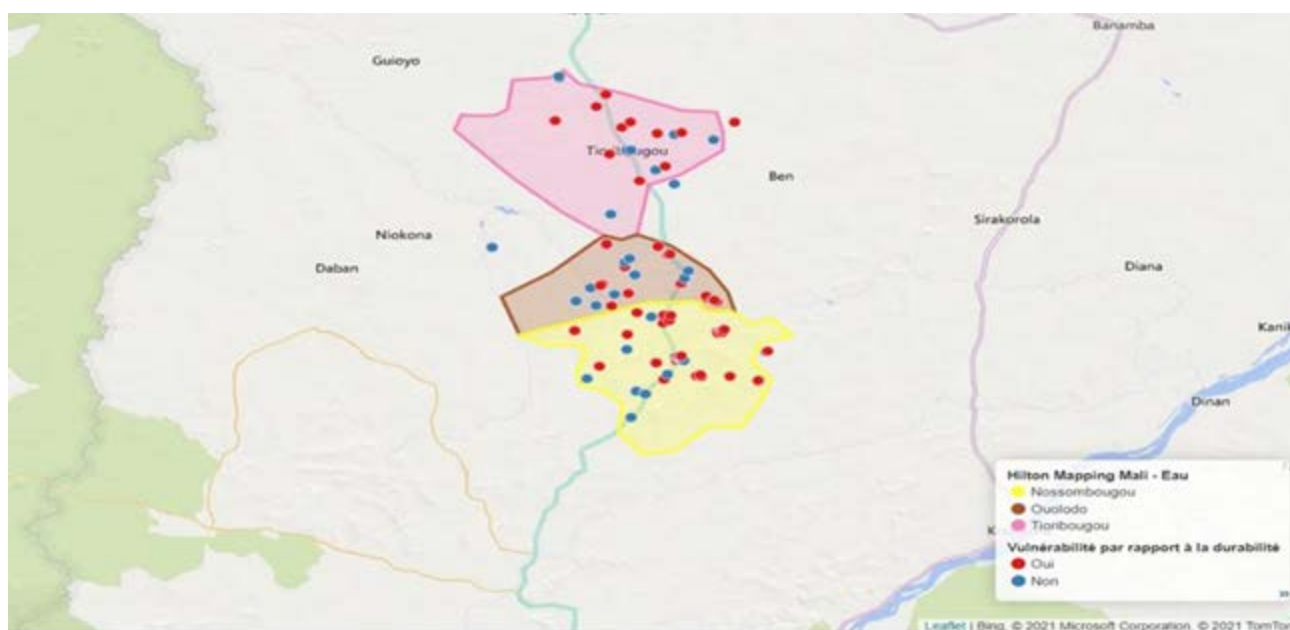


Figure 28: Map of the three partner districts in Mali identifying the communities with the greatest vulnerability to water shortage due to:

1. likelihood of WASH infrastructure breakdown
2. poor management of existing WASH infrastructure
3. availability of WASH infrastructure.

Context

After several years of exploration, IRC Mali formally registered its office and became a full-scale focus country programme in 2021 and nominated a new Country Coordinator in April 2021.

While there is strong partnership and dynamism among WASH sector actors in Mali, the socio-political crises across this Sahelian country make traditional programme implementation challenging. A coup d'état in May led to leadership changes at all levels and threats of violence in rural areas can prevent field visits to certain parts of the country.

COVID-19 left IRC colleagues working from home for part of 2021, but for the most part colleagues were able to continue their work remotely.

District level results

IRC has supported the development of district master plans in the districts of Nossombougou, Oulodo, and Tioribougou. These plans focus on increasing the level of WASH services in health care facilities at various levels and in schools. The mayors in each of these municipalities have adopted these plans and have taken the significant step of formally creating municipal water and sanitation entities.

In these districts, IRC has collaborated with World Vision to convene key actors and improve the collaboration between local town leadership and the community health centres. By helping to interpret national policy and apply the Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool (WASH FIT) model, IRC has trained both health centre staff and local government to better understand their roles and responsibilities for health centre hygiene and to play these roles more effectively. As a result, new latrines have been constructed in several schools which include disability-accessible services and gender-specific toilet blocks.

National level results

IRC has become a recognised and respected partner in Mali. IRC published a summary note of the JMP data for Mali and provided a vision and recommendations for the country through the development and dissemination of the IRC Mali 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

Building on IRC's experiences in partner districts, national level collaboration with World Vision and the National WASH Coalition (Coalition Nationale pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement (CN-CIEPA)) provides the opportunity and scale for IRC's systems strengthening.

Output in focus

Notable outcomes for 2021 include obtaining a licence for IRC Mali, sharing JMP Mali 2020 data with WASH sector actors, and compiling 2021 service level data from schools and health centres in our partner communes into a database.

We also worked with several WASH actors on the development of a national advocacy document to support schools and health centres in Mali.

4.3.7 Niger



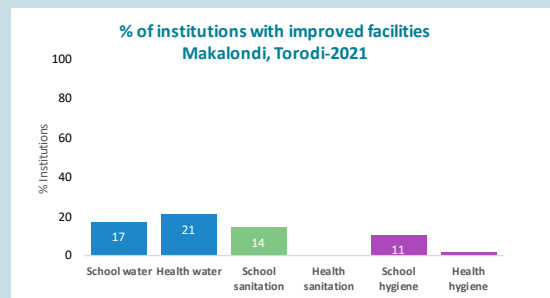
Health workers at a WASH FIT training workshop in the district of Torodi

IRC NIGER AT A GLANCE

2 staff, **6** projects, **5** donors,
4 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 242 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 1,288**
 Human Development Index: **rank 189, score 0.394**
 Renewable water resource per capita: **1,517m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):
 Water: **47%** • Sanitation: **16%** • Hygiene: **23%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Makalondi and Torodi districts in schools and health care facilities

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

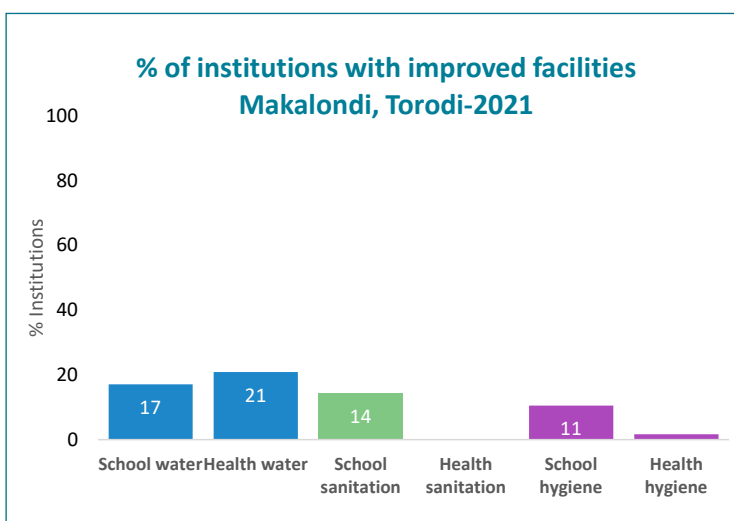


Figure 29: Progress towards the 2030 vision in Makalondi and Torodi districts, Niger (schools and health care facility service levels).

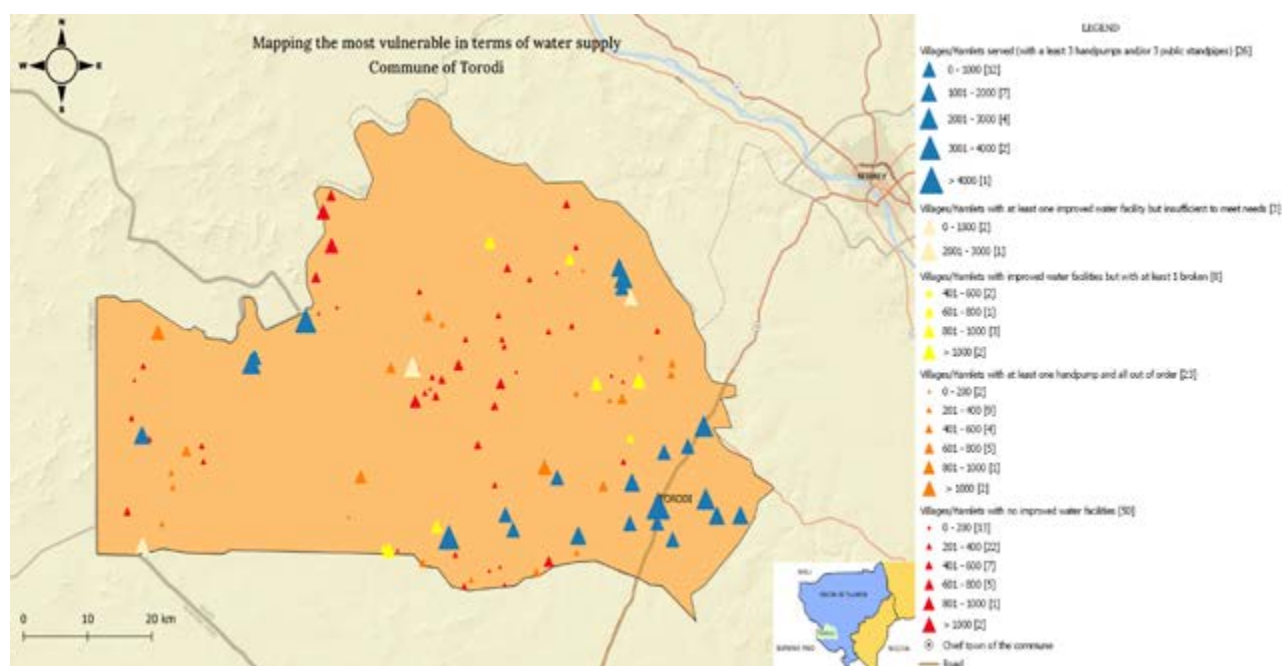


Figure 30: This map visualizes populations that are considered vulnerable in Torodi commune, Niger. The most vulnerable identified with the authorities are the villages/hamlets which are in a politically insecure zone and are also facing difficulties with water supply.

Context

Niger became an IRC focus country in 2020, and in 2021 a new Country Coordinator was recruited. The fragility of the context in Niger poses great challenges for WASH systems strengthening. The country suffers from climate and humanitarian disasters, including an insurgency which has led to instability and increased violence in the region.

In terms of WASH services, at the national level as of 2020:

- the rates of access to water in rural and urban areas were relatively stable at around 47% and 97% respectively; and,
- the percentage of villages declared open defecation free increased from 9% to 22% from 2019 to 2020.

At the current rate, SDG 6 will not be achieved at either the district or national level.

District level results

We started our work in Niger by focusing on WASH in health care facilities as the entry point for more general WASH systems strengthening in two districts: Makalondi and Torodi in the Tillaberi region. However, as the security situation is increasingly deteriorating in these two districts as well, the selection of another—more stable—district as the focus district is the top priority for 2022.

Our work in Makalondi and Torodi was implemented with World Vision and has seen progress despite the challenging context. Of the 266 communes in Niger, given our technical assistance and collective action, our two intervention districts are the only ones to:

- have a strategic water and sanitation plan with a 2030 horizon;
- have accurate information on WASH service levels in health centres and schools according to JMP criteria which is updated annually;
- implement the WASH FIT tool in selected health centres; and,
- exercise seven of the 11 competencies transferred by the State to the communes in the area of water.⁹

National level results

At national level, the building blocks for policy and legislation and water resources management have improved the most due to the adoption of the national hygiene and sanitation policy document and the development of a national water policy document in 2019. A National Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management was launched in 2017 and we have seen concerted efforts as part of its implementation.

Finance and regulation are lagging behind, given that the State has only been able to mobilise 31% of the necessary funding for the first phase of its programme to achieve SDG 6. Although the Water Sector Regulatory Authority was created in 2019, there is no regulatory agency or body for the sanitation sub-sector.

In terms of national progress on service levels, the surveys conducted by the National Institute of Statistics on access to water and sanitation only cover the household level. Through our national support to the collaboration on the WASH FIT model for improving WASH in health care facilities, we have worked on establishing a census baseline of WASH services in all 2,624 health centres in the country on the basis of local water and sanitation plans. The national summary shows that 1,100 out of 2,624 (42%) health centres have access to a basic water service and 1,458 (56%) have limited sanitation services. A national survey is needed to assess the service levels for hygiene, waste management and environmental cleaning.

According to our qualitative assessment, we can see that capacity and partnerships in the country are high. All sector actors accept and play their particular roles in systems strengthening, and there are sector coordination tools, a shared strategy, and joint means of policy implementation in the country. That said, the high level political and financial commitment required to leverage these partnerships and accelerate action is lacking. The deteriorating security and the COVID-19 pandemic have led the state to reduce the share of the national budget devoted to other sectors to ensure security in the country and the management of COVID-19.

The collective action of the broad partnership of sector actors has been supported through our participation in meetings of the State-NGO consultation framework, through our work on the sectoral review, and in workshops. Advocacy for improved WASH services in Niger's health centres was carried out during regional consultation

9. Competencies include: the implementation of WASH policies and strategies at commune level; managing WASH services; applying legislative and regulatory directives; implementing WASH awareness-raising; communication; education programmes; and collecting and sharing data with the Ministry of Water and Sanitation.

forums with local authorities and we have invested in documenting and sharing experiences and challenges in our partner districts with national actors as evidence of the need for greater investment in the WASH sector.

Output in focus

We have produced a summary of the drinking water, hygiene and sanitation situation in Niger based on JMP data, and worked on establishing the WASH situation in the health centres of all the country’s communes using data from local water and sanitation plans.

Since the data published by JMP does not match that of the National Institute of Statistics, the chair of the consultation framework has agreed to contact the WHO and UNICEF country offices to agree on the data.

There is also an [article](#) about IRC’s participation in the national workshop to adapt the WASH FIT tool to the Niger context.

4.3.8 Uganda



Joan Kabasumbi is a Mental Health Nurse and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Focal Person at Kaswa Health Centre III.

Partner districts
Kabarole and
Bunyangabu

IRC UGANDA AT A GLANCE

11 staff, **12** projects, **6** donors,
7 partners*, collaborations or working groups
€ 697 thousand total invested

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPP: **\$ 2,294**
Human Development Index: **rank 159, score 0.544**
Renewable water resource per capita: **1,407m³**

Percentage of population with at least basic services (JMP):
Water: **56%** • Sanitation: **20%** • Hygiene: **23%**



Progress toward the 2030 vision of Kabarole district

* Number of partners, collaborations, or working groups with whom we worked closely on programme implementation in 2021.

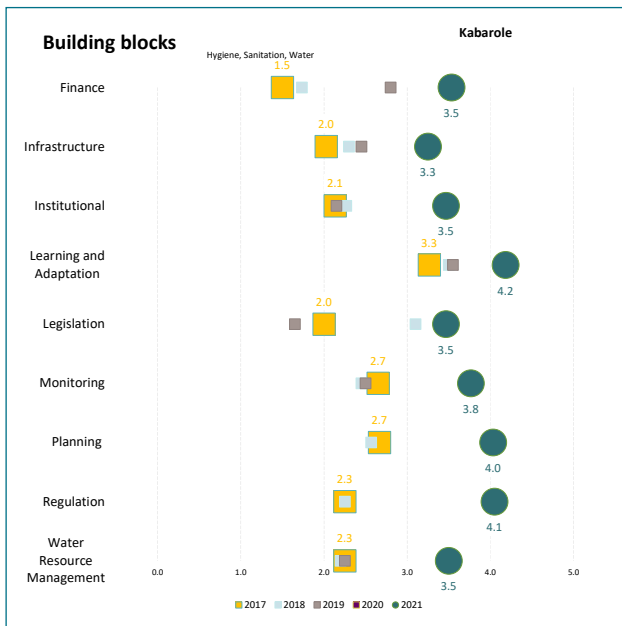


Figure 31: WASH systems building blocks in Kabarole District: changes 2017-2021.

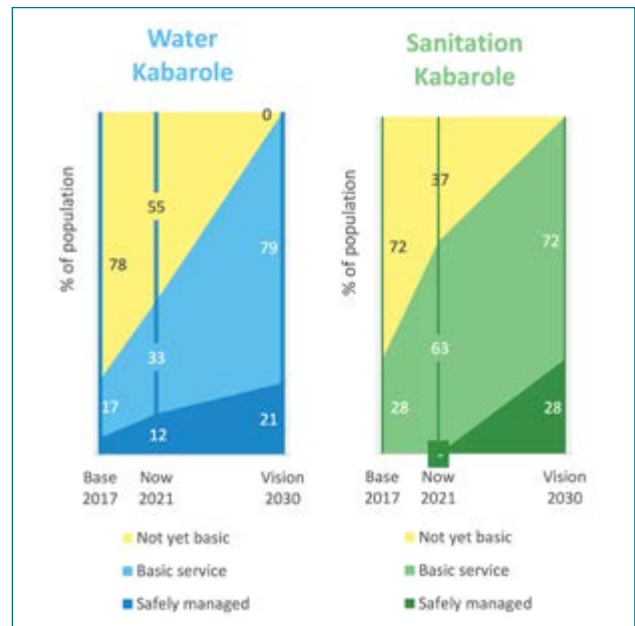


Figure 32: Progress towards the 2030 vision in Kabarole district, Uganda (household service levels).

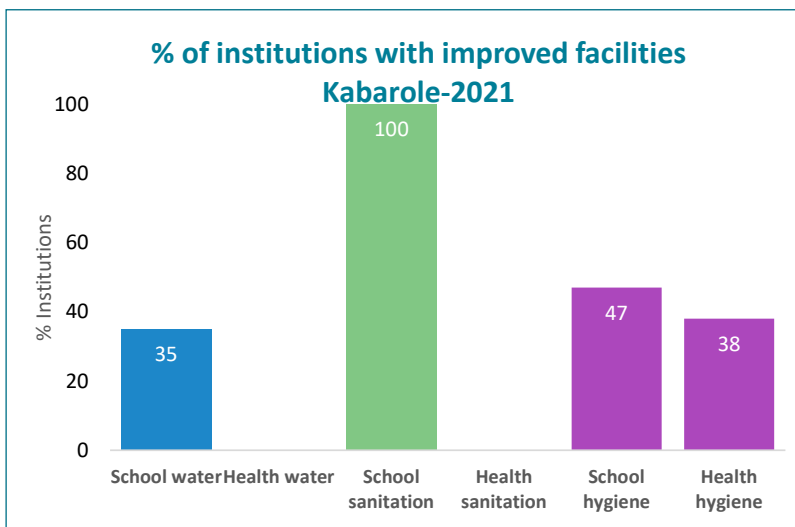


Figure 33: Progress towards the 2030 vision in Kabarole district, Uganda (schools and health care facility service levels).

Context

We continued to align our interventions to the 2017-2021 IRC Uganda strategic plan, the SDG 6 targets, and Uganda's Vision 2040 and National Development Plan. IRC Uganda has fully adopted the Destination 2030 Alliance and a joint level of effort with Water For People was developed in 2021.

Uganda's Third National Development Plan was launched in 2020 and IRC Uganda's new 2021-2025 planning framework and future interventions will need to be aligned to this new national policy document. These national frameworks show increasing political and financial commitment to WASH in the country.

A trend analysis showed a slight improvement in WASH sector budgets for 2019-2020 at UGX 1.8 trillion (€ 415 million) against an estimated annual requirement of UGX 5.10 trillion (€ 1.2 billion). This large funding gap remains an impediment to leaving no one behind in WASH service provision.

The sector has also undergone progressive changes in policy and structure. In 2020, a new Rural Water Operation and Maintenance Framework was rolled out which marks a shift toward more professional rural services. The National Water and Sewerage Corporation, and the Umbrella Authorities (regional utilities), are becoming key actors even in small towns and rural parts of the country. They are working on extending safely managed piped water networks to households, communities and public service institutions.

District level results

At the district level, the Kabarole District WASH Master Plan has guided strong collective action among sector partners, resulting in a substantial increase in funding for water sanitation and hygiene services in the district. An improved funding absorption capacity in the District Water Office has also been noted. It is partly attributed to a boost in human resources with the recent appointment of a new Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and strengthened Ministry of Water and Environment regional units that continue to play a critical role in supporting the district.

Mirroring the excellent progress in strengthening the WASH systems building blocks (Figure 33), **in 2021 Kabarole was ranked among the top performing districts in Uganda** in the national local governments' annual performance assessment. This included performance measures such as: local government service delivery results; performance reporting and performance improvement; human resource management and development; management, monitoring and supervision of services; investment management; and, environmental and social requirements. We can see that the partnership to attain SDG 6 is investing in district leadership. This is improving the overall performance of the district as the competent authority and leader of public service delivery improvement.

In 2021, we built on the 2020 COVID-19 response interventions to develop and deliver a more complete package of systems strengthening for WASH in health care facilities and infection prevention and control (IPC). This package included training district and facility staff and health unit management committees in effective IPC approaches, as well as the installation and repair of water and sanitation infrastructure. As a result of IRC's and other newly trained stakeholders' investments, there has been significant improvement in access to safe sanitation facilities (including a medical incinerator) and an extension of safely managed water to points of patient care.

Our partnerships are also bringing water services to underserved areas. Working with Kabarole District Local Government and National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), IRC supported the design and extension of 3.3 km of a safe water pipe network to serve three villages, a health care facility and a school in one of the least served sub-counties in Kabarole. Through this tripartite partnership, IRC, Kabarole District and NWSC have committed to deliver 100% sustainable access to safe water for all 12,000 residents of Kabende sub-county in the medium term.

In terms of sanitation, we have supported four towns to develop Town Sanitation Plans and helped the Kabarole District Local Council to develop a new sanitation ordinance to help meet SDG 6 goals.

In support of integrated water resources management, IRC Uganda partnered Albert Water Management Zone to create public awareness on water resource management plans for the River Mpanga catchment area.

Building on the success of the master plan and district wide service monitoring activities with IRC in the past several years, the Kabarole District WASH Data portal is now being established to support real time monitoring of service delivery and ensure it is systematically incorporated into sector planning and resource allocation.

National level results

IRC Uganda, WaterAid and Water For People (under the Agenda for Change consortium), supported UWASNET to host a national dialogue to facilitate CSOs to gain a deeper understanding of the new National Development Plan III. This high-level meeting was attended by key national stakeholders including the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, plus a cross section of national and regional WASH NGOs.

Looking toward our new 2022-2025 strategy period and our joint work with Water For People within the Destination 2030 alliance, IRC's Memoranda of Understanding with government agencies were renewed in 2021, and a new tripartite agreement was signed with the Ministry of Water and Environment to strengthen the Water Resources Institute's Water and Environment Capacity Development Programmes.

IRC and Agenda for Change partners successfully commissioned and undertook an assessment of the National WASH systems, which has now been fully adopted by the Ministry of Water and Environment. It builds on IRC's analysis whose findings and recommendations will guide future efforts in strengthening WASH Systems both at the national and district levels.

Output in focus

Notable outputs from 2021 include the morning news TV show on 'How systems strengthening can improve WASH' featuring IRC's CEO, the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment, and the Executive Director of the Civil Society Budget Advisory Group. The public show was part of advocacy efforts towards effective service delivery in the WASH sector with meaningful involvement of different key stakeholders.

4.3.9 New Focus Countries

Good progress was made in the activities and outputs carried out by IRC staff related to the New Focus Countries programme: we have established the Mali office and taken the next step towards autonomy by recruiting local staff to manage financial and administrative functions. Niger is on its way to being registered in 2022. Both countries recruited new coordinators in 2021 and explored expansion into one new partner district each in 2022.

In India we have become more influential through liaising with powerful partners like UNICEF, and the Principal Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department of Odisha state. In Bangladesh our focus has been on sustainability monitoring and institutional support of local authorities and committees via the SDG Consortium and consultancy assignments. These are great examples of influencing, but at the same time we have also learned that the IRC approach to work district-wide as a basis for collective action and influencing systems change at national level is not going to work in India and Bangladesh. The scale of a region or district is too large—it is not possible for NGOs (alone or collectively) to saturate a district—and this calls for a small programme to focus on those building blocks that are most crucial in this context: finance, institutions, and learning.

However, we feel that the systems strengthening approach is still very promising in both countries. The systems approach, with its strong emphasis on influencing for change—as proven in our African focus countries—can also work in a broader Asian context. While the Government of India’s mission driven programmes do support reaching large numbers in a short span of time, challenges remain in putting systems in place that ensure these services reach all (equitable) and continue to meet the basic needs of its users (sustainable). We will work on the where and how in the coming years.

We have started combining skills and staff and prepared a strategy for an Asia Regional Programme instead of separate country programmes.

4.4 Global and regional programmes

Context and general reflections

Our global and regional focus in 2021 was the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, climate action, scaling our impacts in focus countries and rethinking our regional influence.

- Despite going through the second year of having to work in different ways because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the very limited opportunities to meet as teams other than online, in 2021 the annual plan was largely implemented as planned with all the major activity areas completed or progressed.
- Climate action was already a major theme in our work. With the climate crisis changing the narrative and focus of both IWRM and WASH, we analysed 12 country programmes and with Water For People produced a working paper to guide our work on climate action. New activities in climate resilience in 2021 immediately followed including (through UNICEF) developing climate resilient WASH financing strategies in Malawi and Rwanda.
- Strengthening our scaling in focus countries was a major focus of the annual plan, with three main strategies further developed: high level and political influencing; a master planning facility; and the WASH systems academy. All have progressed well and will be extended.
- Starting in Africa, we started research with African institutions in 2021 to rethink our regional influence. In 2022 we will extend our Africa regional programme, with increasingly decentralised staffing, and launch new regional influencing strategies in South Asia and Latin America.

In 2021, we developed a new medium-term strategy (2022-25) with higher goals related to global and regional influence. This builds on our achievements in the 2017-2021 period and especially on 2021. To deliver the new Global Programme, with the greater integration of our functions, we have combined our Research & Learning and Communications & Influencing staffing under a new Change Hub which also includes an Africa Regional team, hosted staff (Agenda for Change and Sanitation and Water for All) and associates.

Change Hub staff is increasingly decentralised (a virtual team) rather than primarily Netherlands-based.

In 2021, the global programme played a critical role in supporting IRC and the wider Destination 2030 alliance to develop their new strategic framework by convening and guiding an organisation-wide process while performing a critical analysis of global data and trends. Within the [Destination 2030 alliance](#), we also developed a joint Influence Plan for the coming five years that leverages our combined strength and ambition with Water For People to increase our investment and impact in global and regional influencing.

Key challenges prioritised by our Global Programme during this period were:

1. popularising the understanding of a need for a systems strengthening approach to achieve SDG 6;
2. the urgency of new and better financing models; and,
3. the importance of strengthening the voice and capacity of global and regional civil society networks.

Global results: scaling up success as a networked think tank

Five years into our 2017-2030 strategy, we have acquired experience and evidence about how WASH systems strengthening can be achieved in different contexts. Through our think tank publications, WASH Academy courses, events, programmatic initiatives and other sources such as our website and dashboard, IRC’s global programme is making this expertise available to partners and collaborators while supporting country programmes to scale their impacts.

A key objective of IRC has been to influence the uptake of a systems approach in WASH policies and practice. We have been a leader in this through our publications, events and influence. A systematic analysis of literature since 2000 identified 273 publications related to systems and WASH (in English), showing a substantial rising trend especially since 2017. It showed that IRC was an author, cited or an IRC approach or tool was used in almost half the publications. Systems approaches are now being much more widely used as evidence, for example in the debates around the Sanitation and Water for All Sector Ministers Meeting or in the planning for the UN 2023 water conference.

Building capacity in systems approaches is vital and is an important part of our approach to scale. The WASH Systems Academy gained over 1,700 new users and, since its inception in 2019, now covers 110 countries. With over 534 courses completed in 2022, users rate the course highly with a 92% rating for novelty and a 94% likelihood of recommending the course to others. The course content is continuously updated with our latest findings, such as an [analysis of the pathways for extending utility services into rural areas](#).

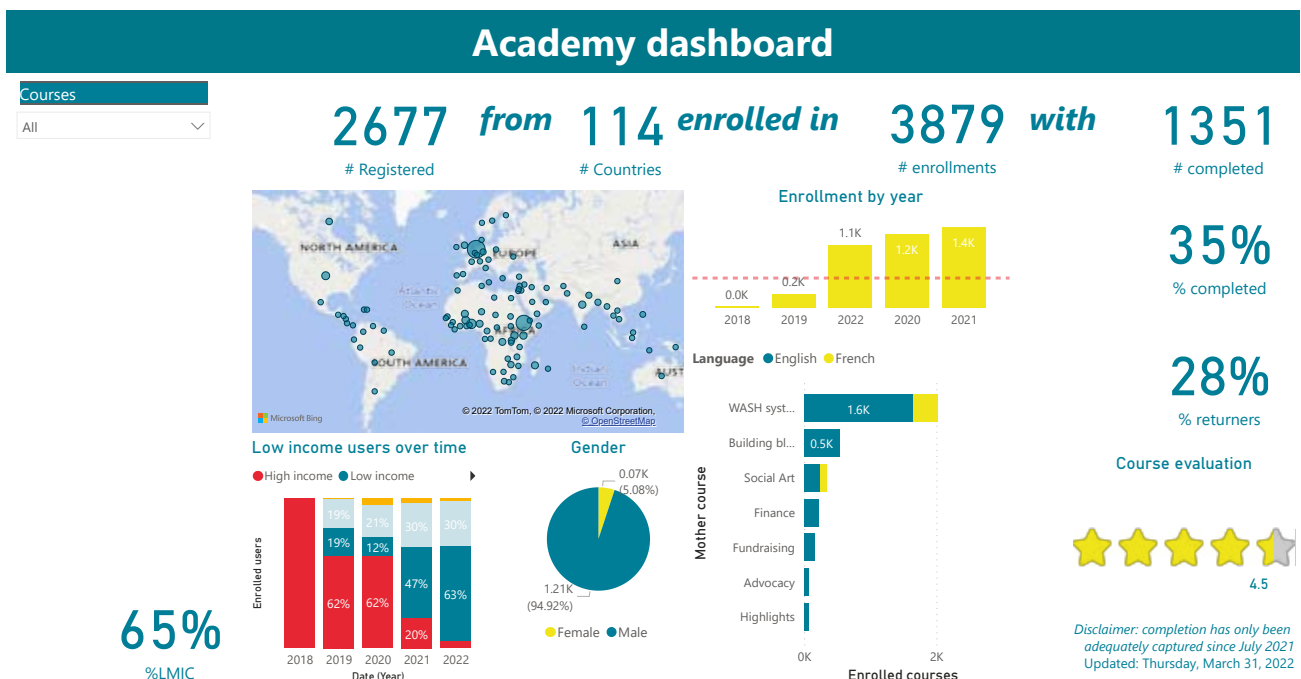


Figure 34: Snapshot of the WASH Systems Academy dashboard in ircwash.org.

In collaboration with country programmes, in establishing a District WASH Master Planning facility in 2021, we found a new way to scale up our success. This initiative was iteratively developed by IRC staff with advice from board members and external experts with the intention of creating a novel approach to replicating and scaling up this decentralised impact model. The new District Master Planning facility will be formally launched in early 2022. It will provide resources, examples, and training material for local and national governments, NGOs and development partners, and will support and facilitate the development and implementation of district WASH master plans. The facility also supports country processes, strengthening planning and financing systems to ensure long-term strategic planning at district and utility level at scale, and ensuring funding and financing for and implementing these plans.

We are also scaling up our influence through technical assistance and advice to key actors. In response to our recommendations, Blue Deal partners, Dutch Water Authorities and the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Infrastructure & Water have reoriented their programme visions and strategies for water governance to reflect a systems approach. Building on IRC studies and support, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) has launched an initiative with partners to establish a **Water Finance Coalition of Public Development Banks**. This seeks to bring new money to water and sanitation.

Reflecting IRC's messages over the years, UNICEF expanded its approach through the development of its first ever WASH systems strengthening strategy. In a landmark deal, UNICEF launched a new Partnership for WASH Systems Strengthening in Africa (covering 19 African countries) with IRC and Water For People which creates the groundwork for large scale systems strengthening support and knowledge exchange and influencing across the continent.

In its new strategy, the Conrad N Hilton Foundation committed to achieving safely managed services (JMP) in its partner districts, while advocating for greater resolve in the water sector to achieve these targets worldwide. IRC has been one of the Foundation's implementing partners since 2016, and has driven district and national level systems change in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Uganda.

In 2021, we published new high-quality original research and thinking in our list of top 10 key (global) publications, thereby demonstrating our think tank credentials. Our publications included those on: 1) climate change, water resources and WASH systems (working paper); 2) utility managed rural water services (Thematic Overview Paper); 3) the role of National Public Development Banks in financing (SDG6; for Water Finance Coalition); 4) strengthening mutual accountability in partnerships for WASH (with SWA); 5) driving change: strengthening local systems in the water and sanitation sectors (based on action research in Ethiopia and Uganda); 6) self-supply (book); 7) people, systems and change: harnessing the power of collective action; 8) more sustainable systems through consolidation (paper); 9) pathways for collaboratively strengthening water and sanitation systems (paper); and, 10) financing for sustainable WASH systems (learning module)

Global results: new ways to champion the value of water, sanitation and hygiene

The logic model is simple. When new allies—decision makers, experts and activists—drawn from far more powerful sectors such as health, see the value of championing water, sanitation and hygiene for their own benefit, they bring a coalition of stakeholders with even greater political power and demand effective national systems and investment.

In 2021, we established a programme to support IRC's country offices in influencing and campaigning to ensure greater political status and bring increased investment to water and sanitation. In one example, IRC's global programme support to the Clean Hands Good Health campaign in Burkina Faso helped it reach 2.8 million people with messages on the importance of handwashing.

Voices for Water—the legacy campaign of the Watershed programme—generated 1.8 million impressions and 1,300 engagements on social media. During this campaign, IRC organised leading champions to speak out on the importance of citizen voices in achieving SDG 6. Our international Nurses Day campaign had 1.7 million impressions and 2,400 engagements on social media. Together, the Voices for Water and Nurses Day campaigns increased traffic to IRC's website by 40%, thereby reaching more people with critical messages on the importance of WASH and WASH systems strengthening.

International partnerships also have a role. In 2021, **Agenda for Change** underwent a change with a new vision and new governance which concentrate on country collaboration and leadership in WASH systems strengthening. IRC played a leading role as a member of the Executive Committee and host of the Secretariat.

IRC also built a stronger alliance with and supported Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). We helped SWA to ramp up its targeted high-level influencing as well as its multi-stakeholder engagement in mutual accountability and monitoring at country level through research and support.

IRC was involved in 50 events and conferences in 2021 with participation nearly entirely virtual. IRC's key role was varied from organiser, presenter, moderator, and supporter to keynote speaker. The events included seven events under the new Hilton Safe Water Strategy E-Learning series. We had a large presence at World Water Week with 11 sessions attracting 660+ participants. Our internal IRC Global Talks further developed 34 sessions across the organisation that were largely self-organised and involved all the focus countries.

Outputs in focus

1. A book (co-authored by IRC) and launch events with key institutions such as the World Bank and African Development Bank raised the profile of Self-supply. This largely unsupported service delivery model supplies water to over one billion people but is rarely addressed in efforts to improve water supply safety and reach. This important book looks at the risks and opportunities associated with safe supply and offers practical solutions for advancing its safety and use across the globe.
2. Two journal articles on [consolidating rural water supply](#) and [scenarios for achieving public systems transformation](#) were based on PhD research by our team in Uganda.
3. We also published a [study](#) on country level accountability mechanisms and their functioning that found major gaps and provided recommendations for CSOs and governments on more effective ways to hold service providers accountable in reaching SDG 6 targets.
4. Our new [Thematic Overview Paper](#) discusses the different pathways under which the 'utilitisation' of rural water supply can take place. It examines the factors that drive these processes, the strengths and weaknesses of the resulting models of utility-managed rural water supply, and possible areas for support.
5. A highlight of the year was developing IRC's CONNECT Campaign which will build new alliances with experts and activists in health, economic development and climate. It was launched with a panel debate between young climate and WASH activists; the start of a video series called 'Toilet Talks'; an associated website; and, campaign activities that will run to the All Systems Connect Symposium in 2023.

5. Inputs

5.1. Staff and offices

With the formal registration of our Mali office in 2021, we now have an established legal presence in the Netherlands (registration of Stichting IRC) and five branch offices in African countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali and Uganda). In addition we have staff in a further five countries (Bangladesh, India, Niger, Rwanda and the USA). We welcome our new colleagues, recruited in 2021, in Rwanda who are hosted by Water For People as part of our new USAID funded Isoko y'Ubuzima project.

At the end of 2021, our total flexible workforce consisted of 130 colleagues: 35 contracted directly from the Netherlands; 61 contracted from one of our focus countries; four interns; and 22 associates. In addition, we hosted eight staff for partner organisations. Moving forward we expect to see the number of staff contracted through our country offices grow both in absolute terms and as a percentage as we continue to implement policies of decentralisation, localisation, and diversification (see next section).

5.2. Organisational development

In line with a public commitment made in 2020, in 2021 we undertook a baseline assessment of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across IRC. This baseline report was adopted by IRC's management which is now working to implement its recommendations. IRC is proud of its increasingly diverse staff, a growing proportion of whom are from the countries in which we work.

Linked to our intention to shift the centre of gravity of power and decision making in IRC, in November 2021, IRC's Supervisory Board agreed to a management proposal to map out a path for further decentralisation. Its end goal is for IRC to become a Networked Organisation with its centre of gravity in the Global South.

In 2022, an internal task force will identify the options for creating a network of increasingly independent, localised and self-contained country offices supported by a secretariat and shared services. The intention is to start implementing this in 2023.

IRC introduced a Whistleblowing Policy in 2019, stipulating the role and responsibilities of the two Trust Persons at IRC. The Trust Persons submit a report, based solely on any disclosures made, to the CEO concerning the activities during the calendar year. Additionally, the Trust Persons advise the CEO on the disclosures, the relevant decisions and the outcomes of any investigation into reported suspected wrongdoing.

In addition IRC reviewed and updated the Disciplinary and Grievance procedure, which are Global Procedures supporting and guiding IRC staff to confidentially and safely express potential grievances.

In 2021, the Trust Persons were approached on three occasions.

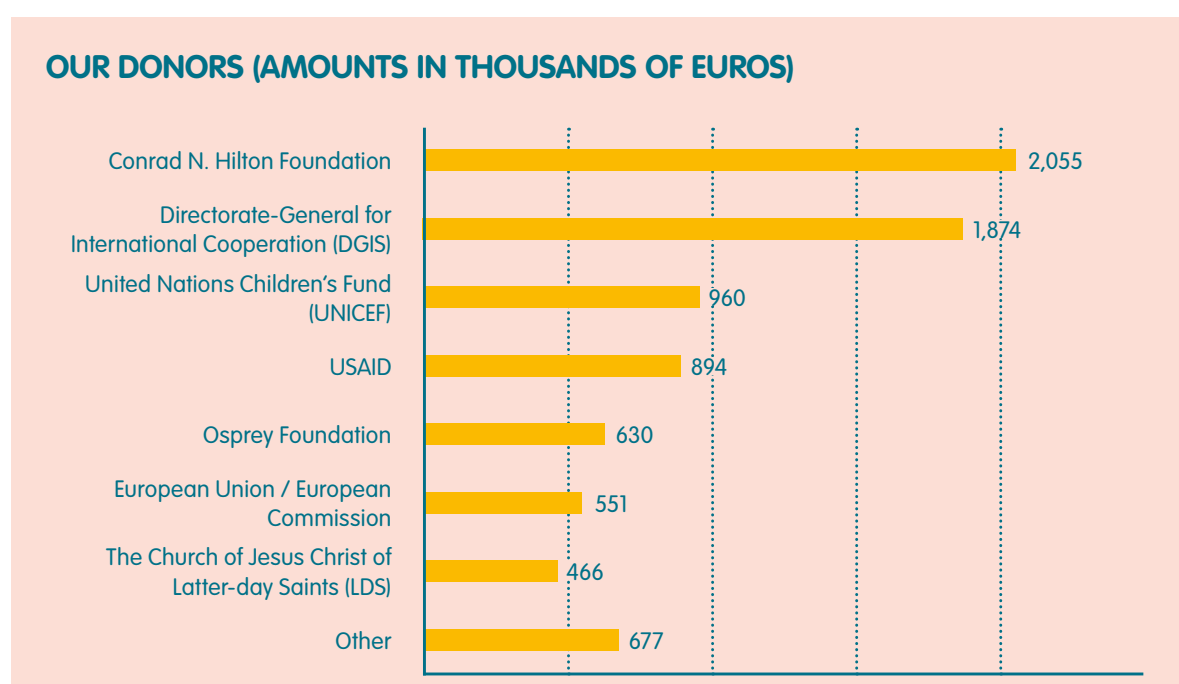
- Once on Employment conditions/Benefits [Solved with the upcoming new global Works Council].
- Twice on behaviour issues, which in both cases were solved in bilateral talks.
- No information is available from the Trust Persons for the other offices.

5.3. Partners and funders

As an organisation that believes passionately in the power of collective action to change the world, partnership is at the heart of everything that we do. In 2021 we continued to grow and deepen these partnerships that span everyone from local communities and grassroots NGOs, through local and national government to global networks. While privileging our partnerships with governments, who we firmly believe to be the only entity with the legitimacy and mandate to ensure universal access, we also partner a wide range of other organisations and individuals from the public and private sectors.

As a vision and mission driven organisation that is at least 90% funded through projects, our clients and donors share a special place in our portfolio of partnerships. It is in identifying and working in areas of shared strategic importance that we achieve transformative impact. We make no effort to hide the fact that we seek to influence those who fund us, while equally accepting that they influence us. We firmly believe that this web of interdependence makes us all stronger and more effective.

To all our partners, clients, donors or otherwise, we take the opportunity to thank you for your partnership in 2021 and look forward to growing and deepening this in 2022.



The following donors and clients joined and supported IRC in 2021: Zie Institut International d'Ingénierie de l'Eau et de l'Environnement / Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) / Agence Française de Développement (AFD) / Aguaconsult Ltd. / Akvo / Amref Flying Doctors / Anesvad Foundation / Aqua for All / Aquaya Institute / Association Africaine de l'Eau (AfWA) / Conrad N. Hilton Foundation / Conservation International / Cranfield University / Databoom / Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) / Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) / DT Global / Dutch Research Council (NWO) / Eau Vive / European Union - European Commission / Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) / Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) / ForthInvestment / Gatsby Africa / IKEA Foundation / Institute for Water Education Delft (IHE) / Institute of Development Studies (IDS) / Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) / KfW Development Bank / MACS Energy & Water / Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) / Netcentric Campaigns / Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) / Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP) / Niras Indevelop / Nuffic / OneDrop Foundation / Osprey Foundation / PNE Benin / Population Services International (PSI) / Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) / Simavi / SNV Netherlands Development Organisation / Splash / Svenska Postkodstiftelsen / Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) / TetraTech / The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) / Unilever / United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) / United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) / United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / University of Colorado Boulder (UCB) / University of Wageningen / Vitens Evides International (VEI) / Vitol Foundation / WASHNote / Water For People (WFP) / Waterloo Foundation / Water.org / Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) / Welthungerhilfe / World Bank World Health Organization (WHO)

5.4. Expenditure and financial balance

Business unit/programme	Ambition 2021	Budget 2021	Expenses 2021	DGIS Programme (% of expenses)
Burkina Faso	€ 1,250,000	€ 2,317,390	€ 1,569,536	€ 69,918 (4%)
Ethiopia	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,121,2223	€ 992,434	€ 75,567 (8%)
Ghana	€ 1,250,000	€ 890,269	€ 738,046	€ 51,818 (7%)
Uganda	€ 1,250,000	€ 930,267	€ 697,413	€ 77,523 (11%)
Total country programmes	€ 5,000,000	€ 5,259,149	€ 3,997,428	€ 274,826 (7%)
Bangladesh	€ 200,000	€ 105,283	€ 77,348	€ 27,487 (36%)
Honduras	€ 200,000	€ 218,945	€ 180,455	€ 36,083 (20%)
India	€ 200,000	€ 106,400	€ 120,020	€ 48,523 (40%)
Mali	€ 275,000	€ 276,799	€ 314,700	€ 63,328 (20%)
Niger	€ 275,000	€ 266,399	€ 242,207	€ 56,553 (23%)
New focus countries mgmt.	€ 100,000	€ 116,518	€ 102,448	€ 78,287 (76%)
Total new focus countries	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,090,344	€ 1,037,179	€ 310,261 (30%)
Global Hub (International)	€ 1,750,000	€ 1,630,396	€ 1,268,472	€ 495,066 (39%)
IRC Consult	€ 850,000	€ 833,980	€ 850,321	€ 45,751 (5%)
Hosted Programmes	€ 500,000	€ 745,386	€ 731,521	€ 0 (0%)
Management & Support (HQ)	€ 650,000	€ 809,870	€ 799,400	€ 271,521 (34%)
Total Netherlands cluster	€ 3,750,000	€ 4,019,631	€ 3,649,713	€ 812,338 (22%)
Total IRC	€ 10,000,000	€ 10,369,124	€ 8,684,320	€ 1,397,426 (16%)

6. Conclusions

At the end of our 2017-2021 strategy, the data presented in this report give reasons for both hope and alarm. We have seen concrete examples of systems change across all our focus countries, in particular in our partner districts. We are confident that our Theory of Change is delivering progressive and sustained long term change in WASH service delivery systems, and we have met the targets we set ourselves. Yet in almost all cases, the positive trend in service levels is too dispersed or too gradual to achieve SDG 6 by 2030. The presidential level political commitment and the financial means to accelerate progress are simply not there.

Over the past years, our direct partners and our fellow travellers in the WASH sector have gradually taken up systems strengthening, and in 2021 we saw several examples of influential actors adopting programmes and strategies aimed at strengthening the interconnected systems and partnerships required for SDG 6. The call for intersectoral partnerships which seemed daunting at the launch of the SDGs in 2016 now feels tangible, and IRC with its CONNECT programme is leading the way.

Through our Destination 2030 strategy with Water For People, IRC is rising to the challenge of SDG 6 and changing ourselves to become a more effective agent of change. Going forward, we will continue to build on the momentum in our focus countries, and globally. At the same time, we are standing up to the challenge of becoming increasingly courageous in calling for critical reflection on sector bottlenecks and failures, and bottlenecks as opportunities to pivot and grow.

Destination 2030 will guide us to radically increase our impact between 2022 and 2030. As systems thinkers, results monitoring and learning and adaptation remain at the heart of our philosophy and Destination 2030 will be updated to ensure we remain on the most effective path possible. Our joint goal is to ensure the delivery of safely managed services to 20 million people by 2030, while impacting delivery to at least 200 million people in the countries where we work, and the more than two billion people who continue to lack services globally.

7. Annexes

[Annex 1: IRC Theory of Change Diagram \(PDF\)](#)

[Annex 2: Programme Scoring and time series data 2019-2021 \(PDF\)](#)

[Annex 3: Outputs and Activities IRC 2021 \(EXCEL\)](#)

[Annex 4: Outcome Harvesting](#)

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make access to safe water and sanitation available for everyone, for good. The UN has set a target to achieve this by 2030 – known as ‘Sustainable Development Goal 6’ (SDG 6).

Resilient systems: the only way

We know that the only way to achieve this goal is through resilient local and national water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems that transform lives. We know how to build and strengthen these systems – but we need to do it now.

It will take everyone, in all parts of the system, changing the way they think and work.

Everyone, together

Each part of a country’s WASH system must work effectively: from people using pumps, to monitoring tools, to finance systems. This can only be achieved if everyone in the system knows and plays their part.

Achieving universal access calls for collective action by a broad movement of government, civil society, private sector service providers, financiers, academia and others.

Our unique position

As a change hub, we’re in a unique position to unite people to drive and champion change from the ground up. We need to convince district, country and global decision makers of what it’ll take to achieve SDG 6.

Now is the time

We need to act now. We’re halfway through but not halfway there. We need everyone to commit to massive-scale change – and as you’re reading this, that also means you.