

Organizing framework for functional national WASH monitoring and evaluation systems

Accelerating national and subnational
WASH monitoring for improved asset
management and service delivery
(UNICEF, IRC, Akvo)



The goal of the program is to strengthen WASH services monitoring at national and subnational levels for improved WASH service delivery in the nine DGIS-WCARO countries. This is achieved through national and subnational capacity building with the use of improved, open source and scalable tools for data collection and WASH monitoring. This will lead to data-driven decision making that will improve the management of WASH assets like water points and sanitation facilities at subnational level.

In partnership with subnational and national governments, assessments of current monitoring systems will be made and the need for additional systems and data discussed to provide a country-based solution for sustainable WASH monitoring and asset management.

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Abbreviations

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ODF	Open Defecation Free
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAIDS MERG	UNAIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WPDx	Water Point Data Exchange

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to introduce a generic organizing framework¹ for a functional national WASH sector monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The framework is the basis for the accompanying “National WASH M&E System Strengthening Tool”.

This framework provides (1) a description of the main components of a functional national WASH M&E system, and (2) some benchmarks against which to assess progress in establishing such a system. This document covers system components that need to be present and work to an acceptable standard for the WASH M&E system to function effectively. However, not all components need to be implemented at all levels of the system and this document does not provide detailed guidance on how to operationalize the system.

This organizing framework stresses routine monitoring, data collection and data use at sub-national levels closest to where WASH services are provided and regulated.

INTENDED USERS OF THE DOCUMENT

National and sub-national WASH government officials and program managers; staff with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) responsibilities; M&E officers from different agencies/organizations; and development partners involved in national WASH monitoring support. The organizing framework is applicable to all countries, regardless of the type of WASH policies and services or the level of M&E capacity and implementation.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The organizing framework can be used to establish a common understanding of what constitutes a functional national WASH M&E system. It can serve as a concise checklist for national WASH M&E system planning and implementation which need to address all 12 components of the system over time. It can be used in M&E trainings, technical guidance and assistance.

To supplement this, the accompanying M&E system strengthening tool provides statements to score against each of the 12 components and can be used to facilitate discussions about actions that can be taken to strengthen national WASH M&E. The identification of priority actions to strengthen the national WASH M&E system can be used to produce a multi-year, costed national WASH M&E work plan which different agencies can support with coordinated financial and/or technical assistance, where needed. It is designed to be re-applied over time to assess progress in M&E system implementation.

¹ The content of this document is a WASH adaptation of the UNAIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group guidance document called “Organizing Framework for a Functional National HIV Monitoring and Evaluation System” developed in 2008. IRC, UNICEF and Akvo would like to thank the UNAIDS MERG authors for the use of this content. A useful reference for readers interested in a non-sector specific toolkit adapted from the same UNAIDS MERG framework may refer to the World Bank publication by Görgens and Kusek (2012) “Making Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Work: A Capacity Development Tool Kit”.

UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL WASH M&E DATA NEEDS

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

The investigation of an issue starts by asking pertinent questions that serve to organize the response: What is the problem, e.g. sub-standard levels of service or slippage in ODF community status? What factors are contributing to the problem, e.g. poor support for community-based service providers? What can be done, e.g. developing an indicator framework and standards for support functions and service levels? Once a response has been formulated and implemented for a sufficient period of time, questions start to become more focused: Are the national and sub-national responses working? Are enough people reached to solve the problem? Figure 1 outlines the main questions that must be addressed when planning a comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation system, and lists the main data collection methods that can be used to answer these questions [Rugg et al., 2004; UNAIDS, 2007].



Figure 1. A question based approach to national WASH M&E adapted from UNAIDS

Although this document focuses specifically on the organizing framework for a single national WASH M&E system, it is important to note that some of the required data may already be collected, either routinely or periodically, through the other existing national and/or sub-national information systems and special surveys/studies. National WASH accounts may include information on the financial resources devoted; and research institutions may be able to provide relevant data from major research studies conducted. These available data sources should be consulted and formal links established to avoid any duplication of effort in data collection.

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK FOR A NATIONAL WASH M&E SYSTEM

This section provides an overview of the 12 components of a national WASH M&E system (Figure 2). The outer ring represents the human resources, partnerships and planning to support data collection and data use. It includes individuals, organizations, functions/actions, and the organizational culture that are fundamental to improving and sustaining M&E system performance. The middle ring focuses on the mechanisms through which data are collected, verified, and transformed into useful information. The center of the diagram represents the central purpose of the M&E system: using data for decision-making.

People, partnerships and planning

Component 1: Organizational structures with WASH M&E functions

Component 2: Human capacity for WASH M&E

Component 3: Coordination of the national WASH M&E system

Component 4: National WASH M&E framework

Component 5: Annual costed national WASH M&E work plan

Component 6: Communication, advocacy and culture for WASH M&E

Collecting, verifying, and analyzing data

Component 7: Routine monitoring

Component 8: Surveys

Component 9: National and sub-national WASH databases

Component 10: Supportive supervision and data auditing

Component 11: Evaluation and research

Using data for decision-making

Component 12: Access and use of data

The 12 components described above are not 12 steps intended to be implemented sequentially; rather, these 12 components all need to be present and work to an acceptable standard for the national WASH M&E system to function effectively. Countries may need to focus on a few of the components at the outset, focusing on the weakest areas/components first, building the system up over time. Not all components need to be implemented at all levels of the system; what is relevant at the national level, for example, may not be relevant at the service delivery level.

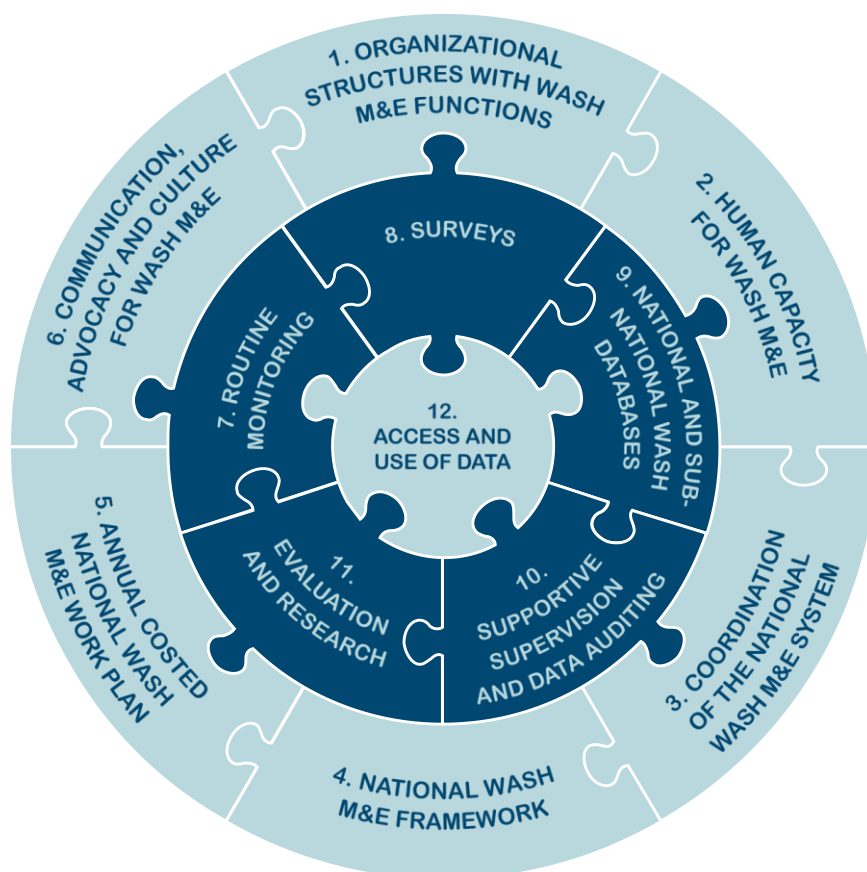


Figure 2. Overview of the 12 components.

12 components of functional national WASH M&E system

COMPONENT 1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES WITH WASH M&E FUNCTIONS

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

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- **Leadership:** Effective leadership for M&E in key organizations at national, sub-national and service delivery levels.
- **Human Resources:** Job descriptions for M&E staff; institutionalized roles and responsibilities for M&E, adequate number of skilled M&E staff; defined career path in M&E.
- **Organizational Culture:** National commitment and sub-national commitment to ensure M&E system performance. Accepted guidelines for monitoring and reporting at sub-national and service delivery levels.
- **Organizational Roles and Functions:** Well-defined organizational structure, including well-defined leadership, a national WASH M&E unit; sub-national M&E units or focal points; M&E units or M&E focal points in other public, private and civil society organizations; written mandates for planning, coordinating and managing the M&E system; well-defined M&E roles and responsibilities for key individuals and organizations at all levels with technical support, including those for continuous data collection.

- **Organizational Mechanisms:** Routine mechanisms for M&E planning and management, for stakeholder coordination and consensus building and, for monitoring the performance of the M&E system; incentives for M&E system performance.
- **Organizational Performance:** Key organizations achieve their annual work plan objectives for M&E.

Description: For the national WASH M&E system to function effectively, a variety of organizations need to work together at different levels. Ideally, the system should be coordinated by one organization, such as a national water, sanitation, or health ministry or directorate or its equivalent authority (referred to as the lead institution). WASH M&E activities are often sub-divided by sub-sectors or the respective responsibilities of the various national ministries. There may be a single lead institution per sub-sector in the case of separate WASH M&E systems. Efforts should be made to reduce duplication. The lead institution(s) should have a dedicated M&E unit with the mandate and authority to coordinate M&E activities and to request data from all relevant partners; it should also have sufficient independence to report openly on M&E data. Additional M&E staff are required at the national level, including WASH monitoring focal points at the WASH-related ministries, as well as at sub-national governmental levels and in organizations or facilities providing WASH services. Some key roles for M&E staff are analysts, IT specialists, and database managers and data managers. Deliberate efforts should be made to mainstream WASH into already existing structures for planning and coordination of WASH, health and development programs at the sub-national level. In addition to human resources, there is also a need for financial resources, as well as basic infrastructure, equipment and supplies.

COMPONENT 2: HUMAN CAPACITY FOR WASH M&E

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

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Defined skill set for individuals and organizations at national, sub-national, and service-delivery levels.
- Work force development and retention plans, including career paths for M&E.
- Costed human capacity building plan.
- Nationally endorsed curricula for organizational and technical capacity building.
- Local and/or regional training capacity, including links to training institutions, colleges, universities and technical schools
- Supervision, in-service training and mentoring and a performance management system.
- Internal communication and information dissemination (feedback loops) to increase an appreciation of data collection, monitoring and reporting for the workforce.

Description: Not only is it necessary to have dedicated and adequate numbers of M&E staff, it is essential for this staff to have the right skills for the work and a good understanding of the added value of M&E activities. Human capacity building should focus on all levels; have measurable performance objectives; include a capacity building plan with clearly defined outputs; and include ways to track progress over time, including feedback loop mechanisms. M&E human capacity building requires a wide range of activities, including formal training, in-service training, and mentorship and coaching. M&E capacity building should focus not only on the technical aspects of M&E, but also address skills in leadership, financial management, facilitation, supervision, advocacy and communication.

COMPONENT 3: COORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL WASH M&E SYSTEM

Performance Goal: Establish and maintain partnerships among in-country and international stakeholders who are involved in planning and managing national WASH M&E system(s).

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Technical coordination of planned national WASH M&E activities in a joint working group
- WASH mechanisms to coordinate all stakeholders, e.g. joint planning, sharing, execution, learning and review with respect to M&E.
- Sub-national leadership and capacity for stakeholder coordination within the lead agency or responsible units.
- Routine communication channel to facilitate exchange of information among stakeholders.

Description: It is important that all stakeholders in WASH monitoring work together to follow national monitoring. A WASH M&E Technical Working Group meets regularly and includes all relevant stakeholders, including all organizations responsible for M&E activities listed in the costed national WASH monitoring work plan.

Other examples of M&E partnerships include conducting joint planning with key M&E stakeholders; and conducting joint M&E activities with representatives from different organizations.

In addition, partnerships between the lead institution and sector stakeholders involved in M&E activities are needed, along with partnerships between the lead institution and other public sector ministries and national umbrella organizations. To avoid duplication of effort, it is also important to establish communication mechanisms with those organizations that provide regular technical support in M&E, both nationally, regionally and internationally.²

COMPONENT 4: NATIONAL WASH M&E FRAMEWORK

Performance Goal: Develop and regularly update national M&E framework including identified data needs, national standardized indicators, data collection procedures and tools, and roles and responsibilities for implementation of a functional national WASH M&E system. Separate frameworks for different sub-sectors may be appropriate but they should be cross-referenced in order to prevent duplication in data collection and other activities.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Existence of a policy/strategy, framework, and/or manual establishing the main features of the M&E system and guiding efforts of the different WASH stakeholders.
- M&E mandate clearly defined in the national WASH policy. The scope of the M&E system is clearly defined, including the sub-sectors in question and key definitions of service areas and service types included (e.g. covering drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene; in urban, peri-urban, small towns and rural areas; at national and subnational levels).
- Broad-based multi-sectoral participation in developing the national WASH M&E framework.
- The national WASH M&E framework is explicitly linked to the National Strategic Plan and country commitments, e.g. SDG, N'gor, SWA commitments/targets.
- The national WASH M&E framework describes the implementation of all components of a national WASH monitoring and evaluation system.
- The national WASH M&E framework adheres to international and national technical standards for WASH M&E.
- Well-defined and consistent indicators assessed against national and international standards.
- Costing of resources and financing mechanisms.

² National M&E systems and statistical services are also the foundation for M&E of regional and international WASH commitments by countries. Examples of relevant bodies are JMP, WHO GLAAS, and GEMI for the Sustainable Development Goals and AMCOW for the African N'gor Sanitation Commitments. To avoid duplication, data should only have to be collected in a single coherent set of data collection and reporting activities.

- A national WASH monitoring and evaluation assessment has been completed and recommendations for system strengthening have been addressed in a revised national WASH M&E framework.

Description: The M&E mandate should be clearly defined in the National WASH Policy and other relevant policy documents. A wide variety of stakeholders should participate in the development and regular updating of the national WASH M&E framework, including sub-national authorities and representatives from civil society. The objectives of the national WASH M&E framework should be explicitly linked to the WASH National Strategic Plan to ensure that relevant data are collected to measure the progress reaching universal access to WASH. Because the national WASH M&E framework is the basis for the implementation of a functional national WASH M&E system(s), it should describe how all components of the M&E system will be implemented over time. The national WASH M&E framework should describe a 3-5 year implementation strategy, indicate costs and resource requirement estimates and outline a strategy for resource mobilization, complete with the source of the resources (financial, technical etc.) The national WASH M&E framework, and specifically the national indicators, should adhere to explicit global and national technical standards and agreed best practices. The M&E framework should also adhere to national laws; for example, the National Statistical Act may specify that the National Bureau of Statistics is responsible for all data collection in the country, which needs to be reflected in the flow of data within the M&E system. In addition to the multi-sectoral national WASH M&E framework, different sectors, development partners and sub-national entities involved in the WASH may develop their own M&E plans that detail how each will collect and report WASH data to contribute to national WASH M&E. The national WASH M&E framework should be reviewed and updated regularly to make adjustments in data collection needs associated with revisions of the National Strategic Plan, and to strengthen M&E system performance based on periodic M&E assessments.

COMPONENT 5: ANNUAL COSTED NATIONAL WASH M&E WORK PLAN

Performance Goal: Develop an annual costed WASH monitoring work plan, including the specific and costed (time and money) national WASH M&E activities of all relevant stakeholders and identified sources of funding. Use this plan for coordination and assessing progress of M&E implementation throughout the year.

Performance Results:

- Activities, responsible implementers, timeframe, activity costs are identified by the lead institution.
- A WASH monitoring work plan contains activities, responsible implementers, roles, timeframe, activity costs and identified funding or the plan is explicitly integrated into the lead agency budget and plans.
- Sub-national M&E work plans should also be in place where these are planned independently of the national WASH M&E work plan.
- The expenses related to capturing data from service providers is incorporated into the work plan.
- The WASH M&E work plan explicitly links to other relevant work plans and the government Medium Term Expenditure Framework.
- Resources (human, physical, financial) are committed to implement the WASH monitoring work plan.
- All relevant stakeholders endorsed the WASH M&E work plan content.
- Links have been drawn and dialogue opened with other sectors to avoid duplication.
- The work plan is reviewed and updated annually based on performance monitoring.
- The annual plan is based on an understanding of the full life-cycle costs of installation, updating and maintenance and support of the M&E systems.

Description: For the national WASH M&E framework to be operationalized, an annual costed WASH monitoring work plan needs to be developed that describes the priority WASH monitoring activities for the year with defined responsibilities for implementation, costs for each activity, identified funding, and a clear timeline for delivery of outputs. This work plan enables the lead institution and the technical

working group (see component 3) to ensure that financial and human resources are mobilized and allows for monitoring progress towards implementation of the national WASH M&E system.

The costed work plan should reflect agreement on key roles and responsibilities and define who will implement and finance each activity. The costed work plan is not the lead institution work plan for M&E; rather, it is a joint work plan that integrates the national WASH M&E activities of all relevant stakeholders. If there is not a single work plan document, there should be a clearly implemented set of plans and budgets that enable these joint activities to take place on an annual basis in a coordinated fashion at national and sub-national level. The costs of engaging WASH service providers to provide required data should be included into the work plan. Where overlaps occur (e.g. support for the same institutions and activities), an agreed co-financing arrangement should be encouraged and indicated accordingly on the plan. This may be the case for large undertakings such as national surveys and/or assessments.

It allows all stakeholders to plan and work together in a harmonized way; this is why it must be developed and communicated with input and agreement from all key stakeholders. M&E work plans may also be developed at the sub-national and service delivery levels to guide M&E implementation linked to the national WASH M&E system. The annual M&E work planning cycle should be closely linked to the overall budgeting cycle to ensure that funding can be secured for implementation of the plan and to ensure the sustainability of monitoring capacity.

COMPONENT 6: COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY AND CULTURE FOR WASH M&E

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

Performance Results:

- The national WASH communication strategy includes a specific WASH communication and advocacy plan for monitoring and evaluation.
- M&E is explicitly referenced in national WASH policies and the National Strategic Plan.
- 'M&E leaders' among high-level officials are identified and are actively endorsing M&E actions.
- M&E advocacy activities are implemented according to the national WASH advocacy plan.
- M&E materials are available that target different audiences and support data sharing and use.

Description: It is important to demystify national WASH M&E and M&E in general, to create a supportive M&E culture, and reduce any negative connotations of M&E. It is important to shift emphasis from project and donor monitoring to alignment and harmonization to national monitoring and evaluation.

A communication and advocacy strategy for M&E can help to achieve these objectives. The strategy needs to be multi-dimensional, with tailored messages for different audiences, including the general public. One important message that will help to rally citizen support is that the national WASH M&E system is not for government purposes alone; it is useful to all stakeholders in WASH. M&E fosters transparency, but also requires a transparent environment to function effectively. Providing a national focus can strengthen the coordination of activities and harmonize efforts between the diverse WASH stakeholders.

Obtaining political support for transparency and accountability related to WASH is an important component of the communication and advocacy strategy. One way to gain political support is to identify an 'M&E leader', a high level official who can promote M&E among his/her peers, to help foster an understanding about the importance of investing in quality data for policy formulation and government program decision-making. The communication and advocacy strategy for national WASH M&E should be part of the country's national WASH communication strategy to ensure that M&E is being mainstreamed by lead government institutions.

COMPONENT 7: ROUTINE MONITORING

Performance Goal: Produce timely and high quality routine administrative WASH monitoring data.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Data collection strategy is explicit about why data is collected (e.g. linked to indicators) and how it is expected to be used (e.g. linked to planning, budgeting).
- Clearly defined data collection, transfer, and reporting mechanisms, including collaboration and coordination among the different stakeholders in the routine monitoring process at sub-national level.
- Data collection and reporting take place at sufficient frequency linked to stakeholders' needs (e.g. performance evaluation, planning, budgeting).
- Essential tools and equipment for data management (e.g., collection, transfer, storage, analysis).
- Routine procedures for data transfer from sub-national to national levels.
- Well-functioning WASH infrastructure monitoring / asset management system.
- Well-functioning WASH service level monitoring and performance monitoring of service providers and service authorities.
- Well-structured and managed national WASH monitoring database to capture, verify, analyze, and present WASH monitoring data from all levels and sectors, including data required to analyze national indicators, for example, on WASH service levels, behavior change, fecal sludge management, support to service providers, regulation, and finances.

Description: The lead institution and sub-national authorities need a routine system to track the coverage and quality of WASH services and hygiene promotion and manage sector assets. To guide decision-making at all levels, the data needs of different stakeholders should be determined and routine data made available in a timely fashion. Standardized data include inputs (resources, such as staff, funds, materials, WASH facilities, supplies), activities (implementation of interventions and services, such as hygiene promotion, drilling, training, etc.) and outputs (facilities installed/rehabilitated, pits emptied, waste treated etc.). Standardized data from all providers, including private and community-based service providers, should be collected on a routine basis. Data exchange standards, such as the Water Point Data Exchange (WDPx), can greatly increase the usefulness of collected and stored data by increasing the compatibility of data sets across institutions, tools and sectors.

If a functioning information system exists that routinely collects data, there is no need to establish another data management system. The WASH technical working group should ensure that the data from these systems is also captured in the national WASH information system on a timely basis to allow for their inclusion in routine reports and other information products.

Routine data on community-based WASH services: Establishing routine data collection and reporting from community-based WASH services is challenging, but they provide essential information needed by the lead institution and sub-national government levels to coordinate WASH authorities and monitor WASH service delivery comprehensively. Data should be obtained from community-based service providers, such as those funded directly by the government as well as those funded through other sources (e.g., by development partners). Sectoral databases may already exist that include data relevant to WASH programs. In advance of data collection and the development of new data sets and tools, it is important to identify all existing data sources and to establish appropriate links and avoid duplication.

COMPONENT 8: SURVEYS

Performance Goal: Produce timely and high quality data from surveys.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Protocols for all surveys following international standards, e.g. the fundamental principles of official statistics and international guidelines.³

³ The UN Statistical Division has developed extensive guidance and standards including the fundamental principles of official statistics: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/>

- Specified schedule for survey-based data collection linked to stakeholders' needs, including identification of resources for implementation.
- A list of WASH-related surveys conducted.
- Well-functioning behavioral surveillance system based on household and community level data

Description:

Some countries may wish to include: household survey of WASH access and use, a survey capturing knowledge and attitudes of the general population; a school survey on WASH education and students' knowledge; a survey of the extent of WASH services at health facilities;

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

COMPONENT 9: NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL WASH DATABASES

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

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Database(s) designed to respond to the decision-making and reporting needs of different stakeholders.
- Common data standards are used by different agencies and sectors to facilitate data consistency and avoid duplication of effort. Databases are designed to use these common standards to support exporting and importing data and linking data platforms
- Sectors and sub-sectors to identify and use common repositories when possible to avoid duplication and share costs for an improved database platform.
- Well-structured and managed national and sub-national WASH databases (based on the principle of subsidiarity) to capture, verify, analyze, and present program M&E data from all levels and sectors.
- Required services are contracted including: installation of the databases, operations and maintenance, technical support and regular upgrades based on changing technology and user needs. The full costs of the facilities, services, database and related software and hardware are included in the relevant budget lines.

Description: An information system consists of the infrastructure (hardware), a database and related software tools (graphical user interface to calculate, edit and manage information), and skilled individuals trained in the methods to use the databases to capture, verify, transfer, analyze, and share data. Clear roles and responsibilities need to be established at national, sub-national, and service-delivery levels to ensure an appropriate and timely data flow between the different levels. A national and sub-national WASH database is not a prerequisite for a functional national WASH monitoring system. However, an electronic data management system allows for the information to be captured in a way that facilitates data verification, data sharing, and data use. Where there are existing databases, such as a functioning health information system, it is important to build on these rather than establish a parallel system. If no database exists, there are several available software packages that may be considered as a starting point. Special attention should be given to the use of data standards and the

The International Household Survey Network (IHSN) has also developed useful guidance on designing and implementing surveys:
<http://www.ihsn.org/home/guidelines>

ability to export data in different useful formats for accessibility. Countries that are not at a stage of developing an electronic national database should have a mechanism for the systematic archiving of data and reports to allow easy data access and use. A national WASH database(s) may include the following types of recent as well as historical data:

- Up-to-date contact list of organizations involved in WASH programs and M&E.
- Data on all national standardized WASH indicators specified in the national WASH M&E framework.
- Data from various WASH-related data sources, including:
 - Data from surveys.
 - Routine infrastructure-based program data.
 - Routine community- and/or household-based program data.
 - Data on available resources.
 - Information on WASH capacity building activities.

In addition to the national WASH database(s), different stakeholders may have their own databases. It is important to evaluate if common standards are implemented and whether they should be. In addition, it may be useful to use common repositories instead of separate databases. When possible, relevant data from these databases should be linked with the national WASH database(s) and/or transferred; existing standard exchange formats should be used to facilitate data transfer between different databases.

COMPONENT 10: SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION AND DATA AUDITING

Performance Goal: Monitor data quality periodically and address any obstacles to producing high-quality data (i.e., data that are valid, reliable, comprehensive, and timely). Identify at the same time any capacity gaps in the staff implementing the system at all levels, and provide immediate support as well as design simple remedial mechanisms as necessary.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- Guidelines for supervising routine data collection at community- and facility based WASH service delivery levels.
- Routine supervision visits, including data assessments (audits) and feedback to local staff.
- Periodic data quality audits. Supervision reports and audit reports.

Description: Supportive supervision refers to overseeing and directing the performance of others and transferring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are essential for successful M&E of WASH activities. It offers an opportunity to take stock of the work that has been done; critically reflect on it; provide feed-back to local staff; and where appropriate, provide specific guidance to make improvements and build capacity.

Data auditing is the process of verifying the completeness and accuracy of reported aggregate WASH data. This typically requires field visits to users, communities, local government, NGOs or service providers that reported the data in order to check these data against existing records.

For sound decision-making, it is important to be confident about data quality. Regular data quality checks and provision of feedback are important mechanisms to improve or sustain data quality. Guidelines for supportive supervision are useful in order to clarify expectations and standardize procedures. Supportive supervision should be conducted with a sample of WASH service delivery providers and can also be used as a mechanism to strengthen local M&E capacity. Data auditing requires that indicator protocols are in place, as well as protocols for data quality audits. It may be cost-

and time-effective to combine supportive M&E supervision with financial and/or program implementation supervision.

COMPONENT 11: EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Performance Goal: Identify and prioritize key evaluation and research questions, coordinate evidence generation to meet the identified needs, and enhance the quality and use of evaluation and research findings and recommendations.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- An inventory of completed and ongoing country-specific WASH evaluation and research studies, including sustainability checks, WASH-BATs, JMP findings etc.
- An inventory of program evaluations and project audits.
- Inventory of local WASH evaluation and research capacity, including major research institutions and their focus of work.
- Prioritized, national WASH evaluation and research agendas and plans in order to fill knowledge gaps and ensure accountability to all stakeholders.
- Guidance on evaluation and research standards and appropriate methods, templates and tools.
- Ethical approval procedures and standards.
- Quality assurance processes and tools for evaluations and research.
- Joint sector review, national conference or forum for dissemination and discussion of WASH research and evaluation findings.
- Evidence of use of evaluation and research findings (e.g., referenced in planning documents and action plans).
- Existence of a mechanism to ensure that evaluation and research findings and recommendations are used. For example, recorded management responses to findings and tracking of the implementation of the any resulting action plan.

Description: Evaluation and research are essential but often neglected components of a comprehensive WASH M&E system. Appropriate use of evaluation/research data ensures that the planning of the WASH services is based on the best available evidence and guides ongoing national and sub-national program improvement. It also an integral part of sector accountability mechanisms. Establishing a country-led process for identifying evaluation/research gaps relevant to the National Strategic Plan and for coordinating evaluation/research partners helps ensure that evaluation/research studies are relevant to the country's needs and avoid duplication.

Identifying evaluation and research service providers and managers, building their capacities, developing and applying appropriate standards, templates and quality assurance processes and tools help ensure the quality and usefulness of evaluation findings and recommendations. Processes must also be in place to ensure that evaluation and research results are available, widely shared, used to inform decision-making, and translated into action.

As a first step, it is important to take stock of what is already happening at research institutions and other relevant organizations and to invite these key stakeholders to become part of the national process.

A national process may focus on:

- Governance structures for evaluation and research, including requirements for registration of studies and local dissemination of study findings;
- Development and actual use of quality assurance and ethical approval procedures and standards;
- A prioritized evaluation and research agenda, e.g. fecal sludge management, water quality, ODF slippage; and,
- Capacity building of evaluation and research stakeholders (service providers and managers of research and evaluation projects)
- Mechanisms for the use of evaluation and research findings in the planning, policy, and program decision-making processes.

COMPONENT 12: ACCESS AND USE OF DATA

Performance Goal: Disseminate and use data from the M&E system to stakeholders for sector learning and to track progress against national and sub-national targets, to support policy formulation, and to guide annual planning, improvement of WASH services, and corrective actions at all levels.

Performance Results - The following elements are in place:

- The National Strategic Plan and the national WASH M&E framework include a data use plan.
- Analysis of data needs and data users.
- Evidence of clearly defined and commonly agreed sector performance indicators
- Data use calendar to guide the timetable for major data collection efforts and reporting requirements.
- Timetable for national reporting.
- Standard format for reporting and data tabulation.
- Information products tailored to different audiences and a dissemination schedule.
- Evidence of information use (e.g., data referenced in funding proposals and planning documents, use of technical and financial data for regulation purposes).
- Evidence of wide access to raw data and simple tabulations and key analyses for the purposes of decision making and improving WASH plans and services at all levels.

Description: The most important reason for conducting M&E is to provide the data needed for guiding policy formulation and program operations. A detailed data use plan should be included in the national WASH monitoring framework; this plan should link data needs and data collection efforts with specific information products for different audiences, as well as a timetable for dissemination. It should also include activities to encourage data use, such as workshops to discuss the implications of M&E data for decision-making for sustaining and extending services. A functional M&E system collates and presents the data in a way that facilitates data use at all levels, including the citizens and beneficiaries of services. Evidence of data use includes:

- The National Strategic Plan explicitly references the most up-to-date service levels for WASH;
- WASH reports include accurate references to available national M&E data; and,
- Implementers refer to national M&E data in their WASH interventions.

There are a range of strategies to promote data dissemination and use, including: ensuring ownership of data; ensuring dissemination of good quality data in a timely manner; determining appropriate information products for different users; allocating sufficient resources for data dissemination; and, providing assistance for data use.

A short bibliography

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