

Facilitating change in a complex environment Delivering rural water services in Ghana

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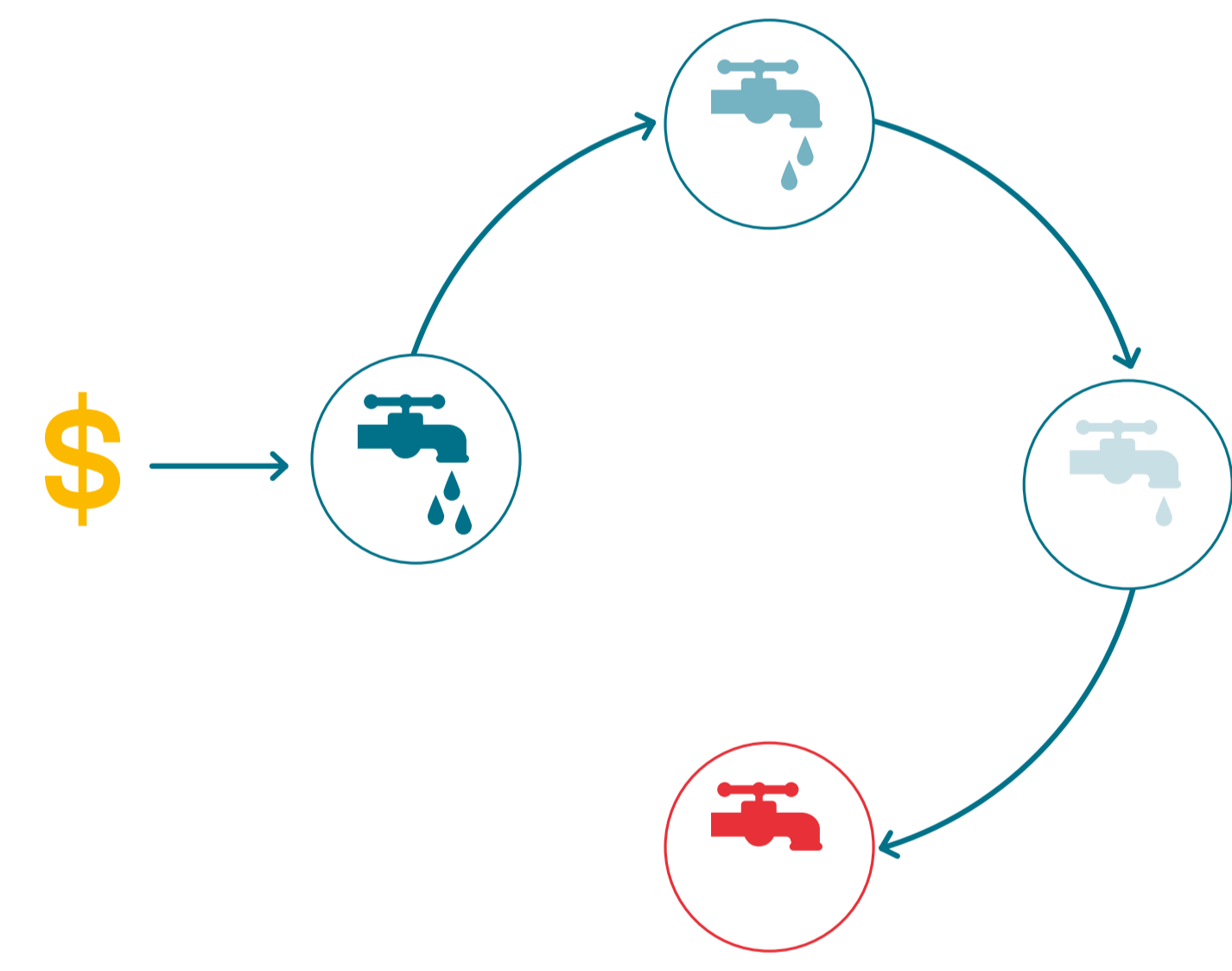


Between 2009 and 2014 IRC through the Triple-S project, supported Ghana's rural water agency, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), to build consensus around a new vision of adequate water services that are sustained over time and develop an approach to make that vision a reality.

This poster shares some lessons from how CWSA, pilot districts (East Gonja - Northern Region; Sunyani West - Brong Ahafo Region; Akatsi North and Akatsi South - Volta Region) and partners were supported to navigate the sector's complex realities.

One of the reasons IRC chose to work on 'systemic change' through the Triple-S project (a learning initiative carried out from 2009-2014 in Ghana, Uganda, and at the international level) in Ghana was that it was typical of many countries striving to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); it had made significant progress in increasing geographical coverage, but it had significant problems:

- the sector was pre-occupied with extending 'coverage' by accelerating the installation of new water infrastructure;
- the sector was donor dominated with many autonomous projects and financing some 95% of rural water investments;
- There was weak leadership and lack of coordination.



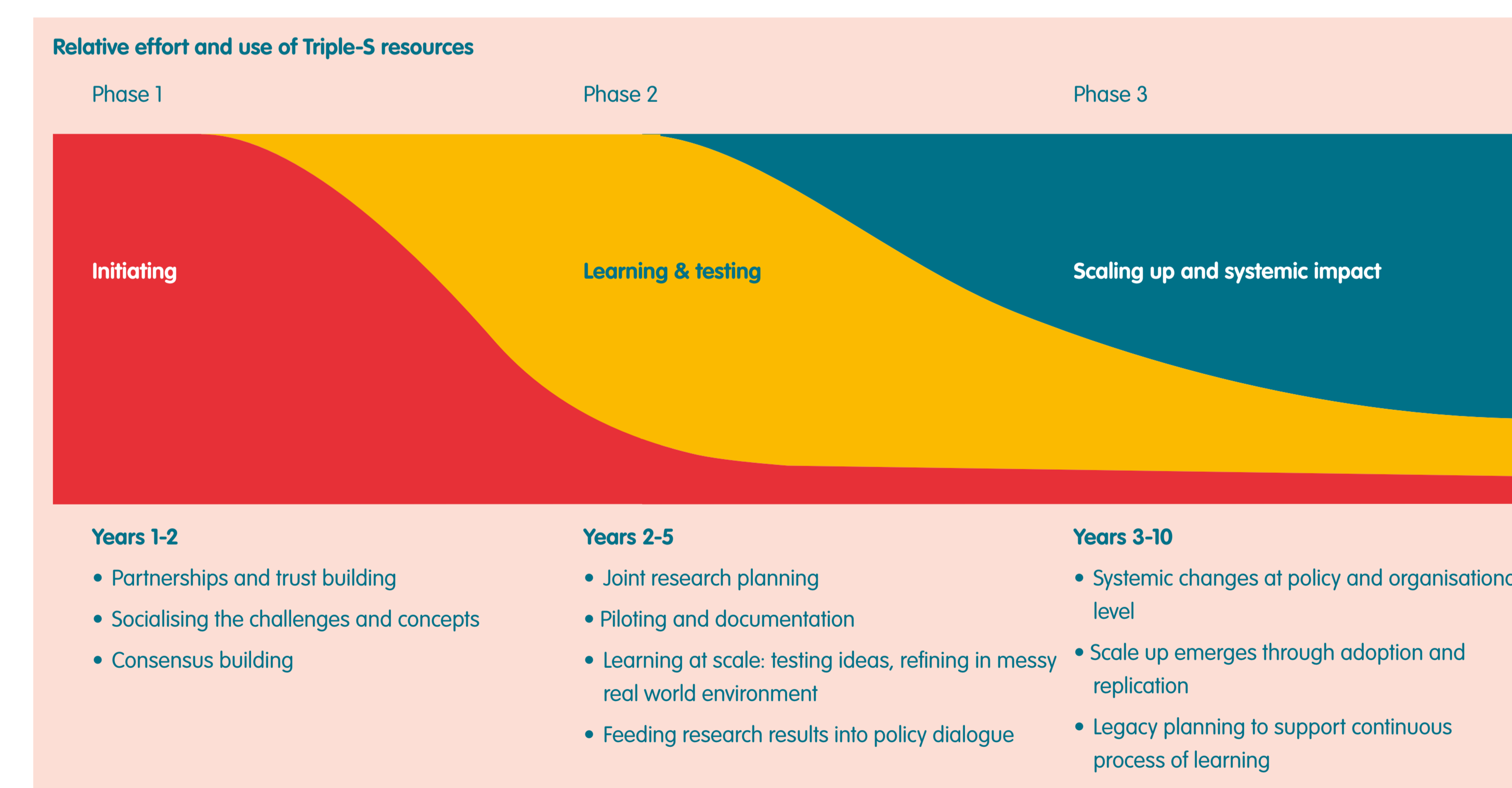
In Ghana the sector was pre-occupied with extending 'coverage' by accelerating the installation of new water infrastructure



A phased approach
Triple-S took a phased approach to change and sector strengthening. In the first phase it sought to build trust with key actors, foster consensus around the sector's problems and promising concepts, and support CWSA to lead more effectively.

The second phase focused on a collaborative endeavour to test a range of promising solutions in three pilot districts. In consultation with sector stakeholders, the project diagnosed the root causes of failed water systems, generated alternative solutions, and interrogated and refined them through experimentation. Through regular feedback and reflection workshops, the models were continually improved and internalised. By providing empirical evidence for informed policymaking, the results of the pilots also served to boost the confidence and leadership capacity of CWSA.

The third phase, which outlives the initial five-year project, is working to institutionalise the gains and actively promote scaling of the new pathways to delivering sustained water services.



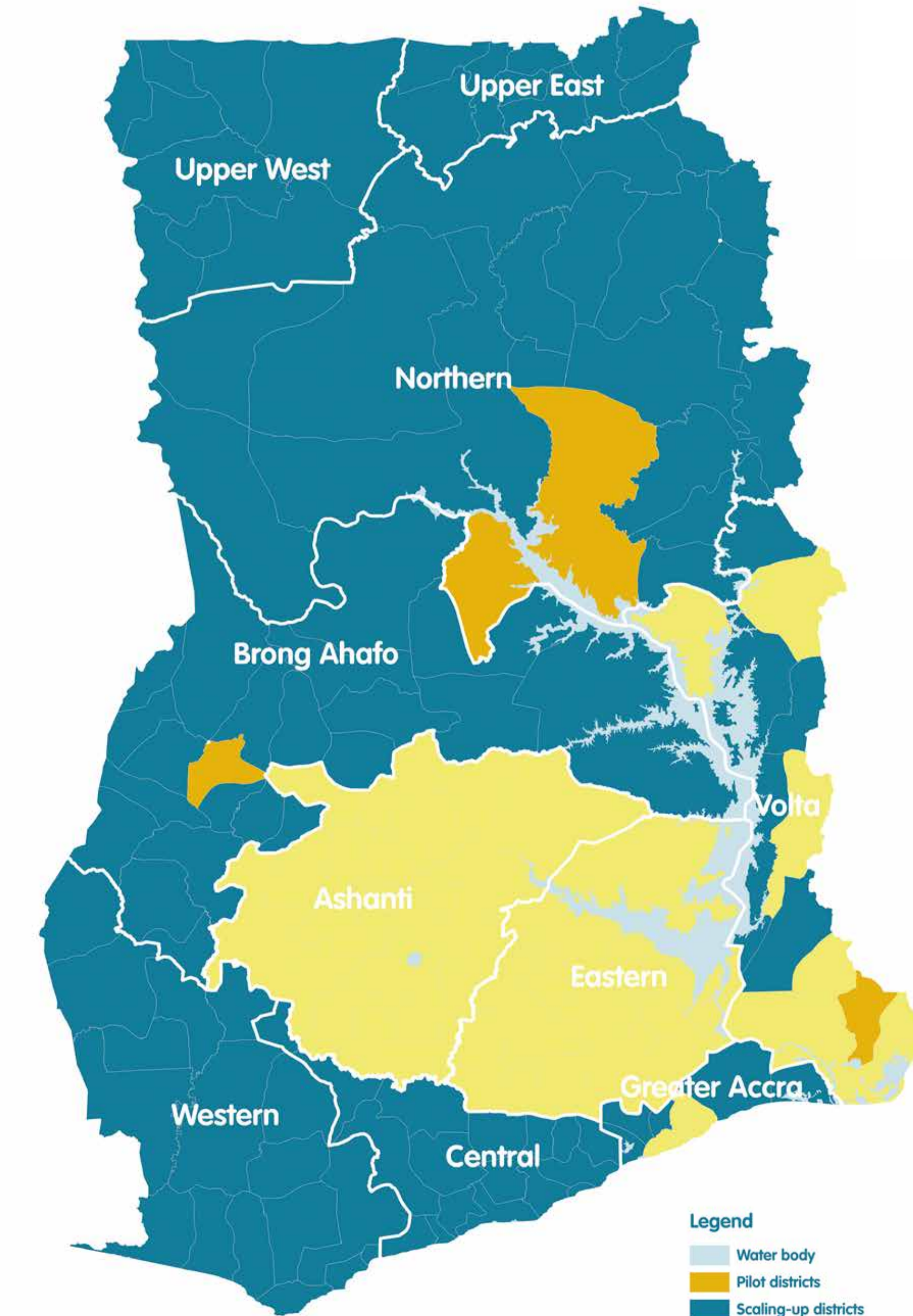
A partnership and learning approach
Whereas previous projects had typically been managed autonomously, the Triple-S initiative was deliberately hosted by CWSA with the view to fostering institutionalisation of the outcomes. Through regular joint learning and reflection meetings, Triple-S supported CWSA to rethink its organisational systems

and develop evidence-informed policy documents and tools needed for leading the drive towards service delivery. The project also facilitated regular external reflections with the pilot districts and other sector stakeholders.

District officials undertaking water service monitoring using a mobile phones to get reliable data on functionality and water service levels

The costs of facilitating sector change
About US\$ 1 million per year for backstopping policy facilitation, engagement, action research and strategic communication.

- Remaining challenges**
- Regulation of the rural sub-sector still requires further attention and reflection.
 - Sector financing to ensure the provision of sustainable services at scale remains a major challenge.



Service monitoring has been scaled up from 3 to 131 districts in partnership with World Bank, CWSA, UNICEF, Akvo and SkyFox

What has changed?
There is increased confidence and leadership by government, especially the CWSA, to guide the sector for providing sustainable services at scale.

Policy acknowledging the service delivery approach and guidelines developed to operationalise its implementation include explicit requirement to budget for an extended life cycle beyond construction.

There is increased awareness of CWSA to enhance its regulatory role of ensuring that sector stakeholders adhere to national norms and standards.

Partnerships are emerging to take results to scale.

There is an improvement of the ICT architecture. Service monitoring has been scaled up from 3 to 131 districts in partnership with World Bank, CWSA, UNICEF, Akvo and SkyFox.

Scaling of successful results in partnership with Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and its grantees (WaterAid, World Vision International and the Safe Water Network), under the leadership of CWSA and local government.