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Introduction and Agency Context

As the U.S. government's (USG) principal leader, coordinator, and provider of international development assistance, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) advances national security and economic prosperity while demonstrating American values and goodwill abroad. In partnership with the Department of State, USAID co-leads the USG’s efforts to implement the Water for the World Act (WftWA) and the U.S. Global Water Strategy (GWS).

USAID’s investments in water security under the GWS are critical to advancing prosperity, stability, resilience and health in the places they are needed most. Reliable, sustainable access to safe water and sanitation are crucial building blocks for healthy, productive populations, thriving businesses and markets, and strong and equitable economies. Water security bolsters resilience in the face of climate change and other shocks and stressors, while affordable, reliable water and sanitation services extended equitably can enhance the stability of societies by reducing conflict and building legitimacy and trust in democratic institutions.

During the five-year implementation of the first U.S. Global Water Strategy (2017–2022), USAID exceeded its targets to provide 15 million people with access to safe drinking water and 8 million people with access to sanitation, while expanding programming and results to strengthen sector governance and improve water resources management. Yet, we know that investments need to stretch further and contribute to more lasting and transformational changes: Water insecurity remains one of the world’s greatest challenges. One in four people continue to lack safely managed drinking water in their homes and nearly half the world’s population lacks safely managed sanitation; without major improvements in water resources management, two thirds of people globally are expected to face water shortages by 2050 due to growing demand, climate change, pollution, and watershed degradation.

This Plan outlines how USAID will scale its impact under the second Global Water Strategy by supporting partner countries and communities to (1) increase access to water and sanitation services that are more sustainable, climate-resilient, and equitable, (2) scale up its work to build a lasting and strong enabling environment for water security by strengthening institutions and growing the financing available to support the sector, (3) expand the scope and impact of its work on improving water resources management and conserving and restoring watersheds to reduce water stress and build resilience to climate change and other shocks and stressors, and (4) address water-related drivers and vulnerabilities to conflict and instability by improving linkages and coherence between humanitarian, peace-building and development efforts in the sector and improving preparedness to water-related shocks and stressors in fragile contexts.

USAID Contributions to the Global Water Strategy and Alignment with other USG Policies and Strategies

USAID will contribute to each of the four Strategic Objectives of the GWS and has developed Intermediate Results that detail the approach the Agency will take to achieve each one (Exhibit
1. The Plan also details tangible actions the Agency will take to implement and integrate the
Strategy’s principles across its programming.

USAID has set ambitious targets for its work under the GWS through 2027 (Exhibit 2). During
this Strategy period, USAID will:

- Work with partner countries to **directly provide 20 million people with sustainable
drinking water services** and **20 million people with sustainable sanitation services**.
The Agency has set equal targets for drinking water and sanitation services to elevate
sanitation, which has been historically deprioritized. USAID will pursue these targets
across stable and fragile contexts, and at least half of the total number of people
reached will be people gaining first-time access to basic services.¹

- Work with partner countries to **strengthen more than 1,000 water and sanitation
institutions** across at least 30 countries, including all High Priority Countries.
Strengthening institutions is a foundation for improving governance, building local
capacity, and enabling local systems that lead to lasting change.

- **Mobilize 1 billion dollars of financing for water and sanitation beyond direct
USAID investments.** USG investments represent a small fraction of the financing
needed to sustainably extend water and sanitation access to all while addressing the
broader challenges of water scarcity and stress. USAID’s ambitious financing target
reflects the critical need to more effectively leverage our direct investments with other
sources of funding.

As U.S. government policies and strategies align with the Strategy as a whole, the approaches
and targets set in this Plan contribute to and align with government-wide as well as USAID
Agency-specific strategies, policies, and mandates. USAID programming under the Plan
contributes to the three pillars of the whole-of-government **White House Water Security Action
Plan** on universal and equitable access to water and sanitation systems, sustainable
management and protection of water resources and ecosystems, and multilateral action to
promote cooperation and water security. The emphasis on equity and inclusion throughout the
Results Framework aligns with the **White House Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,
and Accessibility in the Workforce**, and the **Agency’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and
Accessibility (DEIA) Strategy** and **Equity Action Plan**. The targets set in this Plan also contribute
to the targets set in **USAID’s Climate Strategy** (2022–2030), including improving the climate
resilience of people, mobilizing climate finance, and supporting partners to achieve systemic
changes that increase participation and inclusion. Similarly, other USAID Agency-specific
strategies, policies, and mandates contribute to the achievement of this Plan.

Other key policies and strategies with a bidirectional relationship to USAID’s Plan are noted in
the Policy Coherence section.
Exhibit 1: Global Water Strategy Results Framework and Principles with USAID intermediate results.

**VISION:** A water-secure world

**GOAL:** To improve health, prosperity, stability, and resilience through sustainable and equitable water resources management and access to safe drinking water and sanitation services and hygiene practices.

**GWS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1**

Strengthen Water and Sanitation Sector Governance, Financing, Institutions, and Markets

**USAID’S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS**

1.1 Inclusive laws, policies, and regulations developed, strengthened, and implemented
1.2 Public and private financing effectively targeted and mobilized
1.3 Improved capacity and performance of regional, national, and sub-national institutions
1.4 Participatory, data-driven, and transparent decision making to advance accountability, equity, and efficiency

**OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

**PRINCIPLE 1**

Work through and strengthen global, national, and local systems

**PRINCIPLE 2**

Focus on meeting the needs of marginalized or underserved people and communities, and those in vulnerable situations

**GWS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2**

Increase Equitable Access to Safe, Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Drinking Water and Sanitation Services, and Adoption of Key Hygiene Behaviors

**USAID’S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS**

2.1 Increased area-wide access to safe and climate-resilient sanitation services
2.2 Increased access to safe, equitable, accessible, and climate-resilient drinking water services
2.3 Improved performance and climate resilience of water and sanitation service providers
2.4 Increased adoption of key hygiene practices

**PRINCIPLE 3**

Leverage research, learning, and innovation

**GWS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3**

Improve Climate-Resilient Conservation and Management of Freshwater Resources and of Associated Ecosystems

**USAID’S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS**

3.1 Water resources more equitably allocated and efficiently used
3.2 Enhanced water quality, quantity, and reliability, especially through watershed protection, restoration, and green infrastructure
3.3 Water resources resilient to climate-related shocks and stresses

**PRINCIPLE 4**

Incorporate resilience to shocks and stressors in planning and operations

**GWS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4**

Anticipate and Reduce Conflict and Fragility Related to Water

**USAID’S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS**

4.1 Strengthened capacity to predict, prepare for, and adapt to shocks impacting VSSH systems in fragile settings
4.2 Addressed humanitarian VSSH needs
4.3 Strengthened cooperation and reduced conflict over water
4.4 Strengthened coherence across humanitarian, development, and peace approaches to VSSH programming
4.5 Reduced VSSH-related vulnerabilities among marginalized populations due to conflict, disaster, and fragility
Strategic Objective 1: Strengthened Water and Sanitation Sector Governance, Financing, Institutions, and Markets

Under Strategic Objective (SO) 1, USAID will work with its partners to drive improvements in governance, finance, and market systems that underpin progress toward universal access to water and sanitation services and broader water security. USAID views this as a foundational objective that cuts across and supports all other SOs. When countries have effective policies, country-led processes, and institutions capable of implementing them, they attract investment from both domestic and external sources, leading to a cycle of increased capacity, greater investor confidence, increased sector finance, and accelerated coverage of water and sanitation services. Through this SO, USAID also seeks to reduce corruption and advance accountability, equity, and efficiency through working with government actors at all levels, public and private institutions and civil society organizations. In doing so, USAID will align with GWS Principle 2: Focus on meeting the needs of marginalized or underserved people and communities, and those in vulnerable situations to achieve inclusive development and equitable outcomes (see also Text Box 1). USAID’s Intermediate Results (IRs) under SO 1 are described below.
IR 1.1 Inclusive laws, policies, and regulations developed, strengthened, and implemented

More effective and inclusive laws, policies, and regulations are fundamental to transforming the sector both in terms of sustainably increasing access to water and sanitation services for all and ensuring water resources and watersheds are sustainably managed. For laws, policies and regulations to be inclusive, they need to reflect the priorities of diverse stakeholders in their language and implementation, and specifically target equitable and inclusive outcomes. The policy, legal, and regulatory environments in many countries are not currently conducive to mobilizing finance, improving the management of water resources, or expanding services, especially to underserved and marginalized communities. Even if policies are in place, many countries have limited tools (strategy, regulation, and plans) and capacity to advance reforms.

Under this IR, USAID will support sector governance and financing by working with local, national, and regional institutions, including traditional or customary systems, to develop and improve policies, plans, and coordination in ways that are inclusive and actionable, enable private sector participation, and promote transparency, participation, and accountability. USAID will carefully balance competing objectives when supporting the strengthening of laws, policies and regulations, such as setting user fees and rate structures that make services affordable to citizens, while ensuring long-term financial viability of public or private service providers.

Illustrative activities include:

- Support host governments in the coordinated development and implementation of inclusive sector strategies, policies, standards, and institutional and regulatory frameworks to improve water and sanitation services and water resource management at the national and subnational levels.
- Support processes such as Joint Sector Reviews and other multi-stakeholder platforms that strengthen coordination and accountability among government and local civil society actors.
- Increase understanding and commitment to enforce water and sanitation policies, regulations, agreements, and plans at regional, national, and sub-national levels.
- Provide technical assistance to help structure and implement economic incentives, such as targeted subsidies, to expand services more equitably.
- Conduct tailored and on-demand assessments and action planning such as enabling environment assessments and market assessments, and use these assessments to develop decision-support tools.
- Conduct political economy analyses, systems mapping, or other exercises to better understand power dynamics, accountability gaps, and incentives that shape behaviors and decision-making in the sector.
IR 1.2 Public and private financing effectively targeted and mobilized

Water and sanitation is a sound investment—every dollar invested brings a four-fold return on social, economic, and development outcomes. Conversely, poorly managed sanitation and water and lack of hygiene, exacerbated by climate change, could lead to losses of up to seven percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in certain countries. Yet, the financing needed for delivering sustainable water management and universal access to WASH vastly exceeds current levels of investment. Availability of finance is inextricably linked to water and sanitation sector governance, performance and transparency. Most countries invest less than 0.5 percent of GDP in the sector, well short of the Sanitation and Water for All target of 5 percent of the national budget. Mobilizing additional domestic resources will require better tracking and monitoring of current public investments and increased advocacy for additional domestic resources from sources such as increased tax revenues and user fee reforms. Moreover, it is estimated that only 15 percent of water and sanitation utilities in low-income countries are able to cover operations and maintenance costs with user fees, a primary source of revenue. Service providers become more competitive for additional funding, both private and public, when they first collect existing user fees more efficiently and comprehensively. Finally, expanding access to new and creative sources of funding for the sector, including blended financing mechanisms, revolving funds, repayable commercial finance, and climate funds, is critical to meet growing financial needs of service providers and other sector institutions.

Under this IR, USAID water and sanitation programs will aim to increase the effectiveness of current funding and mobilize additional public and private funds to expand and improve water and sanitation services and management of water resources, especially in a world altered by climate change and increasing water stress.

Illustrative activities include:

- Support the development and implementation of local and national government sector financing plans to maximize and better target existing public funding and mobilize additional funds from domestic public and private resources and user fees.
- Leverage digital tools and other opportunities to improve efficient collection of user fees.
- Strengthen water and sanitation service providers’ business viability and credit-worthiness to unlock access to public and commercial finance.
- Partner closely with multilateral development banks and other development finance institutions, including national development banks, to maximize efficiency of existing sector funding and expand resources to the sector.
- Develop, modify, and/or expand financial products and instruments to help meet the demand from service providers and other actors in the water and sanitation value chain by increasing the understanding of the water and sanitation sector by local banks, financial institutions, and investment platforms.
- Facilitate transactions such as increasing access to loans for water and sanitation businesses and households, using catalytic capital to leverage private finance for blended
financing mechanisms, payment for environmental services mechanisms to support management of water resources, and access to climate finance platforms.

- Strengthen budgeting and public financing and develop partnerships with the private sector and civil society to sustainably support improved WRM.

IR 1.3 Improved capacity and performance of regional, national, and sub-national institutions

Fostering a strong and diverse set of public and private institutions is critical to rapidly, equitably and sustainably extending and improving the quality of water and sanitation services and effectively managing water resources. These institutions can include governments, regional entities, civil society organizations, transboundary or other basin authorities, traditional or customary governance or management entities, and formal or informal water and sanitation service providers from across the water and sanitation value chain (see also SO2).

Under this IR, USAID will work with local communities and governments to identify and target technical assistance and other investments that foster sustained improvements in the performance of diverse sector institutions, building resilience and fostering locally driven changes that are necessary for meaningful and long-term progress on reducing water insecurity.

through targeted investments in human resources and capacity-building, business and operational planning, improved management systems and technologies, clarification of roles and responsibilities within decision-making processes, integrating data and evidence into routine planning, and improving communication with and responsiveness to customers and other stakeholders.

Illustrative activities include:

- Support the capacity of local civil society organizations, especially those led by and for different underserved or marginalized groups and communities, to engage in planning, monitoring, and provision of services.
- Support human capacity development for professionals in government, the private sector, and civil society through training, mentoring programs, and twinning arrangements that connect institutions to transfer expertise and share best practices, and that recognize, award, and elevate outstanding performers.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building support for improved annual budget process, contracting, and supervision with national and subnational government departments or agencies.
- Strengthen institutional capacities to integrate adaptive management principles, strategies, and technologies into planning frameworks to ensure governance is effective in the face of deep uncertainty from climate change.
- Support capacity building and diversification of the workforce of sector institutions and markets through formal training, professionalization, certification, and mentoring.
IR 1.4 Participatory, data-driven, and transparent decision making to advance accountability, equity, and efficiency

Improving water and sanitation services requires participation beyond formal ministries and service providers; individuals, communities and advocacy organizations need to be included to ensure decision making is transparent and accountable. Building citizen trust and reducing corruption through engagement of local civil society, water and WASH service users, and service providers is critical to legitimize planning, implementation, and review of sector initiatives.

USAID will support transparent and accountable decision-making by strengthening the enabling environment for and capacity of constituents and underrepresented voices to be at the decision-making table and participate safely and meaningfully. Additionally, USAID will support civil society organizations in holding governments accountable, including in locations where partnership with governments is limited due to corruption and government-sanctioned conflict.

USAID will invest in the institutionalization of collection, analysis, sharing, and increased use of evidence and data to improve decision making and adaptive management, optimizing the use of existing resources to accelerate access and equity of services. This includes targeted support to governments and/or civil society to close water and sanitation data gaps that can help improve services.

Illustrative activities include:

- Support standardization, collection, and public access of high-quality data about WASH services and water uses and resources such as water quality information, key performance indicators for service providers, service coverage, and WASH budgets, including support for national statistical agencies and multi-stakeholder learning platforms.
- Promote stakeholders' participation, capacity, and leadership, especially among women and civil society to effectively advocate for enhanced services for marginalized populations, including through harnessing data and evidence.
- Support local institutions to build their own data collection and data analysis skills so that they can close key data gaps and increase the use of community-derived data.
- Support processes and tools for government and service providers to hear directly from and be held accountable by users, such as transparent complaint processes and forums.

Text Box 1. Inclusive Approaches to Meeting the Needs of Underserved and Marginalized People and those in Vulnerable Situations

USAID takes an inclusive development approach in its water security, sanitation and hygiene investments. This means considering the reasons an individual, household or community may be unserved or underserved or struggle to access sanitation and water resources. It also recognizes that some people are marginalized by virtue of their membership in specific
groups, identity, or for historical or other contextual reasons. These groups include, but are not limited to: (1) children in adversity, (2) women and girls, (3) persons with disabilities, (3) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people, (4) Indigenous Peoples, (5) youth and older persons, and (6) racial, ethnic or religious identify. USAID also takes targeted approaches to promote and ensure water security for people in vulnerable situations. Vulnerable situations can arise from climate change, state fragility, internal displacement, natural disasters, and other challenges that create barriers to water security and sanitation regardless of a person’s level or type of marginalization. Each underserved or marginalized person or community, and those in vulnerable situations, may face other intersecting barriers to water security and sanitation, including but not limited to legal status, poverty, geography, education, social status, profession, and other social, economic and political factors. To improve the inclusivity and equity of water, sanitation and hygiene outcomes, USAID will partner with underserved and marginalized people and communities, and with civil society organizations led by and for them and people in vulnerable situations. This includes, for example, seeking free, prior and informed consent; supporting capacity development to accomplish locally defined goals; meaningful participation in activity and policy design, implementation, monitoring and research; honoring local and traditional knowledge and systems; and using inclusive and accessible communications tools and social and behavior change approaches.

Strategic Objective 2: Increased and More Equitable Access to Safe, Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Drinking Water and Sanitation Services and Adoption of Hygiene Practices

Under SO 2, USAID seeks to partner with local government and public and private sector service providers to expand access to safe, affordable, reliable, and climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene products and services across entire cities, districts, or counties, including in institutional settings like schools and healthcare facilities. USAID will emphasize working through local systems (see Principle 1) and align with work under SO 1 to improve the performance of service providers and market actors along water and sanitation value chains. USAID will also support state-of-the-art behavior change approaches that concurrently address individual, structural, and social factors to increase the adoption and sustained practice of key hygiene behaviors, including for menstrual health.

IR 2.1 Increased area-wide access to safe and climate-resilient sanitation services

New evidence indicates that health, nutrition, early childhood development, and other positive downstream outcomes of better sanitation are only achieved when improvements occur across entire geographies—e.g., when most households across an entire community or neighborhood or larger area have access to improved sanitation. To do so, USAID will focus its work at these area-wide scales, while also aligning with local administrative units, such as governments, and market systems. USAID will also seek to support outcomes across the entire sanitation service chain and shift its programming toward more contextual, layered, and sequenced approaches.
that are necessary to ensure coverage across the diversity of geographic, market, and
population demographics that exist at these scales.

During extreme storms or floods, poor quality or poorly situated household latrines, sanitation
infrastructure like wastewater treatment plants, or sanitation services like desludging services
can all sustain severe damage or be difficult to operate effectively, cutting off access and
shutting down vital services. This in turn exacerbates public health impacts at a time of crisis
and increases costs of extending sustainable and safe sanitation in the long-term. USAID will
thus work with key stakeholders in the sanitation sector to create policies, operational protocols,
and promote investment decisions that take climate risks into account, helping to prepare
service providers and regulators for extreme events and improving the resilience of new
household and municipal infrastructure to withstand future climate impacts.

Engaging with women and girls and other marginalized groups, is an essential part of creating
safe, effective, climate-resilient area-wide sanitation systems. USAID will support equitable,
gender-responsive, and inclusive sanitation approaches that integrate necessary programmatic
elements, including behavior change, policy strengthening, infrastructure, financing options for
businesses and households, monitoring, leadership, and partnership with the private sector in
order to support area-wide sanitation that protects human health and is climate resilient and
sustainable.

Illustrative activities:

- Support programs that seek to promote increased adoption of sanitation and hygiene
  products, services, and behaviors.
- Promote achievement of safely managed sanitation that considers climate risks and
  includes infrastructure and services along the full sanitation service chain including fecal
  sludge management.
- Conduct sanitation market assessments to understand and strengthen markets and
  improve the viability of sanitation businesses.
- Support capacity building and workforce development for sanitation leadership, planning,
  design, construction, monitoring, and implementation of sanitation programs and
  improvements.
- Engage traditional and non-traditional sanitation stakeholders (e.g., local government
  authorities, traditional rulers, landlords) to change attitudes and standards around the
  need for improved latrines in every dwelling sold or leased.

IR 2.2 Increased access to safe, equitable, accessible, and climate-resilient drinking
water services

Increasing access to safe, reliable drinking water services brings proven health and economic
benefits to households, communities, and nations. Reducing the distance between home and
point of access to water has also been linked to increased use and safety of water, decreased
prevalence of diarrheal disease, increased nutritional status, decreased child mortality, improved mental health, and reduced bodily injury from water fetching. More proximate, including on-premise, access to drinking water is particularly important for gender equity in low-income households, where women and children tend to bear disproportionate responsibility for water collection. Effective, safe, and independent access for women, girls, and persons with disabilities is critical to minimizing risks of exploitation, abuse, and deteriorating health or hygiene.

USAID will work with partners to increase access to both basic and safely managed water services, decreasing the distance to point of access, improving water quality and service reliability at the point of use, and increasing access to water on premise. This includes engaging in efforts to ensure access to safely managed water in institutional settings, including healthcare facilities and schools. USAID will promote area-wide approaches by working with public and private sector partners to strengthen and/or develop service delivery models to reach more people, particularly low-income and marginalized households, with progressively higher quality and more affordable services, noting that approaches may differ between urban and rural areas. While USAID will support new construction, it will focus heavily on improved service provider operations and maintenance and asset management practices to ensure the sustainability of services. To promote sustainability and increase equity in access, USAID will also strive to increase the meaningful participation of low-income and marginalized groups in the design, implementation, and evaluation of activities (see also Text Box 1).

Climate change is increasing water stress in many places, making water quality and availability less predictable, while extreme weather events damage infrastructure and overwhelm water treatment systems. To address the growing climate risks to safe and sustainable drinking water services, USAID will work with partners to better address climate risks in the design, financing, and construction of infrastructure. It will also work with water service providers and their regulators to better prepare for drought and other disasters, for example through reducing system leaks and non-revenue water, and engaging more proactively in watershed management to improve water quality and availability at the point of supply. Particularly in urban areas and areas that are already or soon to be water stressed, USAID will emphasize improvements in water use efficiency, raw water supply, and demand management.

Illustrative activities:

- Construct new or rehabilitate and provide technical assistance in the planning, financing, and implementation of climate resilient infrastructure and services, using inclusive approaches, with emphasis on reliable operations and maintenance arrangements.
- Support programs that ensure low income and marginalized water users gain access to at least basic drinking water services.
- Strengthen water safety, quality, and quantity monitoring systems and increase the capacity of service providers to undertake routine water quality testing.
• Strengthen access to basic water in institutional settings by working with government partners to integrate WASH into overall planning and monitoring processes, particularly as part of quality of care and infection prevention control efforts.

• Conduct analyses of the impacts of conflict on access to water and sanitation services for marginalized groups.

IR 2.3 Improved performance and climate resilience of water and sanitation service providers

Water and sanitation service providers and their performance are a crucial part of water and sanitation systems and are vital to achieving universal access. Service providers can be private sector enterprises, government institutions, parastatal entities, NGOs or community-based organizations; their structure varies from informal individual water vendors to formalized utilities.

USAID will support improving the performance of all types of service providers with a focus on promoting principles of commercial operations. USAID will focus on strengthening operational capacity and increasing efficiency before making large investments in infrastructure. USAID will assist such service providers with networking, forming or expanding trade organizations, and collaboration across market segments. USAID sees service providers as key stakeholders and leaders in strengthening services for climate resilience, and will work with them to ensure services, and revenue collection, are resilient to shocks and stresses.

Illustrative activities:

• Improve business, financing, and investment planning, including revenue collection, creditworthiness, and key performance indicators and benchmarks, leveraging digital tools where appropriate and the testing and scale up of innovative models.

• Support reductions in non-revenue water and energy efficiency improvements for utilities.

• Strengthen the operational and technical capacity of service providers including the diversification of workforce and promotion of women and other marginalized populations in leadership roles.

• Support service providers to conduct vulnerability assessments and climate risk analyses, and to use the assessments in business continuity and emergency response planning.

• Support networking and trade organizations, twinning, and accountability through civil society to improve performance, including for small and informal providers.

IR 2.4 Increased adoption of key hygiene practices

While behavior change is important for all IRs within the Agency Plan, its contribution is most prominent within sanitation and hygiene. USAID will work with communities and institutions,
such as healthcare facilities and schools, in a locally led, context-driven manner to support a range of improved behaviors linked to adoption of key hygiene practices including, but not limited to, handwashing with soap, safe drinking water management, safe food hygiene, safe handling of animal feces, and practices to improve menstrual health and hygiene. Beyond individual hygiene practices, USAID will also work with local partners to support efforts to shift social and gender norms linked to WASH, adjust incentive structures, and work toward improving policies that foster a stronger enabling environment.

Illustrative activities include:

- Research consumer and household preferences, needs, and barriers to behavior change to strengthen social and behavioral change (SBC) investments.
- Strengthen policy, regulations, laws that enable market availability and accessibility of multiple product choices to support hygiene behaviors.
- Design and implement evidence-based SBC interventions that address individual behavioral determinants and promote positive social and gender norms.
- Build capacity and knowledge of community health workers, educators and members of civil society to influence individual and communal behaviors and to endorse norms-shifting interventions.

Strategic Objective 3: Improved Climate-Resilient Conservation and Management of Freshwater Resources and Associated Ecosystems

Under SO 3, USAID will invest in watershed conservation and water resources management (WRM) to help partner countries plan for rising water stress and ensure that water is available to support vibrant communities and cities, sustainable food and energy systems, and healthy ecosystems. Working in tandem with water policy and governance under SO 1, USAID will focus its efforts on ensuring that WRM institutions have the capacity and financial resources to make decisions that are informed by data and are more resilient and inclusive. WRM is a multisectoral challenge. Connecting work under this SO to other USAID initiatives—in particular, Feed the Future under the U.S. Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), biodiversity conservation efforts under the USAID Biodiversity Policy, climate change adaptation and mitigation under the USAID Climate Change Strategy and PREPARE, and other programming to build resilience, address climate risks, and/or foster sustainable management of natural resources—will be critical to help ensure the availability of water for agricultural and food security uses, economic productivity, human health, and ecosystem health. In particular, USAID’s work under this SO also aligns with and reinforces GFSS IR6, “Improved Water Resources Management.”

IR 3.1 Water resources more equitably allocated and efficiently used

Effective WRM involves understanding and allocating available water resources across users within basins, while drawing out and promoting local solutions and planning to sustainably
develop available resources and enhance watersheds. Many critical basins lack essential comprehensive water management and allocation plans, often because they span administrative boundaries, facing more complex governance challenges. In many instances, the current and future needs of water for different uses have not been characterized and the water needs of ecosystems are not accounted for. Where such plans have been developed, the water supply and quality are rarely sufficient to sustainably meet the competing needs of all users, future changes in demand and climate are often not taken into account, and implementation and enforcement of plans is challenging. Moreover, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other underserved and marginalized groups are not often sufficiently engaged or empowered in making water allocation decisions.

Under this IR, USAID will work to advance more sustainable use of water resources and more equitable allocation of water across users and ecosystems within a river basin or other target geography (including transboundary basins). Durable solutions require understanding water availability and water use at multiple spatial and temporal scales and participatory analysis of existing land and water tenure, including the customary and traditional rights, practices and systems of Indigenous Peoples. As equitable allocation means ensuring there is enough water to sustain ecosystems, an understanding of the water needs of ecosystems is also critical. Engagement of a broad range of stakeholders to identify challenges underpins an equitable prioritization of uses and actions to improve the quantity and quality of available resources (see also IR 3.2). Climate and land use changes pose particular challenges to sustainable and equitable management and allocation of water resources; working with stakeholders to develop management plans and choices that are more robust in the face of climate change uncertainties and taking into account drivers and consequences of land use changes is a critical priority for both water security and climate change adaptation. USAID will also work to reduce pressure on water resources by promoting sustainable agricultural water management and more efficient water use, reducing sources of pollution, and conserving critical water source ecosystems for the benefit of both humans and biodiversity. USAID will also promote cooperation and equitable resource sharing as a key principle to account for situations where there is shortage of water supply among competing users, regions, or countries.

Illustrative activities:

- Convene and support multi-stakeholder water user groups for collaborative water allocation and integrated WRM plans, with specific focus on including women, Indigenous Peoples, and other underserved and marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations.

- Strengthen capacities of water user associations, regulatory agencies, and laboratories to routinely collect and utilize data and information on water use, hydrometeorological conditions, and water quality.

- Facilitate the development and implementation of stakeholder-driven water allocation and integrated WRM plans.
● Develop tools, technologies, and information to inform water resources management, such as remote sensing, hydrological monitoring and modeling, and climate information services.

● Promote practices and innovations that improve water use efficiency, conservation, and water reuse.

6 IR 3.2 Enhanced water quality, quantity, and reliability through watershed conservation, restoration, and green infrastructure

Activities that improve water storage and moderate water flow or availability over months or even years greatly enhance the success and resilience of water management strategies. The same can be said for activities that improve water quality so that more is available for human use, human health, and to support ecosystems. Gray infrastructure improvements (conventionally engineered systems), such as water treatment plants, pipelines, canals, water tanks, and concrete water impoundments, have a role to play. However, nature-based solutions, such as improving land management practices or uses, preventing or reversing wetland, forest, or other ecosystem degradation, and investing in green infrastructure within critical watersheds, can provide lasting benefits and are often more cost-effective than gray infrastructure. These benefits can extend to other development objectives, such as biodiversity conservation, improved public health, and greenhouse gas mitigation. Traditional knowledge and Indigenous Peoples’ practices can be resources for innovative and nature-based solutions for watershed and water resources management and USAID will seek in particular to build partnerships, where relevant, with Indigenous Peoples, and to support their leadership in planning and implementing such solutions.

Under this IR, USAID will work within watersheds to promote the design and implementation of interventions that enhance water storage and groundwater recharge, improve water quality and reduce the cost of water treatment, restore and maintain river flow and enhance resilience to floods and droughts, and increase water-related ecosystem services. Interventions will be chosen as part of watershed planning processes where there is collaboration across sectors and stakeholders to consider multiple potential goals and the costs-benefits of different types of interventions.

Illustrative activities:

● Support analysis and stakeholder engagement necessary to identify priority watersheds and actions for investment.

● Strengthen natural systems to maintain ecosystem goods and services, such as soil conservation, reforestation, wetland restoration and conservation, and promote other green infrastructure such as the construction of infiltration ponds, sand dams, and vegetative buffer strips.
● Improve the collection of water abstraction and user fees and establish water funds and markets that link downstream water users with upstream landowners to help pay for planning and conservation and restoration efforts.

● Promote practices and innovations that improve water use efficiency, conservation, and water reuse, including by building on indigenous knowledge and practices.

IR 3.3 Water resources resilient to climate-related shocks and stresses

Water is at the center of the climate crisis. Climate change is increasing water stress in many places, making water availability less predictable, with more extreme rainfall and flooding in some areas and more protracted, severe, or frequent drought in others. Events such as droughts and floods can have drastic effects on communities, especially communities that are more vulnerable to such events because of poverty or other factors that contribute to marginalization. Climate and weather extremes result in the loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, food insecurity, the spread of disease, and the exacerbation and spread of conflicts.

Under this IR and in conjunction with work under SOs 1 and 4 and IRs 3.1 and 3.2, USAID will work to increase preparedness and reduce overall vulnerability to flooding, drought, and other water-related events such as hurricanes and extreme monsoons. USAID will work with communities and institutions to manage future uncertainty and climate-related risks to the long-term quality and availability of water resources, and to enhance capacity to analyze and use climate and weather data in decision making.

Illustrative activities:

● Provide technical assistance to national, regional, and local governments to proactively incorporate climate risk into water security policies, including through flood and drought risk assessments and maps.

● Support the management of uncertainty and variability of future water resources by pursuing local solutions and embracing a participatory approach to identify water security hazards.

● Support the capacity development of local leaders in effective communications and engagement to empower their communities, especially women, Indigenous Peoples, and people and groups that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts to participate in policy reform to support climate-related risk management for water resources.

Strategic Objective 4: Anticipate and Reduce Conflict and Fragility Related to Water

As the world faces more frequent and intense conflicts, extreme weather events, and climate-related migration, USAID will work in fragile contexts to reduce water-related drivers of and
vulnerabilities due to conflict and fragility through a multifaceted approach that focuses on systems preparedness, emergency response when needed, conflict mitigation, and coherence across approaches. Given that conflict and disasters often reveal and reinforce systemic inequalities,\textsuperscript{xv} USAID will maintain a “do no harm” posture and will focus on those marginalized populations that are at greatest risk. This includes women, girls, and gender minorities who experience disproportionate rates of gender-based violence in conflict and disaster settings,\textsuperscript{xvi} displaced populations, who face compounding water-related vulnerabilities,\textsuperscript{xvii} and other groups who face discrimination due to underlying power structures that drive systemic disparities that perpetuate the cycle of water-related fragility, conflict, and vulnerability.\textsuperscript{xviii}

**IR 4.1 Strengthened capacity to predict, prepare for, and adapt to shocks impacting water and sanitation systems in fragile settings**

Disasters that commonly affect water and sanitation systems, including but not limited to conflict, extreme storms, earthquakes, and disease outbreaks, have the destructive power to undermine health systems, economies, and political stability. In the past 20 years, over half of all natural disasters were floods (44 percent), droughts (6 percent), and other water-related events. Flooding can also accelerate the spread of waterborne diseases, such as cholera, which spreads primarily in areas with inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene access.\textsuperscript{xix} These disasters led to 1.6 million human deaths, the vast majority (82 percent) of which were in low- and lower-middle income countries. Water and conflict have a reciprocal relationship; drought can be a predictor of sociopolitical unrest, while conflict can lead to damage to water infrastructure and reductions in access and quality.\textsuperscript{x}

And while disasters can and do happen everywhere, focusing on reducing disaster risk in places that face recurrent shocks makes economic sense. Estimates suggest that every dollar spent on social safety-net or resilience building in areas of recurrent drought will result in three dollars of benefit in terms of avoided asset losses and reduced humanitarian spending.\textsuperscript{xx} Therefore, USAID will address chronic water vulnerabilities and reduce the overall impact of recurrent water shocks and stresses in fragile contexts through a focus on enhancing systems that reduce disaster risk and build local, national, and regional response capacities to confront disasters.

Illustrative activities include:

- Provide technical assistance to national and regional governments and traditional and customary governance institutions to establish and codify emergency response strategies appropriate for disasters, water-related disease outbreaks, and armed conflict.
- Work to improve national and regional meteorological services for seasonal climate forecasting as part of improving preparedness, especially for drought.
- Empower community members and civil society, including organizations led by and for underserved and marginalized groups, to participate in disaster preparedness planning and to assess the capacity of hygiene practices and water and sanitation infrastructure to mitigate known hazards.
USAID will address global humanitarian water and sanitation needs through water supply, sanitation, hygiene promotion, environmental health, menstrual health and hygiene, and WASH non-food items (NFIs) interventions to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from shocks or displacement. These interventions focus on meeting the immediate needs of populations, particularly in consultation with vulnerable and displaced groups, and in so doing, improve public health and the dignity of beneficiaries.

Illustrative activities:

- Repair critical water and sanitation systems that have been damaged by disaster or conflict, considering groundwater resource sustainability and multiple water uses (including livestock and agriculture).
- Distribute and train beneficiaries on effective use of WASH non-food items (e.g., water treatment, menstrual hygiene supplies, hygiene kits), supported with key hygiene practices.
- Support staffing for critical humanitarian WASH coordination roles.

IR 4.2 Addressed humanitarian water and sanitation needs

Emergency water and sanitation needs are already acute. One hundred-twenty million people were in need of WASH-related humanitarian assistance in 2021, while a 75 percent funding gap existed and around 40 percent of those humanitarian water and sanitation needs went unmet. In 2022, basic emergency water and sanitation needs are projected to increase in 56 of 58 countries identified as “fragile contexts” in the OECD States of Fragility Framework (2018), while rising conflict is set to exacerbate the scope of emergency water and sanitation needs globally. Disasters can induce damage to water and sanitation infrastructure and water resources that create public health risks, erode household assets, and wipe out livelihoods for affected populations; WASH interventions in particular are essential for curbing the impacts of infectious disease outbreaks and mitigating disproportionate impacts of crisis, such as gender-based violence, on marginalized groups. In addition, climate change will lead to more frequent and severe disasters, perpetuate a vicious cycle of degenerative erosion of productive assets, degrade WASH conditions and water resources, and increase vulnerability to shocks, stresses, and conflict. Meanwhile, WASH remains one of the most chronically underfunded sectors within humanitarian assistance.
• Incorporate protection and gender-based violence prevention and safeguarding principles into humanitarian water and sanitation programs.

IR 4.3 Strengthened cooperation and reduced conflict over water

Some level of conflict over water is inevitable due to competing uses, needs, tenure claims and priorities, but good governance and management of the resource base can prevent these conflicts from escalating. Conflict and cooperation over water co-exist and are interrelated; it is rare that a given interaction over water can be categorized purely as a “conflict” or as “cooperation.” With the mounting impacts of climate change and growing demand for water resources, water will continue to factor into political, social, and economic tensions. Even when it is not the direct cause of conflict, water resource disputes can exacerbate existing fragility and disputes between social groups, regions, or nation-states. At local levels, there have been many cases where cooperation over water has been maintained despite periodic, minor conflicts, such as between herders and farmers. Cooperation has the potential to create better outcomes through water activities that use systems approaches, such as ecosystem services programs that incentivize responsible use of shared waters by municipalities for social, economic, and ecological purposes.

The relationships between water, conflict, and cooperation are often indirect and complex, and always mediated by local socioeconomic systems. For that reason, USAID will use systematic tools that address potential water-related conflicts, and/or how water programming could inadvertently trigger conflict, as part of the program design process. USAID will leverage a suite of tools, including the Conflict Assessment Framework (to be updated and renamed the Violence and Conflict Assessment Framework in 2022), the Water and Conflict Toolkit (to be updated in 2022) and the Land and Conflict Toolkit (also under revision) to integrate conflict analysis and do-no-harm principles into programs, while balancing the need to address the resource dynamics of conflict as well as the broader systems of which those conflicts are a part (e.g., governance, economic, cultural).

Illustrative activities include:

• Conduct conflict assessments or analyses as part of program design to identify linkages between water, conflict, and proposed USAID activities.
• Support the collection and use of data for decision making across stakeholder groups.
• Bring together and build the capacity of stakeholders, including relevant regional organizations, to establish or improve governance processes in order to prevent the escalation of a water conflict.
• Promote cross learning processes for transboundary water cooperation among different stakeholders.
IR 4.4 Strengthened coherence across humanitarian, development, and peace approaches to water and sanitation programming

Fragile contexts demand a nuanced approach to sector programming, requiring simultaneous, coordinated efforts across humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) assistance. This coordination can take the form of complementary, yet separate programs in the same geographic area, or fully integrated programs that blend different HDP approaches within a single activity. Complementary approaches can be no- or low-cost and easy to incorporate into current programs or future projects. For example, increasing the engagement and role of the private sector or using market-based approaches, while ensuring the needs of people in vulnerable situations are met can be a part of any actor’s toolbox. Integrated approaches require more conscious program development efforts and engagement with host country governments, including through joint analysis and design. At their core, both approaches require that development actors focus on strengthening systems at all levels to facilitate emergency response when needed, and that humanitarian actors create an enabling environment for long-term development when addressing shocks.

Therefore, USAID will align water and sanitation technical approaches across humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development programming in fragile contexts through coordinated planning, analysis, and measurement.

Illustrative activities include:

- Joint planning and analysis across relevant stakeholders to identify entry points and inform initial designs, annual work planning, and “collaborating, learning and adapting” activities, including through stakeholder mapping, stakeholder analysis, scenario planning, gender and protection analyses, and conflict analysis.
- Developing locally owned, shared metrics for success in water and sanitation programming across humanitarian, development, and peace actors operating within overlapping geographic zones.
- Monitoring support at the onset and throughout the duration of shocks, including the implementation of baseline and endline surveys to measure outcomes.
- Facilitating joint work planning and/or pause and reflect exercises to enhance coordination and collaboration across actors responding to evolving needs.

USAID Approaches and Commitments to Mainstreaming Global Water Strategy Operational Principles

The GWS operational principles are core values that guide USAID water and sanitation investments across all SOs and the USAID Program Cycle. Under this Plan, USAID will employ specific means to track alignment with and progress against each principle (see also Program Cycle section).
Principle 1: Work through and strengthen global, national, and local systems

Achieving a water-secure world requires working at multiple levels, engaging and strengthening global, national and community systems. Global systems, which include UN agencies, international financial institutions, national governments, and international and local civil society (including the media), are interconnected with regional, national and local systems. Adopting a systems approach requires intentional efforts to understand layered contexts and the stakeholders that impact water and sanitation outcomes in specific settings. For example, engagement of civil society—a key actor in any system—can improve the inclusiveness of policies, the responsiveness of water and sanitation service providers, the allocation of water resources, and the links between humanitarian and development processes. Engagement of the local private sector can generate new products, market approaches, and sources of funding that influence the overall system. Working with traditional or customary structures and building on Indigenous knowledge and practices enhances resilience and increases the inclusiveness of investments. Understanding systems, including relevant stakeholders, power dynamics, and influencers, is essential to lifting barriers to global water security, sanitation and hygiene. To ensure uptake of Principle 1, USAID water and sanitation programs are all expected to contribute to SO 1, and are strongly encouraged to employ systems analysis tools, such as those described in the Agency’s WASH Governance technical brief, to identify specific problems and ways to address them across the Program Cycle. Investing in capacity development of key stakeholders at the local and national levels to support local actors to design and lead sustainable solutions and to drive increased sector financing is also critical. This includes civil society engagement in USAID activity design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation and alignment with the New Partnerships Initiative, where appropriate.

Principle 2: Focus on meeting the needs of marginalized or underserved people and communities, and those in vulnerable situations

Achieving universal access to water and sanitation means leaving no one behind, yet many people in both stable and fragile contexts face barriers to accessing services, and may lack agency in water resources management based on factors including, but not limited to, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, race, ethnicity, religion, class, disability, legal status, geography, and/or age (see also Text Box 1). Other factors, such as harmful gender norms and menstruation-related stigma and taboos, apply across contexts and augment vulnerability. To ensure that USAID water and sanitation programs are reaching underserved and marginalized people and communities and those in vulnerable situations, USAID partnerships and investments will focus on progressive realization of services for these groups, including through deliberate targeting and tailoring of investments and systematic methods for engaging underserved and marginalized people and those in vulnerable situations in activities and research. This starts with understanding and responding to specific contexts, experiences, traditional knowledge, and barriers to equity and inclusive outcomes, and includes incorporating the findings of mandatory gender analyses into activity design, implementation and monitoring, and increasing the use of social and inclusive development analytical tools across the Program Cycle. Increased reporting of indicator disaggregates in water and
sanitation programs, including disaggregation by sex and, where possible, gender, and by other factors reflecting marginalization groups (e.g., youth, persons with disabilities or Indigenous Peoples), is a best practice to better guide the Agency’s impact and continually improve the design and targeting of investments. Improved reporting on Performance Progress Reporting Key Issues such as Menstrual Health and Hygiene and Gender will incentivize and scale up the scope and impact of cross-cutting inclusive development activities within water and sanitation programs. Intentional efforts such as these to more fully integrate inclusive development across water and sanitation programming are key to the Agency realizing its 2022–2027 target of ensuring half of all people directly reached with water and sanitation services are receiving first-time access.

**Principle 3: Leverage research, learning, and innovation**

Research, learning, and innovation are core to USAID’s ability to ensure Agency water and sanitation investments are impactful, climate-resilient, equitable, and sustainable and its commitment to locally led learning and adaptation. Principle 3 hinges on (1) maximizing Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) practices in water and sanitation programs; (2) rigorously evaluating Agency water and sanitation programs to draw lessons for future implementation, including through the lens of inclusive development; (3) supporting data generation, use, and sharing by partner countries and local actors; and (4) investing in research that answers key questions about implementation and global trends for decision makers, including existing research mechanisms across the Agency, and those elevated in the Agency’s [Water for the World Research Agenda](#), and leveraging.

**Principle 4: Incorporate resilience to shocks and stressors in planning and operations**

Shocks and stressors—ranging from floods, droughts, pandemics and conflict to job loss or catastrophic family illness—have strong links to water, sanitation, and hygiene. Stable and affordable access to water and sanitation services, hygiene products, and water resources can provide protection to households, communities, and economies facing unpredictable challenges. Where water or sanitation services lag and water resources are insecure, shocks and stressors may be exacerbated or their impacts prolonged. To support household and community resilience, USAID will incorporate adaptive approaches for responding to shocks and stressors into water and sanitation activity design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation as appropriate. Increasing ambition to analyze and incorporate programming design elements to respond to climate risks identified through Climate Risk Management screening will also be important to realizing Principle 4 across the USAID water and sanitation portfolio, as will capturing results from such activities using standard climate change adaptation indicators, as appropriate.

**Implementing Across the USAID Program Cycle**

USAID strives to ensure that water and sanitation programming is strategically focused for maximum impact and sustainability. The sections below provide high level guidance and
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guidelines for developing water and sanitation programming through the USAID Program Cycle, including strategic planning, project and activity design and implementation, developing activity budgets and resourcing, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). While the Strategy guides investment across development and emergency programming, there can be exceptions to the guidance in this section when programming outside the development assistance framework.

Designation of High Priority and Strategic Priority Countries and Regions

High Priority Countries

Planning and prioritizing development assistance under this Plan is guided by the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014 (WftW Act). While the achievement of this Plan depends on contributions beyond programming funded through the WftW Act, including agriculture, biodiversity, climate change, and humanitarian assistance, among others, the WftW Act requires the President, by October 1 every year, to annually designate “no fewer than 10 countries as high priority countries (HPCs) to be the primary recipients of United States Government assistance” authorized under the Act. Selection of HPCs and regions is based on needs and opportunity criteria laid out in Section f(1) of the WftW Act, and in Annex B of the overall Global Water Strategy. Although HPC designations are officially made annually, USAID intends to retain a consistent set of HPCs for the life of this Strategy. A current list of countries designated as high priority under the WftW Act can be found on the Global Waters website.

Per the WftW Act, High Priority Countries will be the primary recipients of USG official development assistance programmed under this Strategy. HPCs are also required to meet additional requirements for strategic planning, staffing, programming, and monitoring (Text Box 2).

Text Box 2. What does it mean to be a WftW High Priority Country?

HPCs are prioritized as the primary recipients for development assistance authorized under the WftW Act. Given the significant investment and focus on water and sanitation needs and opportunities in HPCs, the designation comes with an expectation of greater reach and impact of HPC country programming. To support this ambition, USAID/Washington will prioritize HPC missions for technical support, capacity development, and access to centrally funded field support activities. To ensure rapid and effective implementation of this Strategy and the WftW Act, HPCs are also subject to a number of expectations and requirements:

- Field staffing: The WftW Act requires HPC missions to identify a lead subject matter expert that can help deliver impactful programming.
- Country Plans and Strategic Planning: The WftW Act requires HPCs to develop Plans that include budgets and are evidence-based and results-oriented in order to deliver on Agency water security objectives. HPC missions are strongly encouraged to link...
this Plan with other high-level planning processes and documents, such as Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (R/CDCS).

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Research: In order to demonstrate the impact in HPCs, HPC missions must report annually on standard water and sanitation indicators, including at least one standard indicator to capture results under SO 1, as well as disaggregates noted below. HPCs are also encouraged to contribute to sector learning as relevant locally via investment in closing knowledge gaps as laid out in the Water for the World Research Agenda. With the support of Washington, HPC will be required to conduct monitoring and assessments to enable USAID to understand how well they are delivering on the approaches in the strategy, including technical pivots, strategy principles, and best practices.

Details and additional recommended implementation practices for HPCs and other Operating Units (OUs) programming under this Strategy are included throughout the Program Cycle and Roles and Responsibilities sections of this Plan.

Strategic Priority Countries

Strategic Priority Countries (SPCs) are places in which USAID anticipates substantial and long-term investment in water and sanitation due to a combination of strategic considerations and development needs. SPCs are not eligible for designation as HPCs because they do not have high or medium-high needs as defined by the Needs Index, but are critical countries for USAID engagement on water and sanitation for reasons including national security and other geopolitical considerations, and water scarcity and stress. SPCs are also designated annually, given high levels of sustained investment, and expected to deliver impactful programming aligned with this Strategy and Plan. As such, best practices and specific requirements for SPCs around strategic planning, programming, and monitoring, are outlined in the sections below. A current list of countries designated as SPCs can also be found on the Global Waters website.

Strategic Planning

Reflecting the Global Water Strategy in Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies

Strategic planning for most bilateral and regional USAID missions is reflected in Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs) and R/CDCS. The CDCS provides a guide for the subsequent design of projects and/or activities to operationalize specific results so this is an important opportunity to ensure water and sanitation related challenges and objectives are carefully considered. Per ADS 201.3.2.6, Missions must align their R/CDCSs to Agency and Interagency Strategies/Policies. HPCs and SPCs that develop new or make significant revisions to existing R/CDCSs during this five-year plan period are strongly encouraged to reflect water and sanitation priorities in their R/CDCSs, such as through establishing an Intermediate Result.
(IR) or Sub-IR linking directly to the Strategy and USAID Agency Plan Results Framework. 

USAID/Washington will engage HPC and SPC missions during Phase One of the R/CDCS development process and work collaboratively to align R/CDCSs and Strategy priorities and objectives. Other missions programming WftW-authorized development assistance are encouraged to consider this approach.

Developing Individualized Plans for High Priority Countries

The WftW Act specifies that USAID develop individualized plans for designated HPCs as part of an appendix to the Agency’s Strategy requirements. The aim of HPC Plans is to ensure that the country-level strategies for implementation advance and align with the revised Strategy, Agency-specific plans and the CDCS. HPC Plans are to be “costed, evidence-based and results-oriented.”

Program and Activity Design and Implementation

Design objectives

USAID projects and activities funded under the WftW Act must be designed so that they contribute to one or more of the SOs of the Strategy and the associated IRs of this Plan, while meaningfully reflecting Strategy Principles. The design process is a unique opportunity to understand local contexts and systems, and leverage the best available data and evidence in order to:

Maximize impact: Effective design ensures that the greatest number of targeted people and systems receive the greatest possible benefit, delivering the most transformative impact possible using the available resources. It is expected, especially for HPCs and SPCs, that programming is designed to be transformative in the sector.

Ensure equity: Marginalized populations are often the hardest to reach, but investing the resources needed to do so is a core principle of the Strategy and the WftW Act (Principle 2). As such, all water and sanitation program and activity designs should include analysis to better understand and explicitly reduce inequity in water and sanitation access and benefits. This includes inequity between wealthier and poorer populations that typically have access to lower quality and more expensive services, and inequities due to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, level of physical and mental ability, indigenous status, age, religion, ethnicity, location, and other factors (see Text Box 1). Water and sanitation project and activity designs should also ensure that such marginalized populations have input into the design process itself, and participate meaningfully and safely in activity implementation and monitoring, and in research.

Increase the likelihood of durable results and localization: Ensuring that the impact achieved can be sustained and expanded in the future requires taking a systems approach that among other things includes increasing local ownership and investing in
local capacities. To ensure alignment with the core Strategy operating principle to work through and strengthen global, national, and local systems, water and sanitation programs and activities should all at a minimum contribute to SO 1 and work to strengthen governance, financing, institutions, and markets and the relationships between them. Local knowledge and expertise should be emphasized where possible to better tailor programming to specific social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental contexts and support empowerment and sustainability.

Meeting these design elements can be facilitated by analysis to identify the best geographic and/or thematic fit for programming, as well as identifying the approaches that will best suit the target context.

**Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (MEL) and Research**

Continuous MEL and research help USAID tell our story and provides opportunities for improved CLA. Five key components capture this Plan’s approach to MEL and to research.

**Standardized Reporting:** Reporting on high-level indicators and their disaggregates is essential for capturing progress toward the goal and strategic objectives of this Strategy and form a core part of the water and sanitation MEL framework. Standard indicators are measures that USAID and the Department of State use to collect performance data that can be aggregated globally to help justify requests for funding, understand operational challenges, assess progress, and support external reporting. Standard indicators related to water, sanitation and hygiene are found under HL.8 in the Department of State Office of Foreign Assistance’s Standardized Program Structure and Definitions (SPSD). USAID has updated the suite of standard indicators to capture results under each SO, and USAID’s water and sanitation Indicator handbook further describes how to apply and measure against water and sanitation standard and custom indicators, while a Climate Change and Water Security, Sanitation and Hygiene Indicator Reference Cheat Sheet has been prepared to ensure better reporting on related climate standard indicators in support of the USAID Climate Strategy.

Every USAID activity utilizing Water directive funding must report on at least one standard water and sanitation indicator. To advance the governance and finance priorities laid out in this Plan in addition to Strategy Principle 1, High Priority and Strategic Priority OUs must at a minimum report on standard water and sanitation indicators HL.8.3-3 or HL.8.4-1 each year, in addition to other standard indicators as relevant. Other OUs are encouraged to do the same, as appropriate. Where appropriate, activities should report on standard Global Climate Change indicators to demonstrate progress in transforming the emissions profile and climate vulnerability of water and sanitation systems, in alignment with the USAID Climate Strategy and PREPARE Initiative. To better align with Strategy operating principles on equity and resilience, and to ensure progress toward meeting the targets in this Plan, HPC and SPC OUs must also report on existing key standard indicator disaggregates, including, as appropriate:
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- Sex and, where available and appropriate, gender
- Marginalized Groups (e.g., as defined in Text Box 1 and by ADS 201)
- Number of Institutions Strengthened for the First Time
- Funds Mobilized for Climate Resilient Water and Sanitation Services

Assessment and Monitoring of Programming Pivots, Principles, and Outcomes:
USAID will monitor and assess the Agency’s progress towards programming and results that reflect the priorities and associated pivots in the GWS and this Plan, including progress towards integrating principles. HPCs must contribute to these assessments through supplementary monitoring of programming.

Evaluation: Evaluations of certain USAID water and sanitation programs and activities may meet the evaluation requirements under ADS 201.3.6.5. When OUs undertake evaluations of water and sanitation programs or activities, they are strongly encouraged to incorporate evaluation of the programming priorities, principles, and desired outcomes laid out in the Plan, including the efficacy of governance and finance, inclusive development, climate resilient, and locally led development approaches as they relate to water and sanitation.

Coordinated Research and Learning: To elevate and coordinate research across WftW activities and programs, USAID has developed a Water for the World Research Agenda. Through existing and future research activities, USAID/Washington is committed to investing significant resources over the Strategy period to advance knowledge against the gaps identified therein and to maximize the impact of the Agency’s investments through the improved evidence base for programming. In alignment with the Strategy principle on research and innovation (Principle 3), OUs are encouraged in their activity and programming learning agendas to contribute to at least one of the research gaps identified in the Research Agenda. HPCs and SPCs in particular should work to make meaningful contributions to these broader research objectives.

Data and Information Sharing: Data and information produced by each activity is an essential resource for future learning and programming. As per ADS 579, data should be shared through the Data Development Library as well as with other appropriate government agencies and global data efforts (as appropriate). As per AIDAR 752.7005 all program learning documents are also required to be posted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse.

Additional Resources and Processes to Support Strategic Programs and Activities

Technical Guidance: A more expansive synthesis of the latest global evidence and recommended programming approaches associated with SOs, IRs, and Principles and different programming contexts can be found in USAID’s Water and Sanitation Technical
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1 Brief Series. USAID/Washington will periodically update this technical series with new
topic areas and additional evidence or other guidance, as appropriate.

2 Capacity Building and Training: USAID/Washington will implement a capacity building
strategy for USAID field staff with a focus on professionalizing the sector backstop within
the Agency and offering opportunities for professional development to maximize the
Agency’s internal capacity to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategy and our
Agency Specific Plan. Through four interrelated work streams, USAID’s capacity building
efforts will seek to promote, improve, and create opportunities for water and sanitation
field staff to apply best practices, systems, processes, and tools to design, manage,
learn from and adapt water and sanitation programs to increase the effectiveness of
programming globally. Offerings include a global biannual workshop to facilitate learning
and evidence exchange, a focus on enhancements to internal systems and processes
(including regularizing Foreign Service National fellowship opportunities, creating career
ladders and pursuing a pilot foreign service backstop), improving internal knowledge
management tools and providing networking support, and finally, a Continuous Learning
Series that utilizes several different learning approaches, as well as an associated
competency-based training plan to create a personalized experience for learners
throughout that is grounded in the key knowledge, skills and abilities required to be an
effective leader in water security, sanitation, and hygiene.

3 Water and Sanitation Portfolio Reviews: USAID/Washington will support Mission
water and sanitation programs who choose to conduct regular water and sanitation
portfolio reviews to discuss current and planned investments, project and activity
evaluations, mission water directive pipeline, results, challenges, pivots, and tradeoffs
that elevate water and sanitation priorities and achieve Strategy SOs. HPC and SPC
Missions are strongly encouraged to undertake such a portfolio review annually, either
incorporated into existing processes such as the Mission’s preset periodic overall
Portfolio Review or as a dedicated exercise. These reviews should be conducted in
participation with the Mission Director, water and sanitation technical staff and other
relevant offices, and the Global Water Coordinator (GWC) or their designee and should
be led by Mission water and sanitation leads (see Roles and Responsibilities).

31 Programmatic Budgeting and Resources

32 The WtW Act authorizes USAID to engage in drinking water and sanitation service provision,
hygiene, and WRM in developing countries. Since 2008, annual appropriations acts have
provided legal authority for USAID to spend funds on water and sanitation service provision and
hygiene. Recent annual appropriations also include subdirectives; since FY 2008, USAID has
received a subdirective on water, sanitation, and hygiene in sub-Saharan Africa; beginning in
FY 2015, USAID has received a subdirective on safe latrines. Sector spending must conform to
annual appropriations language, and to Agency-specific policy including as laid out in this
Strategy and Plan. Technical recommendations on allocation levels and subsequent use of
approved levels of water and sanitation directive (e.g., earmark) will be updated by the
USAID/Washington Water Technical Working group and Water Leadership Council (see Roles and Responsibilities) and serve as a guide and input to the formal budget process.

Where outcomes benefit myriad development sectors (e.g., reducing student absenteeism or enhancing government effectiveness) or where gains across other sectors benefit water and sanitation (e.g., enhancing public financial management or agricultural water use efficiency), blended or integrated funding approaches should be considered. In particular, achieving SO 3 and SO 4 are a shared responsibility across numerous appropriations, initiatives, and earmarks. For instance, where watershed conservation or other WRM benefits are not principally linked to the provision of drinking water, USAID will use agriculture, biodiversity, or other funds as appropriate. Similarly, where water investments mitigate escalating conflict between communities, USAID should blend democracy or other funds, as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clear organizational roles and responsibilities are necessary to ensure effective implementation of the Agency Plan’s SOs and in line with its principles. The roughly 80 USAID personnel stationed at headquarters and across the world, as well as entities listed below have specific roles related to water, sanitation, and hygiene programming.

Global Water Coordinator

The WftW Act statutorily requires that the USAID Administrator serve concurrently as, or appoints at the Deputy Assistant Administrator level or higher, a Global Water Coordinator to oversee USAID water, sanitation, and hygiene programs, co-lead the implementation and revision of USAID’s portion of the GWS with the Department of State, and to expand USAID’s program capacity in HPCs. In addition, the GWC represents the Agency on issues related to water security, sanitation and hygiene to Congress and the National Security Council and at external conferences, and other events (Public Law 113-289).

Water and Sanitation Technical Working Group

The USAID Water and Sanitation Technical Working Group (WS-TWG) is a Washington-based water and sanitation coordination and leadership platform composed of technical staff representing regional and pillar bureaus and Missions with water and sanitation programming. This platform provides a multi-sector structure for collaboration across the extended Washington-based water team in areas such as technical and implementation coordination, strategy development, balancing of equities, and policy recommendations. Ad-hoc subworking groups may be formed to address specific initiatives, discuss topical challenges, or advise OUs per the request of Mission Water and Sanitation Leads and USAID/Washington Mission Water and Sanitation Support points of contact (PoCs). The WS-TWG also provides technical guidance and recommendations to the WLC. The Director of the USAID/Washington Center for WSSH serves as the chair of this group and the liaison between the WS-TWG and WLC.
Mission Water and Sanitation Leads

Mission water and sanitation leads are Mission-based subject matter experts who coordinate and lead the Mission water and sanitation portfolio and coordinate with USAID/Washington Water and Sanitation Mission Support PoCs, U.S. Embassy Team at the host country, host country officials, and other donors active in advancing water security in the host country. HPC Missions are required by the WftW Act to designate Water and Sanitation Leads, but all Missions with significant water and sanitation portfolios are strongly encouraged to establish this role. Especially at HPC and SPC missions, Water and Sanitation Leads should be full-time staff with strong water and sanitation sector technical backgrounds. Leads should be at either Office Director or Project Management Specialist level serving within U.S. Direct Hire (USDH), U.S. Personal Service Contractor (USPSC), Third Country National (TCN), or Cooperating Country National (CCN) capacity, and should be responsible for managing the water security portfolio at their Missions, including guiding the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation activities, and ensuring alignment with the Strategy and this Plan. USAID/Washington will support the professional development of water and sanitation leads and other technical staff through its capacity building strategy (see above).

Water Leadership Council

The USAID WLC is an intra-agency coordination platform with representation from all pillar and regional bureaus at the Deputy Assistant Administrator level. Fundamentally, the WLC elevates the visibility and importance of water and sanitation programming in the Agency particularly among leadership within USAID’s Missions. The WLC provides overall leadership and oversight to respond to agency institutional and administrative challenges and opportunities affecting programming. The WLC is chaired by the GWC—positioned within the Bureau of Resilience and Food Security—and deputy chaired by a representative from the Bureau of Global Health. The WLC is composed of representation across both Pillar and Regional Bureaus engaged in providing resources and technical oversight of water security activities. The key functions of the WLC are to support and coordinate (1) recommendations on budget allocations to the Office of Budget and Resource Management, (2) technical leadership, (3) technical policy guidance, and (4) programmatic oversight of water and sanitation activities and investments within the Agency. These specific tasks stem from ADS Guidance on Leadership Councils.

Policy Coherence

The GWS and USAID Plan are aligned and linked to the following policies.

- United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability
- U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption
- National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality
- U.S. Global Food Security Strategy (2022–2026)
USAID's Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (2013)

USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy (2014–2025)

USAID Digital Strategy (2020–2024); USAID Economic Growth Policy

USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy

USAID Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World Policy (2013)

USAID Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis Policy (2012)

USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2020)

USAID Biodiversity Policy (2014)

USAID Vision for Health Systems Strengthening (2030); USAID LGBT Vision for Action; USAID Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2020); USAID Youth in Development Policy (2022)

Global Water Strategy Glossary

1. Basic drinking water: Drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a round-trip, including queuing time. Improved sources include those that have the potential to deliver safe water by nature of their design and construction, and include: piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater, and packaged or delivered water. Note that basic drinking water for healthcare facilities is defined as water from an improved source that is available on-premises. Source: JMP

2. Basic sanitation: Use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households, but where excreta is not safely managed. Source: JMP

3. Ecosystem-based adaptation: A nature-based method for climate change adaptation that can reduce the vulnerability of societies and economies to climate stressors. This includes using nature-based methods to address aspects of water insecurity through strengthening natural systems to maintain the goods and services that ecosystems provide for human development. Source: Global EbA Fund

4. Ecosystem services: The short- and long-term benefits people obtain from ecosystems. They include: 1) provisioning goods and services, or the production of basic goods such as food, water, fish, fuels, timber, and fiber; 2) regulating services, such as flood protection, purification of air and water, waste absorption, disease control, and weather impact related regulation; 3) cultural services that provide spiritual, aesthetic, and recreational benefits; and 4) supporting services necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, such as soil formation, production of oxygen, crop pollination, carbon sequestration, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling. USAID Biodiversity Policy

5. Equity: The consistent and systematic, fair, and just treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to marginalized and underrepresented groups that have been denied such treatment. Equity addresses the specific and proportionate needs of certain persons or groups to attain fair and just treatment and outcomes, as opposed to equality, which when used to describe a process, emphasizes the same or equal treatment for all persons or groups regardless of specific circumstances or needs. Equality as a goal refers to the equal enjoyment of resources, opportunities, and rights. USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030

6. Fecal sludge management: The system for collecting, transporting, and treating fecal sludge from onsite sanitation such as pit latrines and septic tanks. Fecal sludge is made up of human excreta, water, and solid waste that is disposed of in onsite toilets and sanitation systems. Fecal sludge management is required for safely managed sanitation service where a centralized wastewater transport and treatment system is lacking. Source: Environment & Public Health Organization
7. **Gray infrastructure:** Engineered structures built with conventional methods, such as conventional steel and concrete drainage and water treatment systems (i.e., pipes, pumps, ditches, storm drains, dams, and detention ponds engineered by people to manage stormwater and drinking water). Conventional treatment systems include energy-intensive water treatment systems and processes such as membranes and reverse osmosis. Source: *Duke Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions*

8. **Green infrastructure:** Any engineered structure that uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier built environments for people and the natural resources that sustain them. Green infrastructure can range in scale from small-scale technologies such as rain gardens and green roofs to regional planning strategies targeting conservation or restoration of natural landscapes and watersheds. Green infrastructure may be interconnected with existing and planned gray infrastructure to create sustainable infrastructure that can enhance community resilience to disasters and climate change. Source: *EPA*

9. **Groundwater:** Water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. It is stored in and moves slowly through geologic formations of soil, sand, and rocks called aquifers. It is a preferred source of drinking water as it is often isolated from sources of contamination at the surface. Source: *USGS*

10. **Improved drinking water:** Improved drinking water sources are those that have the potential to deliver safe water by nature of their design and construction, and include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater, and packaged or delivered water. Source: *JMP*

11. **Improved sanitation facilities:** Improved sanitation facilities hygienically separate excreta from human contact and include: flush/pour flush to piped sewer system, septic tanks, or pit latrines; ventilated improved pit latrines, composting toilets, or pit latrines with slabs. Source: *WHO*

12. **Institutions:** A government, non-government, or parastatal organization with equities or responsibilities in the water and/or sanitation sectors. These institutions may be formal, informal, or customary and include government, civil society, the private sector, and service providers. Source: *UNEP*

13. **Integrated water resources management (IWRM):** A process for improving water resources management that has been incorporated as a goal under SDG 6 (Safe Water and Sanitation for All). IWRM explicitly recognizes the connection among water, land, and people, and actively engages stakeholders to weigh trade-offs and identify the most important water management investments, taking into account the various users and uses of water as well as the environment. The Global Water Partnership defines IWRM as “the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an
equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.” IWRM is an important tool and approach for improving WRM as envisioned under DR 4. Source: Global Water Partnership

14. **Limited sanitation:** Households have access to a facility that is considered improved, but that is shared with other households. Source: JMP

15. **Limited water service:** Households have access to a basic water source, but with collection time greater than 30 minutes round-trip. Source: JMP

16. **Local systems:** The interconnected sets of actors—governments, civil society, the private sector, universities, individual citizens and others—that jointly produce a particular development outcome. The “local” in a local system refers to actors in a partner country. As these actors jointly produce an outcome, they are “local” to it. As outcomes may occur at many levels, local systems can be national, provincial or community-wide in scope. Source: USAID Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development Report

17. **Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH):** Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) is the ability of women, girls, and transgender and gender non-binary individuals who menstruate (“menstruators” or “individuals who menstruate”) to manage their menstrual cycles in a safe, dignified, healthy, and supported manner throughout their lives. MHH encompasses Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), which is the ability to experience menses safely and sanitarily and requires access to clean supplies for collecting menstrual blood, soap and water, and safe, private, and convenient facilities for changing, laundering, or disposal of menstrual management materials; and knowledge of how to manage the menstrual cycle with dignity. Sustainable MHH approaches at the systems level include MHM programs; health care; water and sanitation services, including environmentally sound management of menstrual hygiene waste; access to accurate body-positive sexual and reproductive health information; social and behavior change to encourage positive social and gender norms and confront stigma; and advocacy for and development of improved MHH policy, inclusive of all people who menstruate. Source: USAID standard definition

18. **Nature-based solutions:** Actions to protect, manage, and restore ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively are called nature-based solutions when broadly referring to goals like climate adaptation and mitigation or water and food security. Source: UNEP

19. **Open defecation:** The disposal of human feces in fields, forests, bushes, open bodies of water, beaches, and other open spaces or with solid waste. Source: JMP
20. **Public sanitation facilities**: Facilities that are available to the general public, sometimes for a fee. Source: [USAID Water and Development Strategy Implementation Brief on Sanitation](https://www.usaid.gov/water-sanitation/)

21. **Resilience**: The ability of people, households, communities, systems, and countries to reduce, mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Source: [USAID Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis Report](https://www.usaid.gov/)

22. **Safe drinking water**: Also known as potable water, safe drinking water is considered acceptable for drinking or to use in food preparation. Source: [JMP](https://www.jmp.org/)

23. **Safely managed drinking water**: Drinking water from an improved water source that is located on premises, available when needed, and free from fecal and priority chemical contamination. Source: [WHO/UNICEF JMP Progress on Household Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene 2000-2020](https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/jmp/)

24. **Safely managed sanitation**: The use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed in situ or transported and treated off-site. Source: [JMP](https://www.jmp.org/)

25. **Surface water**: Water that comes from rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, and reservoirs. Surface water is also the lowest rung on the JMP drinking water service ladder and is defined as: drinking water directly from a river, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal, or irrigation channel. Drinking water from such sources poses the greatest risks to health because of the high risk of contamination. Source: [JMP](https://www.jmp.org/)

26. **Systems**: The group of interdependent, interconnected, and interrelated actors and factors, both formal and informal, that comprise a complex social problem. No one person or organization has the ability to influence the entire system, but by working together, the group can move towards systems change. Source: [Collective Impact Forum](https://www.jmp.org/)

27. **Underserved**: All the individuals, households, or population groups who do not have access to basic services or better.

28. **Unimproved drinking water**: Drinking water that comes from an unprotected dug well or unprotected spring. Such sources are difficult to protect from contamination. Source: [JMP](https://www.jmp.org/)

29. **Unimproved sanitation**: The use of pit latrines without a slab or platform, hanging latrines, or bucket latrines. Such facilities enable fixed-point defecation, but do not protect from contact with feces, limiting health benefits. Source: [JMP](https://www.jmp.org/)
30. **Water quality:** Refers to the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological characteristics of water. It is a measure of the condition of water relative to the requirements of one or more biotic species and/or human need or purpose. It is most frequently used by reference to a set of standards against which compliance, generally achieved through treatment of the water, can be assessed. *Source: USGS*

31. **Water scarcity:** Lack of adequate quantities of water for human and environmental uses. While many definitions of water scarcity exist, it is generally considered to be a physical characteristic of the environment and is often quantified in terms of the total water resources available to the population in a given region or country. *Source: UN Water*

32. **Water security:** The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of and acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability. Having “water security” implies access to safe drinking water and sanitation services as well as water for agriculture, energy, and other economic activities. *Source: NSC Water Security Action Plan*

33. **Water stress:** The ability, or lack thereof, to meet human and ecological demands for water. Compared to scarcity, water stress is a more inclusive and broader concept. It considers several physical aspects related to water resources, including water scarcity, but also water quality, environmental flows, and the accessibility of water. *Source: UN Water Report on Progress on Level of Water Stress 2021* (pg. 3)
Increasing support to extending first-time access to basic services aligns with USAID’s priority under this Plan to focus on ensuring economically or otherwise marginalized people are not left behind. However, extending sustainable basic services to those who have never had it before is not equivalent to comprehensively advancing equity and inclusive approaches in water and sanitation programming. In other words, while the commitment to focus on reaching those who have not had access to basic water and sanitation contributes to USAID’s commitment to equity and inclusive development, it does not represent the entirety of our approach (see also Text Box 1 and Principle 2).


Kolker, Joel Evan; Kingdom, Bill; Trémolet, Sophie; Winpenny, James; Cardone, Rachel. 2016. Financing Options for the 2030 Water Agenda. Water Global Practice Knowledge Brief, World Bank, Washington, D.C. © World Bank. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.


Area-wide refers to the population within an entire geographical area, typically aligned with governmental administrative boundaries, such as a district, province, or city.


xvi IUCN. n.d. Fact Sheet: Disaster and gender statistics.


xxii Global WASH Cluster - Humanitarian Response Dashboard 2021. Note that humanitarian WRM funding is not tracked globally so the funding gap is likely large but unknown.


xxxii USAID. (2021). Building Resilience into a River Basin


xxxv USAID. (2021). Humanitarian-Development Coherence in WASH or WRM Programs
Where needed, USAID will update internal results reporting tools such as key issue requirements and indicator definitions, and/or provide additional technical guidance to support the broad and meaningful uptake of these principles. These are referenced in the Program Cycle section of this Plan.

Terms of Reference for the Water and Development Plan Implementation Working Group, 2019