Water for Women, Phase 2

Independent Final Evaluation

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Investment summary

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Implementing Partner(s):	GHD Australia Pty Ltd
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Primary Sector:	Water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH); gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI); climate change

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Dr Ingvar Anda (Hau Meni & Associates Pty Ltd) has over 20 years' experience in the international development sector with a focus on integrating climate and disaster resilience into international development programs. Holding postgraduate qualifications in sustainability and tropical environmental management, he applies theoretical rigor to practical problems.

Acknowledgements

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[1] Implemented by DT Global

Table of contents

Table of figures

Table of acronyms

AHC	Australian High Commission
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
AUD	Australian Dollars
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAPRED	Cambodia Australia Partnership for Resilient Economic Development
CCRC	Cambodia Climate resilient Communities
CRC	Climate resilient Communities
CRCSU	Climate resilient Communities Support Unit
CRVA	Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DNPN	Department of National Planning and Monitoring
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMW	East Meets West
EOPO	End-of-Program Outcome
FC	Fund Coordinator
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPG	Fund Partnership Group
FSM	Faecal Sludge Management
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GESI-SAT	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool
GoPNG	Government of PNG
HCF	Health Care Facility
HWWS	Hand Washing With Soap
iDE	International Development Enterprises
ISF	Institute for Sustainable Futures
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
IWRM	Integrated Water resource Management
JMP	Joint Monitoring Program (WHO, UNICEF)
K&L	Knowledge and Learning
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MKA	Motu Koita Assembly
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OPD	Organisation of People with Disability
PHA	Public Health Authority

PMU	Project Management Unit
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PWD	Persons with a Disability
RHO	Rights Holder Organisation
RM	Rural Municipality
RO	Research Organisation
RWHS	Rainwater Harvesting System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SNV	*Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilliger*
TA	Technical Adviser /Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
WASH	Water And Sanitation and Hygiene
WfW	Water for Women

Executive summary

This document is an independent evaluation of the *Water for Women Fund* (WfW)—a development investment funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. The Fund was implemented in a total of 16 countries across the region, investing AUD159.9 million over two phases spanning seven years from 2018 to 2025. This evaluation focuses on the second phase (2.5 years; 2022 – 2025), which involved a pivot to emphasising climate-resilient inclusive WASH programming. The evaluation team utilised both primary and secondary data. In-person interviews and observations were undertaken during field work in three purposively sampled countries: Papua New Guinea (PNG), Cambodia and Nepal over the period 11 November – 15 December 2024. The primary audience for this evaluation is DFAT; specifically, the Climate Integration and Programming Section.

Overall, the evaluation found that WfW was broadly effective and made significant progress towards four end-of-program outcomes (EOPO). Most notable were advances towards GEDSI transformation in communities, institutions and among WfW partners. The Fund was also found to be relevant and coherent, with modest prospects of sustainability delivered through a relatively efficient modality that supported diverse approaches to promoting locally-led development.

The key shift in Phase 2 was to climate resilience, in line with DFAT's climate change action strategy and climate finance commitments. In order to ensure that all projects that transitioned into Phase 2 had a clear focus on climate resilience, the Fund Coordinator required project teams to undertake some form of a climate risk and vulnerability assessment (CRVA). CSOs outlined risks, vulnerabilities and projected impacts related to climate variability and climate change but were given flexibility in how they approached and reported the assessments. CSO project designs were also assessed against a bespoke Climate Rio Marker rubric to demonstrate their adherence to 100% climate finance eligibility. Implications of the flexible approach include that it is not possible to interpret the assessments from a Fund-wide perspective, and there is diversity in the rigor and quality of CRVAs completed.

EOPO 1: strengthened inclusive climate-resilient WASH sector systems

'Systems strengthening' was a core approach of WfW, with a key premise being that vulnerable communities could benefit from improved access to equitable WASH services on a sustainable basis through strengthened WASH systems. Based on this premise, partner CSOs implemented a variety of approaches that may broadly be positioned between community-led, government-led and private sector-led conceptions: **I) Community-led** approaches typically involved the establishment or strengthening of community WASH committees, which, as well as managing WASH services, influenced norms in relation to equality and inclusion and promoted awareness of climate hazards. A key finding is that while community level WASH governance is one crucial element of a 'WASH system', it must be linked to—and supported by—subnational and national government along with appropriate private sector investment to be sustainable. Relying on community volunteerism alone without external technical and financial resources frequently proves to be unsustainable. **II) Government-led** approaches mostly emphasised support for subnational government WASH actors, with a lesser focus on national government. A key finding of the Fund's learning agenda was that a functioning WASH governance system has climate risk and resilience integrated into WASH systems. However, an additional overarching challenge is the fact that WASH is rarely administered by a single government counterpart with various

aspects administered by different ministries, making it challenging for an international development organisation such as DFAT to work coherently/comprehensively in the sector. **III) Private sector-led** approaches featured less prominently across the WfW portfolio in Phase 2 with two CSOs in Cambodia (iDE and EMW) accounting for a high proportion of increased sanitation coverage by WfW (by comparison, in Phase 1 six CSOs aligned with a private sector-led approach). This suggests merit in private sector-led systems strengthening though with likely caveats around context relevance, noting the diverse maturity of private enterprise in WfW target areas. Further, the evaluation team noted a limitation of private sector-led approaches in relation to promoting development policy priorities such as GEDSI, climate resilience and safely managed faecal sludge (FSM)—with such priorities imposing additional costs on private sector entities, hence necessitating a legislated/compliance regime by authorities. This finding underscores the point that successful 'systems strengthening' requires a comprehensive approach that works at all levels of government, community and the private sector.

EOPO 2: increased access to inclusive climate-resilient WASH services

There is evidence that WfW '*increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH services*' in target communities, specifically in relation to water supply, sanitation, handwashing with soap (HWWS), menstrual health and hygiene (MHH), institutional WASH and gender-based violence (GBV) services.

Water supply

In relation to climate-resilient water supplies, the evaluation team witnessed a range of responses by projects visited. In PNG, the main difference was in diversifying water sources beyond rainwater harvesting (RWH) to include groundwater (village boreholes). In Cambodia, households with unreliable RWH or poor-quality groundwater were being connected to mains water systems in target areas. In Nepal, WASH committees in mountainous areas were protecting springs through tree planting and creating other barriers to landslides as well as beginning to implement centralised water treatment (chlorination of village water systems at the storage tanks). With reference to GEDSI, there was good evidence of ways in which the Fund facilitated equitable access to water services. In Cambodia, EMW proactively focused on increasing GEDSI-poor households' access to water. In PNG, whilst there were very few water supply points in each village, these were located near the houses of people with disabilities. In Nepal, the 'one house, one tap' approach, directly improved the accessibility of water services for households with PWDs just by virtue of delivering water to all households.

Sanitation

The evaluation team witnessed diverse approaches to increasing sanitation coverage across the five CSO projects visited. In Cambodia, iDE and EMW demonstrated innovations in sanitation infrastructure that meant that their products were more equitable and potentially more sustainable and climate resilient. In PNG, the approach employed by World Vision was based on the Healthy Islands Concept and seemed to be unchanged from the CS WASH Fund and Phase 1 of WfW. Village WASH committees encouraged households to construct pit latrines, and these were generally sited away from waterways and flood prone areas. Overall, the focus on 'climate resilience' in Phase 2 did not appear to impact the approaches taken to increasing sanitation coverage beyond consideration of known/historical hazards and perhaps also underscoring the urgency of the as-yet unsolved problem of faecal-sludge-management (FSM).

Handwashing with soap (HWWS)

The evaluation team saw what seemed to be a relative de-prioritisation of HWWS (compared to water and sanitation) at the household level (at least among the project sites visited) during Phase 2. This is disappointing given that the Fund coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic which provided a strong impetus for the WASH sector to leverage community-wide behaviour change in relation to handwashing (including large behaviour change campaigns supported by WfW). More broadly, weak uptake of HWWS remains an area requiring urgent breakthrough by the sector because it is critical to achieving the public health dividend of clean water and safe sanitation. It was unclear how HWWS was modified by a climate-resilient approach (beyond initiatives related to resilient water supplies as discussed above), noting that the focus of HWWS campaigns is on human behaviour change, and hardware tends to be low-cost with short lifespans (to promote maximum coverage at lowest cost).

Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH)

In each of the three countries visited, women and girls were witnessed participating in activities to increase knowledge and reduce stigma related to MHH and there was also increased access to MHH products. The inclusive nature of MHH is self-evident; however, the additional value of considering climate resilience is less evident and was mostly framed as MHH supporting the health and wellbeing of women and girls, which in turn was argued to be a function of their resilience—broadly speaking. One angle some organisations were beginning to consider was the impacts of MHH product disposal on the environment, in circumstances where commercially available products are generally not organic and cannot be disposed in pit latrines or waterways—arguably a critical issue for the sector moving forward.

Institutional WASH

There was less focus on institutional WASH than household WASH across the Fund. A toilet block visited in Western Province of PNG included ramp access and grab rails and HWWS facilities were provided. World Vision also supported improved water access with a borehole/handpump, noting the unreliability of the town mains connection. This investment by World Vision was strongly justified by need but well illustrates the systemic challenges of institutional WASH which remain largely dependent on external resourcing, impetus and expertise. The lack of government resourcing for basic institutional WASH remains one of the most persistent challenges in the WASH sector and appears to present a more immediate issue than exploring what 'climate-resilient institutional WASH' might look like.

GBV services

Whilst GBV services are not explicitly 'WASH services', they are an essential component of any program that seeks to challenge gender roles and norms at the intra-household and community/public level. WASH programs challenge gender roles and norms both because access to WASH services is gendered and because WASH management that seeks to be inclusive brings marginalised people into decision-making spaces that they previously may not have occupied. The backlash that often occurs because of this (i.e. increased rates of domestic violence) causes harm and hinders potential increases in access to WASH services. Hence, 'good WASH' programming includes strengthening or establishing services to deal with this backlash. The clearest example of GBV considerations encountered by the evaluation team was in Western Province, PNG, where World Vision had supported the Women's Council to re-establish

themselves and strengthen the GBV referral pathways from remote communities to the interim safe house in Daru.

EOPO 3: strengthened climate resilience and GEDSI in households, communities and institutions

GEDSI and climate resilience are integrated into EOPOs 1, 2 and 4. The additional inclusion of a discrete EOPO 3 concerned with GEDSI and climate resilience is irregular and somewhat challenging from a program theory standpoint; but was evidently done in good faith to strongly signal the importance of these development policy domains. While Fund Coordinator staff and partners affirm that all work under the Fund was related to WASH, there was evidently an expectation that this WASH work could serve as a platform for influencing GEDSI and climate resilience results 'beyond WASH'.

GEDSI 'beyond WASH'

Arguably, one of the greatest achievements of WfW is the demonstration of what can be achieved for marginalised people when GEDSI is substantially resourced and proactively pursued. This is borne out at several levels, from CSO staff whose own perspectives have evolved dramatically, to government counterparts who have pivoted their policies and approaches. An important contribution of the Fund to the WASH sector—and community development more broadly—is the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool (GESI SAT). The GESI SAT is a tool for individual and collective reflection on the extent and quality of GESI work within WASH organisations. Each of the sampled organisations as well as their local partners, acknowledged the impact of the GESI SAT within their organisations, specifically with reference to the tool supporting their growth along the GEDSI Continuum.

Climate resilience 'beyond WASH'

A key challenge for fund partners in Phase 2 was framed by the learning question: '*What does climate-resilient inclusive WASH development look like*?'; a question that Fund partners set out to research while concurrently implementing. Given the short timeframe of Phase 2, and the conceptual and practical challenges, it is perhaps unsurprising that knowledge and practice in relation to climate resilience has not advanced as much as GEDSI in WASH which had already been the focus of WfW in Phase 1 and the previous CS WASH Fund. The evaluation team encountered very few examples of climate resilience 'beyond WASH'. Most interviewees in this evaluation conceded that—aside from undertaking CRVAs—WASH infrastructure is not materially different in Phase 2 from previous investments.

EOPO 4: strengthened knowledge, learning, innovation and practice

Over the two phases of the WfW Fund, AUD16.5 million was invested in '*strengthening the use of new evidence, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.*' In Phase 2, WfW invested around 13% of the Fund (approx. AUD4.2 million) to support seven research projects led by research institutions, some of which were in partnership with CSOs that were implementing projects as part of the Fund. Overall, this demonstrates a unique prioritisation of knowledge and learning in the Australian international development program. It resulted in *intra-fund learning* where partners supported each other and exchanged knowledge through online or in-person workshops as well as an online resource platform. It also led to *extra-fund learning* which drove knowledge generation for the wider sector and showcased DFAT's work on a global stage. Overall,

303 knowledge products were published, of which 82 were peer-reviewed academic articles, spanning a spectrum of significance. A persistent issue for DFAT concerns the mechanics of how to preserve and make available the knowledge products beyond the life of the WASH modality.

Sustainability and coherence

A fundamental premise of DFAT's WASH sector investments since CS WASH Fund 2 (2018) has been the pursuit of sustainable WASH systems and services—reflected in WfW in the doctrine of 'systems strengthening' (EOPO 1). The WfW design document identified numerous sustainability challenges, particularly in relation to WASH systems. The design anticipated CSOs would address these sustainability challenges, but this was demonstrably too ambitious an assumption for a CSO-led program.

The focus on system strengthening has been partly in response to global critique of the unsustainability of WASH. While this critique is defensible and has been a key driver of sector advances, it sits in tension with the persistent global challenge that gives relevance to the WASH sector; that is, the public health emergency facing many marginalised communities as manifest in persistent infant mortality. Arguably, the need to urgently maximise WASH service coverage with limited (and declining) sector funding has perpetuated low-cost and unsustainable practices/facilities. This situation has been at the expense of sustainable and resilient WASH systems that would instead pursue catchment-wide holistic approaches to resilient water and sanitation management. But such approaches require significant investment in science (e.g. ground water mapping and hydrological studies) and engineering (e.g. affordable and accessible water and waste treatment plants) that extend well beyond the financing of CSO-led WASH programming. Evidently, what is required, is a joined-up approach that involves all parties (CSOs/RHOs, governments, private sector, research institutions, community), significant investment paired with technical capability, and all framed within the parameters of climate science.

Relevance

DFAT's investment in the WASH sector has been strongly defended in relation to relevance. Australia has committed to contributing to the SDGs, including SDG6. The focus on inclusive WASH is also relevant, noting that WASH sector programming is more successful when women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups are proactively involved. Further, WASH interventions disproportionately benefit women, girls, people with disabilities and marginalised groups. The relevance of the past two years' focus on climate-resilient WASH is explicit in Australia's international development policy. WASH is one of several climate adaptation domains that are crucial for community resilience in a changing climate. However, while this investment by DFAT in climate change adaptation is highly relevant in the project contexts, its relevance sits within the limits of global climate action; noting that unless the global economy can rapidly decarbonise, the relevance of adaptive investments such as WfW will be compromised.

Efficiency

In relation to the WfW modality, Australia's International Development Policy endorses strong partnerships with civil society, and recognises the unique capacity of NGOs and RHOs, especially in relation to community development. The WfW modality demonstrates several unique aspects that promote this agenda. Arguably, the professional skills and experience of staff and partners is a general strength of WfW. A hallmark of WfW was the commitment and passion for inclusive climate-resilient WASH demonstrated by advisers and partners.

Locally-led development

Promoting locally-led development was not an explicit outcome or priority of WfW, and Phase 2 comprised selected CSO partners from Phase 1, so essentially the Fund implementing partners were engaged in 2017, predating DFAT's increased focus on localisation. Nevertheless, localisation is a fundamental and long-standing principle of sustainable development practice, and CSO-led approaches specifically. Despite the Fund consisting overwhelmingly of international organisations, WfW demonstrated a diversity of approaches to locally-led development across the numerous CSO partnerships.

At the Fund level, there was an explicit investment in partnership brokering that was set out in the design. The aim was to broaden the basis for decision-making and governance—within the limits of DFAT's statutory requirement to oversee fiscal and strategy decisions. Interviewees expressed diverse views about the functioning and merit of the Fund Partnership Group. Some were positive about the explicit forum for discussion of Fund issues, while others expressed frustration with the time taken up by internally-focussed issues that seemingly detracted from implementation. Still others seemed disappointed that concepts of localisation, especially in relation to power sharing, were not fully explored. Some interviewees reflected that there is a fundamental power asymmetry in donor-recipient relationships that transcends partnership mechanisms.

Consolidated lessons

1. Introduction

1.1 Synopsis

This document is an independent evaluation of the Water for Women Fund (WfW) Phase 2—a development investment funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. The WfW Fund Phase 2 marks the conclusion of around 14 years of WASH programming through a civil society organisation (CSO) fund modality. The primary objective of the evaluation was to capture lessons about inclusive climate-resilient WASH programming. The secondary objectives of the evaluation were to: assess the Fund's achievements against its end-of-program outcomes (EOPO); ii) assess the extent to which the Fund promoted locally-led development; and assess the appropriateness and relevance of the Fund's design with respect to promoting inclusive, climate-resilient WASH outcomes. The primary audience of the evaluation is DFAT, and in particular, the Climate Integration and Programming Section which looks after climate integration across DFAT's development program and the newly established Climate Resilient Communities (CRC) Facility (stood up in July 2024). CRC incentivises funding towards gender-responsive, inclusive climate and disaster resilience programming, particularly in the water, food, nature-based solutions, and energy sectors.

1.2 Investment overview

WfW was the Australian Government's flagship WASH international development program, focused on improving health, gender equality, inclusion and well-being in Asian and Pacific communities by implementing WASH projects and research. The Fund was implemented in a total of 16 countries across the region, investing AUD159.9 million over two phases spanning seven years from 2018 to 2025.[2]

In the second phase (2.5 years; 2023 – 2025), the Fund[3] was reoriented to focus on climate-resilient inclusive WASH programming—in line with DFAT's commitment to increase climate investments and better address climate risks. Four EOPOs were defined for the second phase:

WfW EOPOs
EOPO 1: Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector *systems* with greater emphasis on climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security.
EOPO 2: Increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH *services*, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.
EOPO 3: Strengthened climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (*GEDSI*) in households, communities, and institutions.
EOPO 4: Strengthened use of *new evidence*, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.

Figure 1: Water for Women Phase 2 End-of-Program Outcomes

[2] A second phase of funding (AUD41 million) was announced by the Minister for International Development and the Pacific on 14 November 2022.
[3] Throughout this report, the evaluators variously use the terms 'WfW' or 'the Fund' to refer to the whole implementation period from 2018. Where specific findings in relation to the Phase 2 focus on climate-resilient WASH are presented, this is specified.

The second phase involved DFAT partnering with eight CSOs and four research organisations (RO) to implement 15 WASH projects and seven research projects in 15 countries.[4] WfW was managed by DFAT[5] as part of Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and was coordinated by GHD Australia Pty Ltd. The Fund reportedly reached 4.3 million beneficiaries[6], including some of the most marginalised communities in partner countries over its lifetime (2017-2025).[7]

1.3 Background and context

WfW is the final phase of around 14 years of intensive investment in the WASH sector by DFAT. This long engagement demonstrates an evolution in the sophistication of WASH programming, arguably in pursuit of 'good WASH', as depicted in Figure 2, and discussed below.

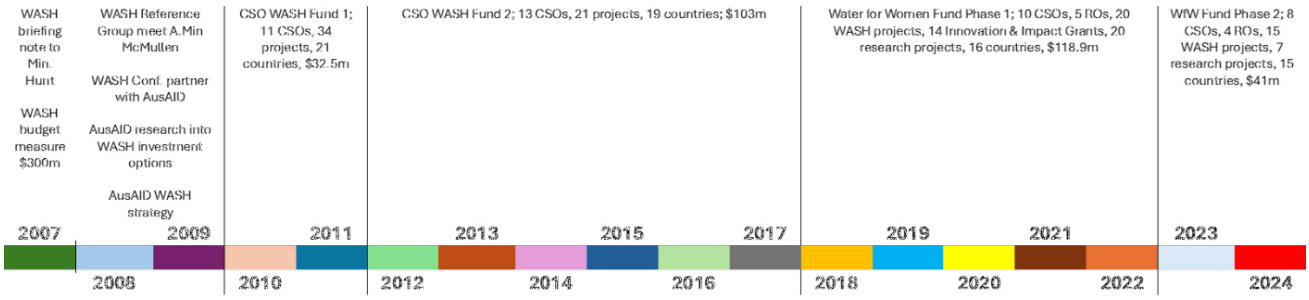

Figure 2: Timeline of DFAT WASH sector investment

The origins of the WASH sector funding modality trace to academic and CSO WASH advocates who briefed The Hon. Greg Hunt in 2007 (the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs) about countries in the region falling behind Millenium Development Goal (MDG) WASH targets, and concerns that Australia was investing little in the WASH sector (outside the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, ANCP). This advocacy led to a WASH budget measure. After a change in Australian Government, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan and senior AusAID officials met (2008) a newly formed WASH Reference Group. This led to agreement on a partnership to convene annual WASH sector conferences, the commissioning of independent research into various investment options to improve the effectiveness of the WASH budget measure, and the development of DFAT's WASH strategy.

From 2010 – 2011, DFAT rolled out the first **CSO WASH Fund**—essentially a pilot to test the merits of a WASH sector CSO-led modality involving 11 CSOs implementing 34 projects in 21 countries spanning east and southern Africa to the Pacific (AUD32.5 million). The premise of this first phase

[4] Across the entire life of the Fund, CSOs implemented 20 WASH projects and 14 Innovation and Impact grants in 16 countries; and research organisations undertook 20 research projects.
[5] Formerly, the Water Section (WTR); and at the time of this report, Climate Integration and Programming Section.
[6] https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/our-progress-2023.aspx
[7] The evaluation team was unable to ascertain a reliable figure for Phase 2 beneficiaries for a number of reasons including: i) the definition of 'climate-resilient inclusive WASH' was a focus of inquiry throughout Phase 2, making measurement of this aspect difficult if not impossible; ii) the FC adopted a delegated/bottom-up (rather than systematic/top-down) approach to MEL across the Fund, meaning that it is not possible to reliably derive whole-of-Fund measures; c) final reporting from Fund partners was ongoing at the time of this report, meaning that available figures were not current.

was implicitly '**do *more* WASH'**. The success of this pilot led AusAID to commission the design of CS WASH Fund Phase 2.

CS WASH Fund 2 (2012 – 2018) represented a profound shift in thinking towards '**doing *good* WASH'**. This most strongly reflected pressure on CSOs to move away from 'direct delivery' approaches (drawn historically from humanitarian WASH interventions aimed narrowly at increasing WASH coverage) towards working in the 'enabling environment' for sustainable WASH services.[8] This shift was driven by global studies[9] that showed the poor sustainability of WASH projects—backed up by the findings and recommendations of the final review of CS WASH Fund 1.[10] CS WASH Fund 2 also drove a shift towards a stronger public health focus in WASH, requiring all projects to integrate sanitation and hygiene promotion with water supply development; and also to prioritise gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) and environmental sustainability. The shift in emphasis is perhaps best captured in the adage by Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: "*give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he'll eat for a lifetime*".

WfW Phase 1 (2018 – 2022) progressed successes from CS WASH Fund 2, leveraging a stronger policy focus on GEDSI across Australia's development program. The premise of WfW Phase 1 was implicitly that '**good WASH' is *gender-sensitive and inclusive***.[11] This shift in emphasis is perhaps captured by the extended adage: "*teach a woman to fish, and the family and community will eat for a lifetime*". GEDSI programming received significant additional resourcing and was an explicit focus of EOPOs. WfW Phase 1 continued to progress the emphasis on achieving sustainable WASH services through a 'systems strengthening approach'. Of note, WfW Phase 1 was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and was a key element of DFAT's COVID response in partner countries.

WfW Phase 2 was part of a strong pivot by DFAT towards integrating climate resilience into the development program more broadly. DFAT designated WfW Phase 2 as 100% climate finance, thereby obliging partner CSOs to rapidly demonstrate: a) a deep appreciation for climate-resilient WASH; b) discernible climate resilience outcomes in communities; and c) application of the RIO Markers[12] to the WASH sector to meet 100% climate finance eligibility criteria. The central argument was implicitly that '**good WASH' is *also climate-resilient***; arguably captured in a further adage: "*teach women, people with disabilities (PWD) and minorities how to fish in a changing climate and their families and communities will continue to eat for generations*".[13]

The above trajectory of WASH programming mirrors the evolution of international development more broadly: progressing from direct delivery of aid, through strengthening systems for

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[8] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339083190_Engaging_with_the_WASH_enabling_environment

[9] https://archive.ids.ac.uk/clts/sites/communityledtotalsanitation.org/files/Plan_International_ODF_Sustainability_Study.pdf

[10] https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/wash-completion-review.pdf

[11] As outlined in the WfW Phase 1 Theory of Change in https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/water-for-women-design-doc-vol1.pdf

[12] https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/development-finance-for-climate-and-the-environment.html

[13] Assuming that global decarbonisation efforts can mitigate ocean temperatures warming such that fish species survive.

sustainability and enduring human wellbeing, to mainstreaming GEDSI, and more recently, building resilience to climate change.

For DFAT, the end of a discrete WASH sector CSO-led modality is marked by the shift to a co-funding modality between Canberra and DFAT posts spanning the Asia-Pacific region—the *Climate Resilient Communities* (CRC) Facility—which aims to support partner-led investments in inclusive climate-resilient water, food and energy security.

This independent final evaluation of WfW, focussed on Phase 2 EOPOs, is principally aimed at capturing lessons learned to support DFAT/CRC in relation to inclusive climate-resilient programming in WASH systems strengthening and service delivery.

2. Methodology

A detailed methodology was set out in an Evaluation Plan approved by DFAT (see Appendix A). The evaluation team utilised both primary and secondary data, collected through a desk review of Fund and project documents, virtual key informant interviews, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and field observations. In-person interviews and observations were undertaken during field work in three purposively sampled countries: Papua New Guinea (PNG), Cambodia and Nepal over the period 11 November – 15 December 2024 (see box).[14] A total of approximately 90 hours of interviews were conducted with around 246 stakeholders (123 women and 123 men). A list of interviewees is provided in Appendix B. Review data was coded against key evaluation questions (KEQ) as set out in Annex B of Appendix A (Evaluation Plan).

The primary audience for this evaluation is DFAT; specifically, the Climate Integration and Programming Section. Secondary audiences include: program management staff at DFAT Posts undertaking inclusive climate resilience programming, CRC program staff, program staff in partner WASH CSOs, and government counterparts of WfW projects in partner countries.

This evaluation was constrained by typical limitations encountered during evaluations of international development assistance that are broadly related to the time available to enable rigorous interpretation of history, context and technical detail.[15] However, the close engagement of the Fund Coordinator and partner CSOs supported greater appreciation of the operating context; and the active involvement of DFAT staff throughout the evaluation (including in fieldwork in Cambodia and Nepal) ensured understanding of operational and institutional history. Importantly, this evaluation is only one of a range of evaluative products in relation to WfW—focussed on Fund-wide lessons, especially in relation to climate-resilient inclusive WASH. Implementing partner evaluations and project-level synthesis will provide more project-level insights.

[14] Papua New Guinea (11 – 20 November 2024), Cambodia (1 – 8 December 2024), Nepal (9 – 14 December).

[15] Particular limitations included: a problematic theory of change (see Appendix C) making assessment of progress against the EOPOs challenging; limitations and inconsistency in Fund-wide M&E which impacted whole-of-Fund performance assessment; the short-timeframe of Phase 2 which constrained the potential to discern changes in climate-resilient WASH; methodological challenges limiting the extent to which the purposive sample of projects could be extrapolated to the whole-of-Fund performance.

Purposive Sample Criteria

- **Regional representation:** projects drawn from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific
- **Performance:** projects reflecting strong and less strong performance over the life of the Fund
- **Learning:** projects demonstrating clear learning opportunities
- **Implementing partners:** a spread of implementing partner organisations across the sample, and a willingness to engage in the evaluation
- **Approach:** representing a diversity of project technical approaches
- **DFAT priorities:** reflecting country and funding priorities of the Department
- **Partner considerations:** capacity and willingness of implementing partners to host the evaluation team within the timeframe
- **Logistics:** travel time/accessibility constraints within the timeframe of the evaluation

3. Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation. Lessons learned are embedded in the findings text as they arise, highlighted in blue text boxes and consolidated on page xvi for convenience. Findings and lessons are predominantly drawn from the three countries where the evaluation team conducted fieldwork.[16]

3.1 Overall assessment

Overall, the evaluation found that WfW made significant progress in relation to the four EOPOs. Most notable were advances towards GEDSI transformation[17] in communities, institutions and among WfW partners. The focus on 'WASH systems strengthening' was key to promoting sustainable access to WASH services, but success required comprehensive and sustained investment at all levels from community to national institutions and financing. The pivot in Phase 2 to climate-resilient WASH enabled sector-leading[18] research and reflection which redefined 'good practice WASH', principally in relation to climate risk and vulnerability. However, in the two-year period, it produced limited material changes in actual WASH delivery.

The following section outlines evidence in relation to achievement of the four EOPOs (i.e. effectiveness[19]). Section 3.3 reviews the sustainability, coherence, relevance and efficiency of the Fund. Section 3.4 discusses WfW alignment with DFAT's locally-led development policy.

[16] Findings were also informed by the evaluation team's virtual engagement with the Plan Indonesia WfW project team.

[17] A 'GEDSI transformative program' is defined by the WfW Fund as a program which 'explicitly challenges harmful social norms and power imbalances to change the position of women, people with disabilities, people of diverse genders and sexualities and marginalised groups' (https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/learning-and-resources/towards-transformation-in-gedsi-wash-continuum.aspx#:~:text=Water%20for%20Women's%20Towards%20Transformation,to%20WASH%20programming%20looks%20like).

[18] Reflected in the number of knowledge products published (303), of which 82 were peer-reviewed academic articles. Also reflected in the views of UK-based WASH sector researchers.

[19] With reference to the DAC evaluation criteria, 'effectiveness' is defined as "*the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, while taking into account the relative importance of the objectives* (https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully_543e84ed-en.html).

3.2 Effectiveness

This section discusses evidence of the extent to which the four EOPOs set out in Section 1.2 were achieved and draws out lessons for future programming.

The WfW theory of change defined a goal, underpinned by four EOPOs to be realised through achievement of three intermediate outcomes supported by three strategies. A critique of the theory of change (see Appendix C) identified several matters that are non-conforming with DFAT's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) standards and international program theory conventions. Some of these matters introduce complexity in evaluation, nevertheless the evaluation team took a 'good faith' approach, assessing evidence against the broad intent of the EOPOs:

- EOPO 1: strengthened climate-resilient inclusive WASH sector systems (software, 'orgware', financing[20])
- EOPO 2: improved access to climate-resilient inclusive WASH services and facilities (hardware)
- EOPO 3: policy priorities related to climate resilience and gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)
- EOPO 4: enhanced knowledge and learning (for program improvement and sector development)

The clear intent was for WfW Phase 2 to further contribute to improved community health, equality and wellbeing in target countries by facilitating 'good WASH' programming—taken to be WASH programming that strengthens national and subnational 'systems' to deliver WASH services in marginalised communities on a sustainable and equitable basis; and that such 'good WASH' must be GEDSI-transformative (see Footnote 17) and climate-resilient.

'Good WASH'

As set out in Sections 1.3 and 3.3, concepts of what constitutes good practice in the WASH sector have evolved dramatically over the past two decades from humanitarian style direct delivery of community water supplies to more sophisticated approaches to strengthening sector systems for planning, financing, delivering, maintaining and governing WASH services focussed on public and environmental health. Further advances relate to the integration of gender sensitive approaches along with the efforts to prioritise the inclusion of persons with disabilities and other minorities in all stages of WASH servicing. More recently, exploration of ways to ensure WASH services are climate-resilient have been key. Moving forward, it is likely that 'good WASH' must be systematically situated within water resources management and wider catchment-scale planning of water supplies and safely managed waste.

As the focus of this evaluation is on Phase 2 of WfW, it is important to clarify the concept of climate resilience. WfW Phase 2 was a continuation of Phase 1 and did not have its own comprehensive design process. A short 'Fund Transition' document guided the shift and noted the importance of alignment with DFAT's Climate Change Action Strategy (2020-2025). The Climate Change Action Strategy defines resilience as:

[20] The evaluation team was influenced by Fund partners who defined four work areas: i) **software** (approaches to promoting community health and inclusion outcomes); ii) **'orgware'** (strengthened WASH sector institutional capacity and networks); iii) **financing** (increased WASH sector funding and improved reliability of finance); iv) **hardware** (resilient and accessible WASH infrastructure, technology and supply chains).

> *The capacity to tolerate shocks or disturbance, and to recover and rebuild a better 'new normal'. Resilience has economic, social and ecological dimensions. It requires diversity and the ability to adapt when external conditions change, and to respond to new opportunities*[21].

According to a DFAT staff member involved in the oversight of the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2, "*our focus was on a comprehensive approach to resilience, beyond just infrastructure*". When the transition proposal was sent to the Delegate for approval it was presented with climate change as the **primary objective** of the investment and therefore attributable as 100% climate finance as per DFAT requirements. DFAT's climate finance scoring guideline also stipulates that in order for an investment to be considered eligible to count as 100% climate finance, along with climate change being its primary objective, "*it should have at least one end of program outcome that addresses climate change*". Phase 2 WfW EOPOs all explicitly reference climate change—hence meeting this definition.

How was climate resilience interpreted at the project level? The DFAT staff member quoted previously noted that some CSO partners found the concept of climate resilience hard to grasp whereas others were already advanced in their thinking on how to integrate climate resilience into WASH. In order to ensure that all projects that transitioned into Phase 2 had a clear focus on climate resilience, the Fund Coordinator required project teams to undertake some form of a climate risk and vulnerability assessment (CRVA). CSOs outlined risks, vulnerabilities and projected impacts related to climate variability and climate change but were given flexibility in how they approached and reported the assessments. CSO project designs were also assessed against a bespoke Climate Rio Marker rubric to demonstrate their adherence to 100% climate finance eligibility.

There does not appear to have been a consistent approach in how CRVAs were conducted. Fund records indicate that by late 2023 only seven CRVAs were completed with the remaining seven still in process. The CRVA documents reviewed by the evaluation team (from the project sites visited) were highly variable in terms of their structure, content and the approach to collect the relevant information. Some were entirely desk-based exercises with good use of national climate change reference documents and data. Others were based entirely on field consultations with communities and local governments and their historical experience with climate hazards and impacts, without any reference to climate change projections or data.

Even the title of the documents generally referred to as climate risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVAs) were not consistent, sometimes across the same CSO with multiple projects, suggesting each project operated with limited guidance from the Fund. This was a shortcoming. A CRVA template would have been a useful tool to guide CSOs. This could have had sections with headings to ensure a greater degree of coherence. Not all partner countries within the Fund have well-developed policies and strategies related to climate change, but many do. Where National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) existed, these could have been drawn on to ground projects in the national climate change adaptation priorities. A CRVA template and guidance would not of itself have been sufficient to ensure quality CRVAs, but it would have contributed.

Lesson:

[21] https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/climate-change-action-strategy.pdf

1. The requirement for implementing partners to undertake climate risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVA) prompted a stronger focus on climate change, but stipulating minimum requirements (e.g. through a template or guidance) would have enabled greater consistency and higher quality across the Fund.

Findings in relation to each of the four EOPOs are discussed in turn.

EOPO 1: strengthened inclusive climate-resilient WASH sector systems

EOPO 1 established 'systems strengthening' as a core approach of WfW. Although not explicit in the WfW theory of change (see Appendix C), a hypothesis underpinning the Fund's design was that vulnerable communities could benefit from improved access to equitable WASH services on a sustainable basis (independent of donor funding) *through* strengthened WASH systems.[22] However, beyond this broad hypothesis, partner CSOs implemented a variety of approaches to WASH systems strengthening that may broadly be positioned between government-led, private sector-led and community-led conceptions. CSO projects generally emphasised one of these approaches, but most involved more than one, e.g. a community-led approach would also usually involve elements of strengthening sub-national government systems. Figure 3 depicts the three systems strengthening conceptions and notionally positions the five projects sampled for this evaluation within this model to illustrate their primary focus. The approaches are then elaborated below.

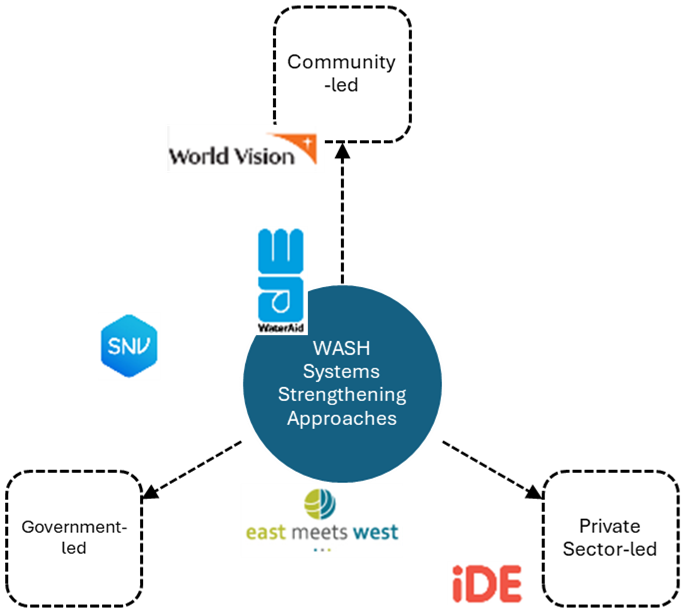

Figure 3 Diverse approaches to WASH 'systems strengthening'

[22] As noted in Section 1.3, this builds on the emphasis on strengthening the 'enabling environment' for WASH in CS WASH Fund 2. Of note, the inverse relationship (i.e. that investment in WASH *services* might lead to strengthened WASH *systems*) was shown through numerous sector studies and evaluations to be unsustainable. See for example Paul Tyndale-Biscoe, Paul Crawford, Bruce Bailey; Engaging with the WASH enabling environment. *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development* 1 March 2020; 10 (1): 124–135. doi: https://doi.org/10.2166/washdev.2020.079

Community- led approaches

Community-led approaches to strengthening WASH systems typically involved the establishment or strengthening of community WASH committees. In WfW Phase 2, this included influencing norms in relation to equality and inclusion and promoting awareness of climate hazards.

World Vision in PNG's Western Province strengthened inclusive community level WASH governance structures in remote South Fly District. WASH committees included women and people with disabilities (PWD), and the committees exhibited a good understanding of inclusion and climate hazards such as flood and drought, although these were based largely on historical experience of hazards with little evidence of integration of future risk. World Vision's emphasis on 'community systems' pragmatically recognised the limited reach of government services and the private sector into this remote and inaccessible part of PNG—reflected in Figure 3 by World Vision's close proximity to the 'community-led' dimension of the model. Although World Vision actively engaged Environmental Health Officers from the Provincial Health Authority (PHA), the lack of reliable financial and technical resources from the Government of PNG (GoPNG) means their involvement was constrained and hence sustainability prospects beyond donor funding are limited. The PHA officers were enthusiastic about the achievements of World Vision's project, noting the gains in target communities compared with three neighbouring districts (Middle, Delta and North Fly), but they lamented the lack of government resources to enable sustainability and replication:

> *I need to be able to replicate this in the other three districts, but I need funding. I am worried that after the project there will be problems with maintaining WASH infrastructure. The PHA has very limited resources.*

This quote illuminates a well-established finding: that while community level WASH governance is one crucial element of a 'WASH system', it must be linked to—and supported by—subnational and national government along with appropriate private sector investment to be sustainable. Relying on community volunteerism alone without external technical and financial resources frequently proves to be unsustainable—a finding well-established in the previous phase of DFAT WASH funding.[23]

Findings in Nepal illustrate this point. Community WASH committees supported by SNV and their local partner, Everest Club, have established strong linkages with the Rural Municipality.[24] SNV facilitated the authorities to implement water safety planning and meet their oversight responsibilities, and the community committees have become more active and representative—involving more women and PWD.[25] Indicative of the success of the system strengthening work is the fact that SNV's financial contribution to a water system rehabilitation has dropped from 50% or more in Phase 1 to as low as 15% in Phase 2, with local government and community fundraising covering the highest proportion, in addition to community fund raising for routine maintenance.

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[23] https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/wash-completion-review.pdf

[24] SNV began their WfW project in two districts – Dailekh and Salahi, but Nepal at the time was transitioning to a Federal system under the 2015 federal constitution which was to see districts phased out. What was Dailekh District is now comprised of 4 urban municipalities and 7 rural municipalities that sit in Karnali Province. See https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2020/09/29/supporting-nepals-historic-transition-to-federalism

[25] Previously, WASH committees had tended to become inactive when staffed mostly with men, many of whom migrated to India in search of employment.

While there are likely several factors contributing to this, it is plausible that the work of SNV under WfW has been an important contributor.

Lesson:

2. Successful community-level system strengthening must be linked to—and supported by—subnational and national systems strengthening to be sustainable, and not just rely on indefinite community volunteerism.

Government-led approaches

SNV in Nepal, East Meets West (EMW) in Cambodia, WaterAid in PNG and also Plan in Indonesia[26] all demonstrated approaches that can variously be described as predominantly 'government-led' system strengthening (represented in Figure 3 by their clustering around the government-led dimension of the model). Indeed, the majority of projects in WfW emphasised support for subnational government WASH actors, with a lesser focus on national government.

Towards the end of Phase 2, the Fund produced a paper summarising some of the partners' key learnings from implementing and researching inclusive climate-resilient WASH. From a systems strengthening standpoint. The paper states:

> *Climate-resilient, inclusive WASH means that WASH services are planned, delivered, and regulated in a way that builds on the existing strengths and processes within the local governance system while also incorporating climate risk and response into these steps, ensuring that services are designed to respond to risks and optimise resilience. Additionally, all plans, investments, and management of those services must consider climate risk at every step of the process.*[27]

The above quote captures the essence of a functioning WASH governance system that has climate risk and resilience at the centre. The Fund paper goes on to present SNV's Nepal project as a good example of a project that has integrated climate risk and resilience into WASH systems (unfortunately, the evaluators found that this more advanced level of integration was the exception rather than the rule across the Fund). As noted above with reference to community-led systems strengthening, SNV strengthened subnational government capacity by working with Rural Municipalities with a view to increasing the capacity of local government to plan, finance, and implement WASH activities in a more strategic and systematic way, including in relation to climate resilience. SNV's research partner, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) assessed community water systems in the target area informed by the climate-resilient water safety planning guidelines of the Government of Nepal. IWMI applied a climate resilience scorecard to rank water schemes, with those receiving a low score being prioritised for upgrade. SNV and local partner Everest Club then worked with local government and communities to upgrade or rehabilitate water systems (i.e. protecting gravity-fed water systems in hill areas and deep tube wells in lowland areas).[28] IWMI trained local government staff to use the climate

[26] The evaluation team remotely interviewed the Plan Indonesia project team but did not benefit from direct field observations.

[27] What-Does-Climate-Resilient-Inclusive-WASH-Look-Like? Insights from Water for Women (Dec 2024) https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/learning-and-resources/resources/KL/Extension-Phase/Water-for-Women_2024_What-Does-Climate-Resilient-Inclusive-WASH-Look-Like_Insights_FINAL.pdf

[28] As noted previously, Rural Municipalities that SNV works with are increasingly investing their own funds in climate-resilient water safety planning.

resilience scorecard and developed an online dashboard with over 100 vulnerability and risk indicators to inform climate-resilient water safety planning. The success of the project attracted the interest of the Nepal Ministry of Water Supply who advised the evaluation team that they are looking to incorporate the scorecard into their online data collection system—NWASH MIS.[29]

In Cambodia, EMW works mainly through the Commune Council level of subnational government, and to a lesser extent Provincial Government at the next level above. EMW had supported the effective functioning of a Provincial Water Committee which meets quarterly. EMW also provides technical capacity that supports provincial government authorities to use the Government's Climate Vulnerability Index (CRI) to inform climate-resilient WASH planning, but EMW observed the planning guidelines are not fully developed, difficult to understand and need refreshing.[30] Whilst strengthening the GEDSI capacity of the Commune Councils and Provincial Water Committee is not a major focus of their work, EMW has encouraged women's participation through advocating for two female volunteers (who facilitate MHH behaviour change sessions with students and households as well as other WASH activities) to be part of each Commune Council.

EMW supports communes to achieve full sanitation coverage and access to piped water in line with national policy. Household WASH infrastructure is generally paid for by the household with the Commune authorities (supported by EMW) mobilizing the community on the importance of WASH for family health. Households without the capacity to pay are given financial subsidies by the Commune. EMW has developed a subsidy targeting strategy which extends the Cambodian Government's 'ID Poor' poverty ranking system[31]. EMW observed that up to half of all households in their target Communes qualify for ID Poor status, so they further target the most vulnerable 'GEDSI Poor' households—households who hold a government ID Poor card and also include one or more of: person with a disability; female headed household; four or more children; elderly.

At the national level, EMW convenes national monthly WASH sector meetings and has helped different national WASH actors to work together more closely. For example, there are two ministries responsible for various aspects of WASH: the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISDI) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) and EMW supported them to form an MoU so they can integrate their two guidelines for CR WASH. EMW also brought the Cambodian Water Supply Association (CWA) together with two RHOs: the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO) and the Women's Organization for Modern Economy and Nursing (WOMEN) to support the CWA to provide better services to GEDSI-poor households. Of particular note was the impact of the Self-Assessment Tool (described in more detail below in relation to EOPO 3 to assess organisational and individual performance with respect to GEDSI) on CWA staff members who expressed humility and surprise at their initially low scores as well as dedication to improving the GEDSI aspects of their work and appreciation for the expertise of the RHOs for this purpose:

> *We don't have skills or understanding about GEDSI. For example, we don't understand the experiences of PWDs so now we can consult the CDPO about this and the CDPO helps us with M&E.*

[29] https://nwash.gov.np/
[30] https://www.cdri.org.kh/project/strengthening-water-resources-management-planning-systems-for-inclusive-climate-resilient-wash-services
[31] https://idpoor.gov.kh/en/

Like all WfW Phase 2 projects, Plan International in Indonesia conducted a climate risk and vulnerability assessment (CRVA) at commencement, using a tool developed in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF). The tool was implemented at the community level by district (*Kabupaten*) and subdistrict (*Kecamatan*) health officials. A research partner (Udayana University) analysed the information collected through the CRVA tool. Plan reported that the Ministry of Health found particular value in the insights generated about climate risks, GEDSI and safe management of sanitation waste and have begun using the tool in other districts with their own funding. This is a clear case of government-led systems strengthening with good prospects for sustainability, and indeed scale-up.

As noted previously, GoPNG invests limited technical and financial capacity in WASH systems. In Wewak District of PNG, WaterAid facilitated the development of a Wewak District WASH Plan (updated in Phase 2 to integrate climate risk and the costs of improved climate resilient WASH systems) which was then endorsed by the East Sepik Provincial WASH Committee. The process is regarded by the WASH Project Management Unit (PMU) within the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM) as national best practice and would like to see the process replicated across all districts and provinces but lacks financial resources to do so. This points to a major 'systems' challenge in PNG: the lack of clear sector leadership. The WASH PMU in the DNPM was set up in 2008 with a mandate to develop a national WASH policy and establish a WASH Authority. A WASH policy (2015-2030) was launched in 2014, but the WASH Authority has not yet been established with legislation stalled. Some stakeholders reported the blockage is because legislators do not understand WASH or the need for the legislation. Others say the legislation is ready but needs the issuance of a 'certificate of necessity'. In the meantime, national WASH planning in PNG remains incoherent, fragmented and largely unfunded.

Lessons:

3. Working with subnational governments is a key entry point to improve inclusive climate-resilient WASH services, but this is most successful when supported with a national government enabling policy environment and strong national sector leadership.

4. The integration of climate resilience into sector planning and implementation by implementing partners is most effective when teamed with research organisations and relevant government agencies.

DFAT Post in Port Moresby provided additional funding (AUD5 million) for WfW to administer through a CSO WASH consortium. While most of the funds supported additional discrete WASH projects by consortium members[32] some of the funds were allocated to a WASH symposium that brought together national, provincial and district WASH stakeholders to discuss inclusive WASH and climate change in PNG. Evidently this built awareness of good practices such as the Wewak District WASH Plan (noted above) and highlighted the need to incorporate climate resilience into a revised National WASH Policy. Whilst a good initiative, sector reform will require more sustained and focused effort including the establishment of the planned National WASH Authority. In retrospect, more collaborative work by the consortium along the lines of the symposium (instead of discrete project implementation) may have helped to progress the GoPNG enabling environment.

[32] In Port Moresby (WaterAid), New Ireland (Plan) and Markham District of Morobe Province (World Vision).

Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) data indicates that government commitment and investment in WASH is crucial to advancing coverage. PNG has had practically no improvement in sanitation coverage between 2010 and 2022 (85% of rural households have less than basic sanitation and this figure is more or less static since 2010); whereas both Nepal and Cambodia have made very significant progress (Nepal officially ODF in 2019 and Cambodia on track for 2025) over the same period. Donor investments like WfW have contributed to progress in WASH coverage in PNG but this is not sustainable without government commitment and investment. In Cambodia, Indonesia and Nepal WfW projects operated in a strong government-led enabling environment, enabling strong progress and good sustainability prospects. Partnerships with research organisations (Nepal and Indonesia) also demonstrated effective integration of science-based climate resilience processes.

Lesson:

5. CSO consortia show potential to strengthen national WASH sector systems through convening advocates, technicians and leaders, but consortia must be designed and managed proactively to achieve specified outcomes and avoid defaulting to discrete CSO project implementation.

Engaging with government counterparts on WASH sector system strengthening carries challenges, as discussed above. An additional overarching challenge is the fact that WASH is rarely administered by a single government counterpart/ministry. Water supply commonly sits within departments of public works, while sanitation and hygiene often sit within departments of health. In some countries, this division is further complicated by whether WASH services are directed at rural or urban jurisdictions. All of this makes it challenging for an international development organisation such as DFAT to work coherently. As described in Section 1.3, DFAT has addressed this through a dedicated WASH sector modality (i.e. WfW and the previous CS WASH Funds), established to convene/strengthen all WASH-related counterparts. With the ending of WfW, DFAT has no plans to implement a further phase of dedicated WASH sector programming but rather anticipates CRC and other modalities may support some climate-resilient inclusive WASH investments—where these are prioritised by local counterparts and DFAT Posts. However, because of the typical fragmentation of WASH across multiple ministries, there is a high risk that WASH as an integrated approach will fall through bureaucratic cracks. In practical terms, because no single bilateral counterpart has carriage of WASH as a sector, there is a risk that WASH as a discrete sector will not be prioritised and advocated by counterparts to secure comprehensive donor support. One experienced sector specialist reflected:

> *Having a dedicated WASH sector fund allows people to focus on the key needs. We are nowhere near achieving the SDG targets…there is a risk of dilution, and that WASH will lose priority if WASH funding is just left to fragment in bilateral programs.*

Lesson:

6. A dedicated WASH modality is an effective way to strengthen a sector that typically falls through the cracks of typical ministerial portfolios (e.g. Public Works, Health etc.) and is otherwise poorly positioned to access bilateral aid through MoUs held by those ministries.

Private sector-led approaches

Across the WfW portfolio, there was generally less engagement with private sector actors than with government and community. Notable exceptions—as reflected in Figure 3—were iDE and EMW in Cambodia. Together, iDE and EMW account for a high proportion of increased sanitation coverage by WfW and have contributed significantly to Cambodia's progress towards ODF status.

This suggests merit in private sector led systems strengthening (though with likely caveats around context relevance).

EMW (as noted above) worked primarily through Commune Councils but also mobilised existing local businesses to deliver sanitation products/services to poor households, and to connect poor households to water schemes. The approach of EMW was to link poor/subsidised households with local businesses (masons) to supply sanitation solutions. There was some training of the businesses to ensure quality and to enable basic training of households in the use of systems. Sustainability was assumed to be a function of the ongoing presence of the businesses in the local area in the event that further services are required.

iDE focused almost entirely on strengthening latrine businesses—an approach consistent with their overarching philosophy of a market-based approach to eradicating poverty.[33] In WfW, iDE has only worked on sanitation, and while the approach is characterised as private sector-led 'systems strengthening', there is no intention to foster sustainability. Rather, the operating assumption is that once full sanitation coverage is achieved, the supported businesses will adapt to pursue new opportunities (e.g. concrete agricultural irrigation products). In a sense, the 'sustainability strategy' is for businesses to develop capacity to innovate and adapt to evolving markets. An example of this is Latrine Business Owner (LBO), Ms Hat Tin, described in the box below. Similarly, iDE's work supporting increased GEDSI at a systems level in Cambodia is limited to working with their LBOs. Approaches include specific training conducted with both women and men that is focused on supporting female business operators in leadership and managing finances (specially, budgeting to prevent the merging of business income with household finances).

Lesson:

7. Private sector led systems strengthening is one effective way to increase WASH services coverage, though with caveats around context relevance and market maturity (noting that enterprise development is nascent in some places).

The evaluation team noted a limitation of private sector led approaches—that being the promotion of development policy priorities such as GEDSI, climate resilience and safely managed faecal sludge (FSM). The promotion of such agenda essentially imposes additional costs on private sector entities and hence are only likely to be prioritised if there is a legislated/compliance regime imposed by authorities.[34] This finding underscores the point made earlier, that successful 'systems strengthening' requires a comprehensive approach that works at all levels of government, community and private sector.

[33] https://www.ideglobal.org/who-we-are#7324

[34] For example, the evaluation team heard several accounts of latrine contents being emptied into the environment without safe treatment of waste, either because of the absence of FSM services, or the cost of accessing such services. Both of these barriers must be addressed through regulation for the benefit of environmental health, and it is implausible that private sector-led approaches can achieve the desired outcome.

Ms Hat Tin, Latrine Business Owner, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Ms Hat Tin is one of the Latrine Business Owners (LBOs) that works with iDE in Siem Reap, Cambodia. She, with the support of her husband employs five full-time staff and five part-time staff (including 2 women) making concrete and brick products. Currently, 60% of her business is through iDE sales agents who facilitate 50-100 latrine orders per month. Her team can install about 5-6 Easy Latrines per day which she sells for USD65 (including transport and installation) each, with a USD5-8 profit margin.

To expand her business, she bought a machine from Thailand that makes interlocking bricks out of concrete: primarily for constructing toilet shelters, but also for constructing other structures when the sanitation market in her area tapers off. Although the machine cost USD6000, it is a worthwhile investment because the bricks are cheaper to make than clay bricks, and the interlocking design means that there are less construction costs for masonry (labour and product). An added benefit of using the interlocking bricks for toilet shelters is that accessible features such as handrails are easy to integrate safely into the walls because rebar can be threaded through the bricks.

Figure 4: Female sanitation entrepreneur, Cambodia

EOPO 2: increased access to inclusive climate-resilient WASH services

There is evidence that WfW '*increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH services*' (EOPO2) in target communities. GEDSI was a key consideration in efforts to improve access to WASH services in both phases of WfW, substantially building on momentum from the CS WASH Fund.[35] Climate resilience was introduced in Phase 2 as a new focus for most CSOs, posing conceptual and practical challenges given the short timeframe (two years). Several interviewees acknowledged that having to conduct CRVAs, identify climate-resilient WASH priorities, *and* implement within the timeframe was challenging. One CSO manager observed:

> *Because it's been such a fast project, we've had to do things side-by-side. For example, from the research side, we had to start implementing whilst [research partner] and others were still collecting data.*

[35] This was achieved both through considering how WASH services could meet the specific needs of women, girls, people with a disability and other marginalised groups of people as well as including representatives of each of these groups in the decision-making processes and platforms (e.g. WASH committees).

In this section we highlight achievements and lessons in relation to increased WASH services, discussing in turn: water supply, sanitation, hand washing with soap (HWWS), menstrual health and hygiene (MHH), institutional WASH and gender-based violence (GBV) services.

Water supply

Key results: During Phase 2 the number of people accessing basic drinking water and safely managed drinking water (according to the JMP definitions) is, respectively, 55,984 and 258,400. The total is 314,424 against a target of 212,507.[36]

In Cambodia and Nepal, the evaluation team witnessed evidence of improved water services that leveraged existing government initiatives—demonstrating the case that an enabling policy environment can support increased WASH services.

In Cambodia, EMW facilitated mains water connections for previously unreached GEDSI-poor households (discussed above in relation to systems strengthening) by brokering discussions between (and financial contributions from) poor households, commune authorities and local private sector water utilities. The significance of EMW's achievement in reportedly connecting 80 - 100% of very poor households in target areas to water schemes was not immediately apparent but is illuminated by DFAT's *Cambodia Australia Partnership for Resilient Economic Development* (CAPRED). This program (AUD87 million over 5 years) is working with 91 water companies around Cambodia and according to program staff has struggled to connect more than 30% of ID poor households to water schemes—confronting reticence by both poor households and water providers. An EMW team member described how they were able to achieve much higher connection rates under WfW than the better-resourced CAPRED:

> *We initially targeted 60 - 80% of poor households and were only able to achieve a 35% connection rate. We found that poor household concerns relate to trust in the water operator, water quality, maintenance support and costs. We realised poor households are risk-averse and require sustained support and information before making a decision to connect. Now with ongoing contact by volunteers, commune leaders and the private operators, we are achieving between 80% and 100% connection rates among the most poor households.*

Figure 5: EMW supported local water service operators to connect 'GEDSI poor' households to water schemes in rural Cambodia

[36] Target and actual figures reported in this section were provided by the Fund Coordinator after the fieldwork phase of the evaluation once partner reporting for 2024 was completed.

In Nepal, SNV/Everest Club leveraged the Government's 'one house, one tap' campaign to mobilise community WASH committees to design water systems that accommodate the new standard. The evaluation team witnessed gravity-fed schemes in remote hill villages that tapped water from protected catchments, treated the raw water with a chlorine dosing mechanism[37] at a storage tank before distributing to household metered connections throughout the villages. This unusually high level of rural water services (compared with more typical central/community tap stands) supported higher standards of household hygiene and increased convenience and wellbeing for women and PWDs.

Figure 6: Chlorinated water distributions system in remote hill village of Nepal meeting the Government's 'one house, one tap' standard

In PNG, there was less evidence of increased access to water services at sites visited by the evaluation team—seemingly due to the weaker enabling environment for WASH services, as discussed above. In South Fly District, World Vision was installing deep boreholes in remote target villages to complement household rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems as a means to address the increasing drought risk. The boreholes were maintained by community WASH committees but were installed directly by World Vision in the absence of government or private sector services.

Figure 7 Pump with features for drainage and protection from contamination, Adamorang village, Western Province, PNG

In Pari Village near Port Moresby, WaterAid (funded through the PNG WASH Consortium described above; see Lesson 5) worked with the community over several years to construct an innovative water supply system to address persistent water shortages caused by increasing drought. However, at the time of the evaluation, the scheme had not been commissioned due to

[37] The chlorination systems had only been installed two weeks prior to the evaluation team's visit so it was not possible to assess the sustainability, or risk for contamination (either by over or under chlorination), of a community-managed chlorination treatment system. The projects also supplied household water filters.

a range of institutional, technical and cultural reasons—arguably illustrating the negative impact on WASH services arising from weak WASH systems (see box below; also see footnote 22).

Pari Village water supply project, Port Moresby, PNG

WaterAid began working in Pari Village during the COVID-19 emergency in 2020, supporting handwashing facilities in Pari school. But a key problem was the lack of a piped water supply. Pari is a cohesive community with a demonstrated capacity and willingness to pay for water and so WaterAid worked with the incorporated local governance body—Motu Koita Assembly (MKA) —to establish Pari Water Services (under MKA) and designed and built a water system.

The water system design involves a single connection to the mains water (managed by Water PNG) at the entrance to the village. From there the water is to be managed by Pari Water Services. From the mains connection, a pipe runs the length of Pari village with seven privately operated 'kiosks' where householders can either buy water by the container or connect to a 'meter farm'. The kiosk buildings, downstream reticulation system and storage tanks have all been constructed. The only thing missing is the connection to the mains. Funds have been allocated by WaterAid and Water PNG but is insufficient to complete the mains pipe connection. A funding commitment by PNG Treasury to MKA early in the project has not been honoured.

The crux of the issue as to why there is no water seems to stem from a lack of effective national level WASH governance. Water PNG were brought into the process late and claim they could have been better able to plan funding if they were brought in earlier. They were on the national WASH Task Force but once the WASH policy was launched in 2014 the task force was dissolved. The planned national WASH Authority has not yet been established. Water PNG attributed part of the problem to a lack of an effective WASH Authority to provide a planning and coordination mechanism to address exactly this kind of problem. The basic problems of weak national WASH sector systems appear to have hindered this project. As it stands, households in Pari still lack access to safe and reliable water, despite the existence of seven Australian-funded water kiosks.

Figure 8: Non-operational water kiosk in Pari near Port Moresby, PNG

In relation to the Phase 2 focus on climate-resilient water supply services, the evaluation team witnessed a range of responses by projects visited. In PNG, the main difference was in diversifying water sources beyond RWH to include groundwater (village boreholes). In Cambodia, households with unreliable RWH or poor-quality groundwater were being connected to mains water systems. In Nepal, WASH committees were protecting springs through tree planting and creating other barriers to landslides.

SNV in Nepal, EMW in Cambodia and to some extent World Vision and WaterAid in PNG (as well as other projects not visited) have begun including considerations for climate resilience in their water safety plans. For example, the CRVA undertaken by SNV/IWMI in Nepal systematically outlined the risks and impact of climate hazards on existing water systems and identified improvements to mitigate risks. EMW in Cambodia and World Vision in PNG addressed community concerns with declining availability of water from rainwater harvesting by facilitating connections to piped water from commercial providers (EMW) or increased use of groundwater (World Vision). However, with the exception of Nepal, it was too soon to see significant evidence of resource allocation or consistent implementation of the climate resilience components of water safety plans. Plan Indonesia's work in West Nusa Tenggara is perhaps the strongest example of a project that considers the full water cycle.

In contrast, with reference to GEDSI, there was good evidence of ways in which the Fund facilitated equitable access to water services. In Cambodia, EMW proactively focused on increasing GEDSI-poor households' access to water. In PNG, whilst there were very few water supply points in each village, these were located near the houses of PWDs. In Nepal, the 'one house, one tap' approach, directly improved the accessibility of water services for households with PWDs just by virtue of delivering water to the households.

Sanitation

Key results: During Phase 2 the number of people accessing basic sanitation and safely managed sanitation (according to the JMP definitions) is, respectively, 36,011 and 163,179 for a total of 199,190. This is well below the target of 566,330 people (i.e. 35.17% of target).

The evaluation team witnessed diverse approaches to increasing sanitation coverage across the five CSO projects visited. As described above with reference to EOPO 1, the greatest increase in sanitation services during Phase 2 out of the countries visited was in Cambodia, through the work of iDE and EMW. These predominantly private sector-led approaches were complementary (though implemented in different localities), with iDE mainly targeting middle-income households through market-based approaches, and EMW targeting GEDSI-poor households through a subsidy-based approach involving commune authorities, the national poverty ranking system and local small businesses (masons).

In addition to increasing household access to sanitation, both organisations in Cambodia demonstrated innovations in sanitation infrastructure that meant that their products were more equitable and potentially more sustainable and climate-resilient (see Figure 9). iDE's 'Sky Latrine' was developed and piloted under WfW as a solution to sanitation in houses elevated over the Tonle Sap flood waters; and could be applied to houses in other flood-prone settings. The Sky Latrine is an inclusive design because it enables sanitation access within the home, benefiting women, children, elderly and PWD.[38] EMW developed an elegantly simple junction box to enable owners of double-pit latrines to independently 'switch pits' when one pit fills up. This design avoids the need for a household to engage a contractor to switch pipe connections between bits, and more importantly, addresses the common practice of piercing the side full pits to drain waste—the antithesis of 'safely managed' waste.

[38] Reportedly, the status quo obliges people to defecate from canoes in the Tonle Sap. The Sky Latrine still faces challenges in relation to safely managing waste once pits are full; and disability access in elevated homes is a broader challenge beyond in-house toilet access. However, the evaluation team heard several accounts from community members of improved wellbeing arising from the Sky Latrine innovation.

Figure 9: EMW dual pit junction box; iDE Sky Latrine

In PNG, the approach employed by World Vision in South Fly District to increase household sanitation was based on the Healthy Islands Concept[39] and seemed to be unchanged from the approach used during the CS WASH Fund and Phase 1 of WfW. Village WASH committees encouraged households to construct pit latrines, and these were generally sited away from waterways and flood prone areas. The rationale for this referenced climate change but seemed to be more related to historical flood levels. In the absence of a sanitation market or reliable government outreach (due to remoteness) the sustainability of these toilets is dependent on individual motivation and volunteer WASH committee member advocacy.

Overall, the added focus of 'climate resilience' in Phase 2 did not appear to impact the approaches taken to increasing sanitation coverage beyond looking back at known/historical experiences of climate hazards (i.e. a 'Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach'). However, several interviewees reflected that the climate resilience emphasis had underscored the urgency of the as-yet unsolved problem of faecal-sludge-management (FSM).[40] Even without the impact of climate change and increased risk of extreme weather events, unresolved FSM leads to concentrated sources of faecal-transmitted disease, and/or unusable sanitation facilities that drive people to return to open-defecation. With the escalating risk of flooding in many places, unmanaged FSM poses an increasing public health risk. Both iDE and EMW promote a model of toilet[41] that can accommodate a double pit to deal with FSM at the household level in dry locations (at extra cost). iDE's Sky Latrine does not include a reliable (or field tested) solution for pit-emptying and there is reluctance from households to invest in a second pit latrine. iDE recognised that even with a strong market-based approach, effective FSM would not be possible

[39] The Healthy Islands Concept (HIC) is a participatory approach to community development implemented in the Pacific Islands since 1997 which encourages communities to recognise the link between people's behaviour, their living environment, and poor health outcomes and as a result, make changes to bring about improved health and well-being. Activities under the HIC generally include improved access to WASH, solid waste management and landscaping and beautification of the environment. (Yeung, S. & Selep, J. (2016). Healthy Islands Concept in Papua New Guinea, 39th WEDC International Conference, Kumasi, Ghana, 2016)

[40] Note that safe FSM is a *means* to achieving 'safely managed sanitation' (according to the JMP definition). The implication is that whilst other aspects safe sanitation may be in place (e.g. having a toilet at the household level, with a lid or a water seal) unsolved FSM may still pose a critical health hazard.

[41] https://washmarkets.ideglobal.org/country-learning/designing-the-easy-latrine

without some kind of government regulation. Local government officials were in agreement that double pit latrines should be a priority:

> *We are an ODF province since one year ago. But full pits are being pierced and releasing sludge into the environment, so we are now encouraging double pit latrines.*

Nepal has been ODF since 2019[42] and the main focus of community sanitation efforts was to encourage households sharing toilets to construct their own. In general, sanitation seemed to be a lesser priority of the project, including in relation to addressing the risk of downslope pollution from pit latrines in hill villages.

Lesson:

8. Unsustainable faecal sludge management (FSM) remains an unsolved technical and institutional problem for climate-resilient sanitation.

The evidence of equitable access to sanitation in the last two years of the WfW Fund built on, but did not seem to differ substantively from work done prior to the Fund to make sanitation more inclusive. The main mechanisms for inclusivity seemed to fit broadly into four groups:

1. Sanitation subsidies for marginalised households e.g. EMW approach in Cambodia
2. Adaptations to sanitation infrastructure for people with mobility impairments e.g. modular brick toilet shelters by iDE, Cambodia
3. Considering the location of sanitation infrastructure e.g. ensuring each household has a latrine close to the house (SNV, Nepal) or inside the house (Sky Latrines by iDE, Cambodia)
4. Including women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups (e.g. indigenous people in Nepal) on WASH committees.

Handwashing with Soap (HWWS)

Key results: During Phase 2 the number of people with basic handwashing facilities in their household (according to the JMP definitions) is 37,847 and 69,528 for a total of 107,375 against a target of 584,460 people (i.e. 18.4% of target).

The evaluation team saw less evidence of both HWWS and inputs or approaches by CSO partners to increase access to HWWS. There were some examples of bamboo tippy taps in Western Province, PNG, and iDE Cambodia were experimenting with a plastic bucket and tap combination that was fixed to the water tank in the toilet shelter (to prevent people from moving the bucket). However, the best examples of HHWS facilities were in SNV's Nepal project sites where a concrete bench for dishwashing and handwashing was located close to the household tap, with drainage and a specific shelf for soap (see Figure 6)—though this represents a substantial capital outlay. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a relative de-prioritisation of HWWS (compared to water and sanitation) at the household level (at least among the project sites visited). This is disappointing given that the Fund coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic which provided a strong impetus for the WASH sector to leverage community-wide behaviour change in relation to handwashing. More broadly, weak uptake of HWWS remains an area requiring urgent

42 https://nepalindata.com/media/resources/items/20/bODF_Nepal_2019_Process_Report_11_Nov_2019.pdf

breakthrough by the sector because it is critical to achieving the public health dividend of clean water and safe sanitation. Arguably, innovations to achieve HWWS at scale remain a 'last mile' challenge for the WASH sector.

Lesson:

9. Achieving handwashing with soap at scale remains an unsolved problem for the WASH sector.

Figure 10: Bamboo 'tippy tap', Western Province, PNG

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was little evidence of ways in which HWWS was modified by a climate-resilient approach (beyond initiatives related to resilient water supplies as discussed above, such as diversifying water supply in the face of scarcity), noting that the focus of HWWS campaigns are on human behaviour change, and hardware tends to be low-cost with short lifespans (to promote maximum coverage at lowest cost). At best, HWWS was described as improving health which broadly improves resilience, including to the shocks and stresses related to climate change.

Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH)

Key results: During Phase 2 the number of schools where access to MHH facilities improved is 20 and 44 for a total of 64, against a target of 100. The number of students directly reached with MHH behaviour change activities is 10,769 and 10,801 for a total of 21,570 (no target set).

In each of the three countries visited, there was evidence that women and girls (including non-students) had participated in activities to increase knowledge and reduce stigma related to MHH and that there was also increased access to MHH products and disposal methods. For at least two of the organisations (iDE and EMW), MHH was a new focus; however, both organisations had worked hard to increase access to MHH information and products. EMW recruited two female volunteers in each commune to deliver MHH information (based on a government-approved curriculum[43]) to female school students and older women and acknowledged that this should eventually extend to men and boys. Through findings from the WASH GEM tool, iDE discovered that MHH was a major source of stress for women and girls and focused some of their innovation funding on developing MHH products—though this was ongoing at the time of the evaluation.

The inclusive nature of MHH is self-evident; however, similar to HWWS, it seems that considering MHH through a climate-resilient lens is mostly framed as MHH supporting the health and wellbeing of women and girls, which in turn is argued to be a function of their resilience. One angle some organisations were beginning to consider was the impacts of MHH product disposal on the environment, in circumstances where commercially available products are not generally organic and cannot be disposed in pit latrines or waterways. Most commonly, these products were being incinerated, with associated pollution and stigma risks. In Western Province, PNG, the Women's Council were making reusable pads and supplying these to schools and markets, though it was unclear what the uptake/demand for these products is. iDE had just begun research about the marketability of reusable or other MHH products in Cambodia but did not yet have findings. Seemingly, what is urgently required is development, production and distribution of affordable *organic/compostable* pads from locally available fibre, though this received limited attention among the project sites visited.[44]

Lesson:

10. The development, production and distribution of affordable MHH products from locally available organic/disposable materials remains an unsolved problem for inclusive climate-resilient WASH.

Institutional WASH

Key results: Individual targets were set for the numbers of schools and health care facilities with access to basic and safely managed drinking water and sanitation as well as handwashing facilities, during Phase 2. Overall, the Fund aimed to support up to 212 schools and reached 260 schools. The Fund aimed to support up to 102 healthcare facilities and achieved 146 facilities.

Overall, there was less focus on institutional WASH than household WASH across the Fund. The evaluation team saw two examples of school WASH, and one example of health care facility (HCF) WASH.

A primary school on Daru Island, PNG, was supported by World Vision to complete an unfinished toilet facility that had been commenced to replace pit latrines that were literally collapsing (see Figure 11). The toilet block included ramp access and grab rails and HWWS facilities were

[43] N.B. Based on one observed session by the evaluation team, there would be value in having the curriculum reviewed by menstrual health experts to ensure alignment with current science.
[44] N.B. the evaluation team was advised of projects in the Pacific supporting women-led reusable pad making businesses including with Plan in PNG, the Solomons, World Vision in PNG and WaterAid in PNG; though re-usable pads are not necessarily organic/decomposable.

provided. World Vision also supported improved water access with a borehole/handpump, noting the unreliability of the town mains connection. This investment by World Vision was strongly justified by need, but well illustrates the systemic challenges of institutional WASH, remaining largely dependent on external resourcing, impetus and expertise.[45]

Figure 11: Accessible school toilet facilities on Daru island, replacing dilapidated pit latrines (behind)

A school in Dungeshwor Rural Municipality, Nepal, also benefited from improved toilet facilities, including 'nudging' signals (drawn from behavioural insights research[46]) between toilets and taps positioned at various heights for child-friendly HWWS. In both Daru and Dungeshwor, the lack of FSM systems meant that the sustainability, and indeed the public health value, of the toilets was questionable given the likelihood that pits would fill and overflow with no clear safe disposal service available. In both places, this points to more profound/systemic issues that are not easily solved, and likely to worsen with climate change.

Both schools had student clubs (or similar) for MHH education and in the Daru school there were MHH facilities (shower and bin) in the girls' toilets. In Dungeshwor, the government had adopted UNICEF's '3-star' approach to school WASH which broadly consists of 10 areas of focus[47] which were being managed by student sub-committees under the guidance of teachers. A competitive element between the committees appeared to generate motivation among students.

In Dungeshwor, the evaluation team also visited a HCF where an accessible toilet block had been constructed and protected against landslides by a concrete drain (constructed with USAID funding prior to WfW).

[45] The evaluation team was advised by a Department of Education official that the GoPNG has had a WASH in schools policy since 2018, and further developed a WASH in schools technical manual in 2024, but does not invest in school WASH hardware.

[46] https://www.comminit.com/files/winsnudgescovid-19_final_web-2.pdf

[47] Nutrition, sanitation, clean environment, safe water, hygiene, DRR, institutional management and sustainability, monitoring and accountability, HWWS and MHH.

Overall, the limited investment in institutional WASH by WfW did not demonstrate any particular innovation from previous phases, and as such remained largely dependent on donor investment. Inclusion was addressed in relation to disability access and MHH, but the climate resilience lens in Phase 2 did not appear to influence any material changes—including in relation to FSM, as noted above. The issue of a lack of government resourcing for basic institutional WASH remains one of the most persistent challenges in the WASH sector and appears to present a more immediate issue than exploring what 'climate-resilient institutional WASH' might look like.

GBV services

Whilst GBV services are not explicitly 'WASH services', they are an essential component of any program that seeks to challenge gender roles and norms at the intra-household and community/public level. WASH programs challenge gender roles and norms both because access to WASH services is gendered (e.g. globally women and children do more water collection than men) and because WASH management that seeks to be inclusive brings marginalised people (including women and girls) into decision-making spaces that they previously may not have occupied. The backlash that often occurs as a result of this causes harm and also hinders potential increases in access to WASH services. Hence, 'good WASH' programming includes strengthening or establishing services to deal with this backlash as part of a broader Do No Harm approach.

The clearest example of GBV considerations encountered by evaluation team was in Western Province, PNG, where World Vision had supported the Women's Council to re-establish themselves and undergo empowerment and leadership training. As a result, the GBV referral pathways from remote communities to the interim safe house in Daru were strengthened and the use of these services were higher than ever.

GBV services are self-evidently concerned with inclusion. Climate resilience is less relevant, however a women's NGO representative reported:

> *An issue we are focusing on is the impact of climate change on GBV. When it's flooding, it's women's job to look for food and firewood which means extra work, therefore extra complaining and potential retaliation. Also, flooding time is risky which creates stress which increases the potential for GBV. Therefore, we run trainings and workshops to teach communities about GBV.*

Lesson:

11. Development programming that challenges gender norms can proactively address the risk of backlash by supporting services where possible including referral pathways to deal with gender-based violence.

Summary of WASH service delivery gains and constraints

Overall, whilst access to WASH (particularly drinking water) increased because of the Fund, there were few substantive breakthroughs or innovations with respect to improving access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (for example, in the way CLTS changed approaches to sanitation almost 20 years ago). Furthermore, it was challenging to ascertain overall progress towards improving WASH services for several reasons: 1) several indicators did not have targets against which to assess the adequacy of progress; 2) individual project data was incomplete at the time of writing; 3) some indicators (e.g. 'number of people with increased climate-resilient, inclusive

WASH capacity') were not clearly defined for measurement purposes[48]; and 4) implementing partners were not obliged to comply with a standardised/systematic format/system for reporting 'aggregatable'[49] data.[50] Where there is data about targets and progress to date for clearly defined indicators, these data suggest that the Fund is behind in meeting some targets.

On reflection, this is unsurprising, given that Fund partners were strongly focused on defining and actioning *inclusive, climate-resilient* WASH. Put another way, in circumstances where the GEDSI component of the Fund was better resourced (see footnote 52) within the Fund Coordinator team than the technical WASH components, it is perhaps unsurprising that there were few examples of WASH innovations or advances. In this vein, some interviewees lamented that the basis for quality WASH was left to individual CSOs rather than led by the Fund Coordinator—and furthermore that there was an absence of any regular/substantive technical feedback.[51] This situation underscores the complicated dilemma of trying to ensure that the WASH sector is keeping up with emerging development imperatives (such as inclusion and resilience), whilst not yet having solved some of the basic technical challenges in the sector—many of which are referenced above and summarised here:

- Approaches to integrate holistic water cycle and catchment management practices into WASH planning
- Approaches to address safe management of faecal sludge, at household and institutional levels
- Approaches to scale-up hygiene behaviour change beyond volunteer-led promotion
- Approaches to scale-up sustainable inclusive institutional WASH facilities
- Approaches to mobilise government investment in WASH systems, including in sustainable operations and management

The conclusion to be taken from this is not that the imperatives to be inclusive and climate-resilient in WASH are unimportant. Rather, that the pivot to climate resilience did not seemingly add substantially and qualitatively to the nature of WASH services. As one CSO interviewee reflected:

> *The community can't tell the difference between Phase 1 and 2. It all looks like a WASH project to them.*

In Cambodia, one community WASH committee member explained that:

> *To us, climate resilience WASH means educating people to use water efficiently, improving the design of latrines, improving water storage in the household and making sure each person uses their own drinking water glass.*

Similar views were expressed by other community WASH committees in Cambodia, PNG and Nepal. Whilst they were grateful to be more aware of climate change, this explanation suggests

[48] This indicator (by way of example) is not measurable insofar as there is no universally agreed definition 'climate-resilient WASH capacity'; and further this domain was an area of active research during the life of WfW Phase 2, and hence not possible to measure and report.
[49] Fund partners were delegated authority to design their own MEL systems rather than complying with Fund-wide systems. While this approach has some advantages, it carries the significant disadvantage of curtailing the ability to provide aggregated Fund-wide performance data that can defend the whole Fund. The Fund Coordinator required CSO project teams to report JMP standardised WASH indicators 2.1 – 2.5.
[50] The evaluation team was not resourced to review/audit project-level or Fund-level M&E data.
[51] The exception was project monitoring visits, which included highly regarded technical feedback, though these were necessarily constrained by COVID, time and resources.

that climate-resilient WASH does not look dramatically different from business-as-usual WASH. The independent evaluation of the SNV project in Laos corroborated this finding:

> *It seems likely that the climate financing requirements premised on the notion that climate-resilience equates to 'additionality' in WASH programming. This is sometimes the case (e.g. greater consideration of water availability via water resources management) but in other areas, climate-resilient WASH is often simply WASH done well. Establishing a clearer narrative on what climate-resilience means for the WASH sector would help inform the terms for more effective funding of climate-resilient programming.*

Perhaps this is unsurprising in the context of the short timeframe. It is all very well to give WASH committees and implementers increased awareness of the impact of climate change but in many cases, their ability to respond is broadly limited to doing what they have already done; albeit with more urgency. The Fund has contributed to WASH services that are more resilient (to varying degrees) to the impact of existing climate hazards (mainly floods and droughts) but in most cases, there was limited evidence that medium to long term climate projections had informed these changes.

On the other hand, the focus on GEDSI in this Fund *did* result in WASH services that were discernibly different from business-as-usual (i.e. GEDSI unaware/harmful) WASH. But this has been the result of more than a decade of focus on GEDSI in WASH, with substantial extra resourcing and expertise invested in the last seven years. This suggests a more realistic timeframe to expect to see tangible benefits from integrating climate resilience into WASH services. Regardless, in this pursuit, the purpose of increasing access to basic (let alone safely managed) WASH services—that being to prevent the deaths of children under five and to improve the lives and wellbeing of all people and the environment—should not be lost.

EOPO 3: strengthened climate resilience and GEDSI in households, communities and institutions

GEDSI and climate resilience are integrated into EOPOs 1, 2 and 4. As articulated in Appendix C, the additional inclusion of a discrete EOPO 3 concerned with GEDSI and climate resilience is irregular and somewhat challenging from a program theory standpoint; but was evidently done in good faith to strongly signal the importance of these development policy domains. While Fund Coordinator staff and partners affirm that all work under the Fund was related to WASH, there was evidently an expectation that WASH work could serve as *a platform for* influencing GEDSI and climate resilience results 'beyond WASH'. A Fund Coordinator team member reflected:

> *The whole GEDSI agenda has demonstrated the use of WASH as a tangible entry point which can create bigger change in systems and other things.*

GEDSI 'beyond WASH'

Arguably, one of the greatest achievements of WfW is the demonstration of what can be achieved for marginalised people when GEDSI is substantially resourced[52] and proactively pursued in development programming. This is borne out at several levels, from CSO staff whose own perspectives have evolved dramatically over the various phases of WASH programming, to government counterparts who have pivoted their policies and approaches through engagement with WfW.

A case in point is the World Vision team in Western Province of PNG who report having shifted from having little insight into inequality and exclusion to now considering these as core aspects of development and social change, integrated not just in WASH programming but in all projects regardless of sector or approach.

Figure 12 Members of the Western Province Women's Council, PNG

Similarly, the work World Vision has done to empower local RHOs such as the Women's Council, Callan Services and the OPD means that representatives of those organisations now have strong networks in the district and provincial governments and are able to advocate for their needs in both WASH and beyond WASH. A provincial government adviser reported:

> *Now we do our own advocacy. We are currently based in Daru but hope to go beyond here. We're advocating to the governor and the town mayor.*

Further, through leadership and entrepreneurship training, World Vision has supported the Western Province Women's Council to undertake non-WASH related activities such as environmental conservation, running businesses, and advancing the GBV referral pathway (for all WASH *and* non-WASH matters). Furthermore, World Visions work with Callan Services (an RHO that supports children with disabilities) in previous projects led to recognition of the need for a similar RHO to represent adults with a disability. Consequently, World Vision has supported the establishment of the Western Province Organisation of People with a Disability (OPD).

In Cambodia, both iDE and EMW supported activities that systemically empower women in government and private sector organisations. EMW reported that all project volunteers are female, and that several of these have progressed to government employment because of the confidence and profile they gained through their involvement in project activities. iDE has developed a specific focus on 'powering' female latrine business owners (LBOs) who are either sole owners or in a husband-wife enterprise, encouraging the women to pay themselves a salary and to separate their household and business finances.

[52] Examples of this in the WfW Fund include: 1) having a full-time GESI specialist in the FC team; 2) most projects hired a GEDSI specialist or advisor to be part of their teams; 3) Just over 11% of the Short-Term Advisor days allocated to the Fund were dedicated to GEDSI. By contrast, there was no dedicated specialists for WASH or climate resilience in the FC team, and the STA days allocated to WASH and climate resilience were each 15% of the total days.

In Nepal, SNV's strengthening of OPDs to network with local government led to the establishment of 'disability help desks' at ward level in seven local governments, enabling advocacy for WASH and other needs by PWDs. SNV also supported women to form credit savings groups and to establish businesses to sell soap, handwashing stations, toilet cleaning supplies and water filters as well as to provide education about burying rather than burning menstrual waste.

Figure 13 Female credit savings group representative with colour cloth bags to assist with budgeting, Nepal

Arguably, an important contribution of the Fund to the WASH sector—and community development more broadly—is the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool (GESI SAT)[53]. The GESI SAT is a tool for individual and collective reflection on the extent and quality of GESI work *within* WASH organisations and projects which was initially developed by SNV Bhutan in 2019 with WfW funding. The tool was trialled and collaboratively adapted with other WfW partners (CSO and RO) over the following two years. The final version was published in 2021. Each of the sampled organisations in PNG, Cambodia and Nepal, as well as their local partners, acknowledged the impact of the GESI SAT within their organisations, particularly with reference to supporting their growth along the GEDSI Continuum. The SAT is also being formally integrated within other organisations and contexts; for example, in Nepal the SAT has been adapted for use by sub-national governments engaged in WASH activities. In Cambodia, the SAT was used by the Cambodian Water Supply Association, where an initially disappointing self-assessment provoked improvements such as engagement with the Cambodian DPO (facilitated through East Meets West). The evaluation team understands that the Fund Coordinator and many partners have redeveloped the SAT as a cross sectoral tool with climate resilience lens.

Lessons:

12. Sustained and substantial investment in GEDSI can lead to WASH services that are more inclusive, and in some cases can foster broader GEDSI outcomes by challenging and changing social norms (i.e. GEDSI transformation).

[53] https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/towards-transformation-in-wash-gender-equality-and-inclusion-self-assessment-tool.aspx

13. Proactively encouraging implementers to partner with rights holder organisations enhances the quality, efficiency and sustainability of their GEDSI work.

Climate resilience 'beyond WASH'

A key challenge for fund partners in Phase 2 was framed by the learning question: '*What does climate-resilient inclusive WASH development look like?'* The Fund set out to research this question whilst CSO partners were concurrently implementing it—akin to building a car whilst driving it. The inclusion side of this question has been quite well answered; the climate resilience aspect less so. As Phase 2 was designated by DFAT as 100% climate finance, the operating assumption was that climate change adaptation was the primary objective of the investment (as per DFAT guidelines[54]). In practice, CSO projects were required to conduct a CRVA to ensure specific climate risks and community vulnerabilities were identified and strategies to address them were central to project implementation.

The shortcomings of the CRVA process have already been outlined above (Section **Error! Reference source not found.**). In most cases, the 'climate-resilient' WASH activities arising from these CRVAs are little different to what a decade ago would have been called 'DRR WASH'. This 'DRR WASH' approach is, however, a necessary (if not sufficient) step in the right direction. The overlap between DRR and climate change adaptation is long established. This is reflected in DFAT's recently updated guidelines to climate finance (*Counting Australia's Climate Finance*[55]) which notes that DRR activities that consider climate-related disasters, along with other hazards, can be counted as a 70 per cent contribution to climate finance commitments[56].Given the short timeframe of Phase 2, and the conceptual and practical challenges, it is perhaps unsurprising that knowledge and practice in relation to climate resilience has not advanced as much as GEDSI in WASH which had already been the focus of WfW in Phase 1 and the previous CS WASH Fund. The evaluation team encountered very few examples of climate resilience 'beyond WASH' emerging from the Phase 2 projects in the same vein as the GEDSI outcomes described above in this section. At best, some CSO staff noted that the exposure they had to climate resilience as part of WfW was beginning to influence their work outside of WASH programming. For example, the Cambodian RHO, CDPO, explained that it had drafted a policy for climate change and inclusion for their work with other organisations (e.g. Save the Children) and another Cambodian RHO, WOMEN, had established a contingency plan for women in their networks to respond to disasters which could be submitted to donors of future projects.

However, numerous interviewees also acknowledged difficulties in conceptualising and implementing climate-resilient WASH, with broadly two perspectives evident, simplistically characterised as follows:

- Climate resilience is an *outcome* of 'good WASH'
- Climate resilience is a *means* to 'good WASH'

The former perspective essentially recognises that functioning WASH systems and services are necessary for communities to thrive—even more so in the face of climate change impacts.

[54] https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/good-practice-note-integrating-climate-change-development-assistance-implementing-partners
[55] https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/counting-australias-climate-finance.pdf
[56] At the time that WfW phase 2 was being assessed for climate finance, this DRR as 70% category was not available. Rather, a DFAT investment was either primary (100% climate finance); secondary (default 30%); or mainstreamed (default 10%).

Hence, any work to improve WASH systems/services is essentially an investment in climate resilience. A CSO representative with longstanding experience in the sector stated:

> *I don't think we've entirely resolved what climate-resilient WASH is…There are different people with different perspectives. I think the majority of people feel like doing good WASH just builds resilience, almost by definition.*

The latter perspective considers that the impacts of climate change must be factored into the design of WASH systems/services in order for them to be resilient into the future. Both perspectives present challenges. The former perspective can be questioned insofar as it suggests that nothing new is required, and indeed 'good WASH' has *always* implicitly contributed to climate resilience. The latter perspective suggests that new standards or practices in WASH are demanded by the changing climate. However, most interviewees in this evaluation conceded that—aside from undertaking CRVA—WASH interventions are not materially different in Phase 2 from previous investments. A respected researcher involved in this work stated:

> *You can't have climate resilience in WASH without first solving cost recovery, sustainability etc etc. Traditional development work is a big part of enabling climate resilience. But that said, we also need to be able to do something new rather than just do the same thing and call it 'climate-resilient'…we need to identify what to do differently to more proactively mind climate risks.*

Lesson:

14. Integrating GEDSI into WASH programming has been a long-term effort that is yielding significant results. Climate resilience is a relatively new area for CSOs and partner governments, and it is unrealistic to expect similar progress over a short timeframe.

EOPO 4: strengthened knowledge, learning, innovation and practice

Over the two phases of the WfW Fund, AUD16.5 million was invested in '*strengthening the use of new evidence, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.*' (EOPO4). During Phase 1, this was used to support:

1. Type 1 RO-led Research Projects (5)
2. Type 2 RO-led, in partnership with CSO Research Projects (7)
3. Innovation and Impact (I&I) grants that fell into three categories:
    a. CSO-led (4)
    b. Jointly led by CSO and RO (5)
    c. RO-led (5)
4. COVID-19 Research Projects (2)

In Phase 2, WfW invested around 13% of the Fund (approx. AUD4.2 million) to support seven research projects led by research institutions, some of which were in partnership with CSOs that were implementing projects as part of the Fund.

In both phases, all CSOs and ROs in the Fund were invited to contribute to a series of learning agendas, working together in sub-committees online and occasionally in face-to-face workshops. Expenses related to the learning agenda such as workshop attendance was mostly

funded, but otherwise participation in the learning agenda was incorporated into project time. Fund partners determined the topic(s) of the Learning Agenda which for Phase 2 was: "*What does climate-resilient inclusive WASH development look like*?".

Overall, the level of resourcing demonstrates a unique prioritisation of knowledge and learning in Australian international development program[57]. It resulted in **intra-fund** learning where partners supported each other and exchanged knowledge through online or in-person workshops as well as an online resource platform. It also led to **extra-fund** learning which drove knowledge generation for the wider sector and showcased DFAT's work on a global stage. Over the course of both phases of WfW, 303 knowledge products were published, of which 82 were peer-reviewed academic articles.

An internal assessment[58] of the 'value and contribution of research' over both phases of WfW identified 10 ways in which research was beneficial. The 10 benefits spanned a spectrum of significance. The following discussion focuses on key benefits that were corroborated by the evaluation team during fieldwork.

One key benefit, which was also shared by participants during the evaluation field visits, was that the knowledge generation component of the Fund meant that research enabled reflection beyond a reporting-focussed M&E role and allowed for the **exploration of new ideas or 'blue sky thinking'**. For example, one CSO staff member explained:

> *If there wasn't the culture of learning in the Fund, I'm not sure we would have dedicated as much time to research. If we likely would have spent our research funding on [project outputs]. We might then have seen a spike [beneficiary uptake] than we did, but the investment in research has helped us deliver better products. We now see research as the first step in any new phase of our work.*

'**Independence'** was another benefit of the research component of the Fund identified in the internal assessment as well as by evaluation participants; although this had varying in interpretations. There was appreciation for the relatively 'neutral' and 'apolitical' position that universities and other research institutions hold meaning that the evidence they produce is generally considered more credible than evidence produced by implementers (e.g. CSOs or governments) about their own work. From a CSO perspective, the I&I grants provided an opportunity for them to independently define their own research questions:

> *All of our research was focussed on our needs here. If there was a top-down research design process, I'm not sure if we would have answered the questions with the same zeal.*

From the perspective of research organisations, the research grants meant that they could choose where and with whom they worked. The result was that they worked with governments as well as CSOs. One researcher explained the benefits of this:

> *I think we've achieved quite a lot in the Pacific after seven years of research partnerships. That gave us opportunities to build relationships, particularly with government. There is more turn over with CSOs there, so it's harder to build capacity. We were able to build*

[57] With the exception of discrete development research investments in the past such as the *Australian Development Research Awards (ADRA)* or the *CSIRO-AusAID Research for Development (R4D) Alliance*.
[58] Learning Brief: Water for Women 2018-2024: The value and contribution of research (currently in draft form only)

> *capacity with government and have seen some changes in the way they do things now which is positive.*

Fund Coordinator team members noted that the **collaborative nature** of the Fund's research component facilitated a lot of knowledge exchange (as opposed to knowledge production in silos or a vacuum):

> *The diverse contexts have enabled such rich cross-learning; for example, all the GEDSI advisers across the Fund have been able to draw on this network of advisers for lessons and advice and this has established a strong alliance. In particular, the self-assessment tool provided a unifying mechanism because it was co-created and tested with each other.*

Several researchers explained how the focus on knowledge and learning within the Fund had helped them to feel more connected to other project partners and to feel part of something bigger than just their projects which helped to motivate their work:

> *It was good to learn about what other researchers are doing; we rarely get exposure to other work with CSOs and researchers and this modality fostered a really cohesive group.*

Whilst the relationships between CSOs, government and research institutions during the Fund was positive and led to important knowledge generation, the sustainability of these relationships without ongoing resourcing is uncertain.

The **catalytic value** of research emerging from the Fund was identified as another key benefit; that is, the tools and resources developed within the Fund (often with relatively low resources) ended up having a disproportionately wide impact. This was attributed to the Fund having multiple CSOs, having ROs working in partnership with CSOs, and resources to facilitate collaboration between partners for trialling new ideas in different contexts. The WASH-GEM, which is a quantitative gender equality measure which was co-developed and tested by organisations within the Fund is an example of this. Another example is the Self-Assessment Tool (mentioned in previous sections) which was developed, trialled and refined over four years by various GEDSI advisors across the fund. With the support of the Sanitation Learning Hub,[59] it has been translated into Portuguese and French and has 5000 downloads. It is currently being developed into a cross-sectoral tool to support GEDSI in programs outside of WASH.

Notwithstanding the progress made towards EOPO4, several interviewees identified areas for refinement and improvement. Firstly, the lack of funding for involvement in knowledge and learning meant that the Fund partners had differing capacity to prioritise this work. Some well-resourced CSOs already had staff capacity processes in this area. Some less-well-resourced CSOs who were more narrowly focussed on achieving outcomes and impacts for beneficiaries, found contributing to a knowledge product more challenging. For example, East Meets West in Cambodia—with a national staff of just four people—addressed this issue through having one of their USA office staff members represent them on the learning agenda, leaving the 4-person in-country team to focus on project implementation. However, this solution would not suit all organisations. As one Fund Coordinator staff member noted, some of the CSO staff members who were based in recipient countries were frustrated when their work was presented on their behalf by staff based in donor countries. Whilst this may be an efficient solution from a resourcing perspective, it contradicts a locally-led approach to knowledge sharing. The Fund tried to address

[59] https://sanitationlearninghub.org/

this through funding K&L workshop and peer-to-peer training attendance (available to all participants).

Another potential challenge with the overall pursuit of EOPO4 is the sheer volume of knowledge products generated, seemingly without a systematic curation of these products. As a result, it is difficult for external actors to determine which knowledge products should be prioritised by the sector. One researcher reflected:

> *Perhaps next time the K&L agenda should be clearer on who we need to influence; rather than learning as an inward focussed agenda [...] We've been focussed on inward oriented learning within the Fund and global advocacy; but less on informing and advocating national level reforms and policy.*

A second researcher seemingly concurred:

> *We could have got more out of the K&L stuff if it had been more structured.*

These reflections suggest that although the K&L agenda was focused on collaboration within the Fund, some partners felt that more advocacy and knowledge sharing with external stakeholders could have taken place.

Some participants felt there was missed opportunity within EOPO4 to be more strategic with integration of M&E with K&L and research. In this vein, one Fund Coordinator team member noted that there was limited systematic feedback to Fund partners from M&E process. This meant that whilst a lot of M&E data was generated it was not fully utilised. A researcher agreed:

> *The links between MEL, research, K&L and the I&I grants could have been articulated better.*

Finally, an issue identified by the evaluation team concerns how the extensive research and knowledge products generated by the Fund will be preserved and made available beyond the life of the WASH modality. Of note, the website that hosted knowledge products from the predecessor program (CS WASH Fund) is now a dead link, meaning that much of the intellectual effort is lost or inaccessible. A similar fate for the knowledge generated throughout WfW should be proactively avoided.

Lessons:

15. Substantially funding research, knowledge and learning within sector programming can significantly advance better practice and credibility.

16. A knowledge and learning strategy should include plans for the curation and preservation of products beyond the life of the program.

3.3 Sustainability, coherence, relevance and efficiency

The primary emphasis of this final evaluation is on lessons and achievements in relation to the EOPOs (discussed in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** in relation to effectiveness). However, the ToR also required rapid assessment against other selected DAC criteria: sustainability, coherence, relevance and efficiency.

Sustainability & coherence

As set out in Section 1.3, a fundamental premise of DFAT's WASH sector investments since CS WASH Fund 2 (2018) has been the pursuit of *sustainable* WASH systems and services—partly in response to global critique of the *unsustainability* of WASH. In WfW, this is grounded in the doctrine of 'systems strengthening', as discussed above in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** in relation to EOPO 1. The importance of system strengthening for sustainability of services is crucial and this is acknowledged in the WfW design document:

> *The robustness of these systems are regarded as the key to ensuring on-going sustainability. Such systems include all relevant aspects such as leadership, policies, planning, financing, institutional framework and roles of government, private sector and civil society actors, coordination, monitoring and accountability.*

The design anticipated CSOs would address these sustainability challenges, but this was demonstrably too ambitious an assumption for a CSO led program. Certainly, there are examples of good progress (such as Plan's work in Indonesia), but these were arguably at least as much due to the existing enabling environment as to the CSO's efforts. The difference between Nepal and PNG being a case in point. Numerous evaluations and studies have found that WASH hardware is ordinarily rendered non-functioning within a few years of being commissioned; and community-led WASH governance (grounded in the ideals of volunteerism and communitarianism) wanes or becomes conflicted without external facilitation. In addition, in contexts where WASH is failing, government investment in the sector tends to be absent or unreliable; and supply chains are unaffordable, unreliable or unsupported by robust technical capacity. More broadly, the CSO-led WASH sector has been criticised for promulgating low-cost/low-tech solutions that rely on surface/rainwater solutions which do not consider projected changes in the climate or take a catchment-wide holistic approach to water cycle management. Indeed, the Completion Review of the first CS WASH Fund (June 2012, p 20) stated:

> *Given the direct relationship between WASH interventions and wider water resources management, particularly in the context of climate change, it is of concern that CSOs have shown limited commitment to engage in this domain. The [review team] is of the view that this issue should attract dedicated focus in the Future Fund—especially given AusAID's environment and climate change priorities, with emphasis on a holistic approach to water cycle management.*

While this critique of CSO-led WASH interventions is defensible and has been a key driver of sector advances, it sits in tension with the persistent global challenge that gives relevance to the WASH sector, as set out below (see 'Relevance'). The unvarnished truth is that—notwithstanding gains made by the WASH sector—around 1,000 children still die each day from preventable WASH-related causes.[60] The public health emergency facing many marginalised communities, coupled with the limited (and declining) investment in the WASH sector, have arguably perpetuated low-cost and unsustainable practices/facilities[61] in pursuit of rapid and broad-based WASH coverage—an approach more akin to humanitarian programming than sustainable development. This situation has been at the expense of sustainable and resilient WASH systems that would instead pursue catchment-wide holistic approaches to resilient water and sanitation

[60] https://www.unicef.org/media/137206/file/triple-threat-wash-EN.pdf

[61] See for example, the tippy-tap innovation depicted in Figure 10, built with low cost, locally available materials, but dependent on ongoing volunteer motivation to be sustained; or indeed cheap household pit latrines that routinely fill/overflow without available FSM solutions.

management. But such approaches require significant investment in science (e.g. ground water mapping and hydrological studies) and engineering (e.g. affordable and accessible water and waste treatment plants) that extend well beyond the financing of CSO-led WASH programming. Evidently, what is required, is a joined-up approach that involves all parties (CSOs/RHOs, governments, private sector, research institutions, community), significant investment paired with technical capability, and all framed within the parameters of climate science. Depressingly, this vision seems to be beyond the capacity of official development assistance, or indeed global politics; but nonetheless underpins the aspiration of sustainable and resilient WASH.

Relevance

DFAT's investment in the WASH sector has been strongly defended in relation to relevance. Australia has committed to contributing to the SDGs, including SDG6, which continues to be problematic in many parts of the world. DFAT's website states:[62]

> *According to the UN, 3.6 billion people worldwide, nearly half the global population, lack access to safely managed sanitation. Concerningly, sanitation coverage reduced between 2015 and 2022 in the Oceania region. At the same time, some 2.2 billion people around the world do not have safely managed drinking water services, and 3 billion lack basic handwashing facilities.*

Hence, donor investment in the WASH sector remains relevant, *ipso facto*.

The focus on *inclusive* WASH is also relevant. As with development programming more broadly, WASH sector programming is more successful when women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups are proactively involved in planning, implementing and improving WASH interventions. Further, WASH interventions disproportionately benefit women, girls, people with disabilities and marginalised groups. Hence, there is a pragmatic case for inclusive WASH because it improves WASH outcomes, and it improves equality and inclusion outcomes.

The focus of WfW over the past two years on *climate-resilient* WASH is firmly aligned with Australia's international development policy priorities, and with the geopolitical priorities of the Asia-Pacific region. Resilient and sustainable WASH services are a necessary but not sufficient condition for community resilience. That is, WASH is one of several climate adaptation domains that are crucial for community resilience in a changing climate. However, while this investment by DFAT in climate change *adaptation* is highly relevant in the project contexts, its relevance sits within the limits of global climate action. As stated in the UNEP 2024 Emissions Gap Report (*No more hot air…please!*[63]):

> *Nations must deliver dramatically stronger ambition and action in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions or the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal will be gone within a few years*.

The clear implication is that unless the global economy can rapidly decarbonise, the relevance of adaptive investments such as WfW will be compromised.

[62] https://www.dfat.gov.au/development/topics/development-issues/water
[63] https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2024

Efficiency

DFAT's FIMR validation matrix sets out six criteria for efficiency.[64] An assessment of efficiency was only a minor focus of this evaluation, and a review of finances, management and the governance arrangements were beyond scope.

In relation to the WfW modality, Australia's International Development Policy endorses strong partnerships with civil society, and recognises the unique capacity of NGOs, especially in relation to community development. The WfW modality demonstrates several unique aspects in the Australian aid program (see box). As noted above in relation to sustainability and coherence, there is a strong case for CSO-led WASH programming to remain one element of a broader joined up approach to inclusive climate-resilient WASH, situated within a holistic water resources management framework. That said, the evidence suggests that a CSO-led modality alone is unlikely to be able to engage comprehensively at all levels required to achieve systems strengthening.

WfW modality

DFAT employs a range of modalities to deliver the international development program. WfW (and its predecessors) represent a novel modality with key features that include:

International CSOs: Australia has long-supported non-government organisations (NGO), most notably through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). NGO funding opportunities have ordinarily been available only to Australian agencies accredited to receive ANCP funding. The initial WASH Fund (2010) was the first time bids from international agencies not represented in Australia were accepted.

Knowledge, learning and research: the systematic accrual of learning within the Fund is unprecedented and has arguably generated significant new knowledge among Fund partners and the WASH sector more broadly. Aside from clear public diplomacy value for DFAT, this has given the Fund a higher-order purpose than simply implementing a WASH program for a period of time.

Centrally managed: most Australian Aid investments are designed and administered from DFAT Posts, whereas the Fund has been managed centrally from Canberra. Further, it is the first aid investment to be managed by a thematic group within DFAT.

Substantial commitment: WfW and its predecessors cumulatively represented a substantial and consistent investment by DFAT in a technical sector, largely focussed on the same target communities/countries spanning 14 years and more than AUD295 million.

Coherence: WfW and its predecessors involved CSO-led designs that uniquely responded to their operating contexts, but were unified by common sector and policy priorities. They aligned with broadly common theories of change.

Arguably, the professional skills and experience of staff and partners is a general strength of WfW. Within DFAT, the Fund was consistently managed by bureaucrats with sector experience. The Fund Coordinator was staffed by qualified and experienced advisers spanning WASH, GEDSI, MEL, knowledge brokering, communications and climate resilience. The WfW partners were CSOs, RHOs and ROs with proven WASH sector implementation/research capabilities—in many cases global sector leaders. A hallmark of WfW was the commitment and passion for inclusive climate-resilient WASH demonstrated by advisers and partners.

More broadly, WfW has been harmonised within DFAT's water resources/WASH programming over the past 14 years—managed by a single section within DFAT. This section has promoted harmonisation through funding international WASH conferences and sponsorship of sector

[64] Efficiency is assessed in relation to: i) use of time and money; ii) budget deviation; iii) modality; iv) governance and management; v) staff professionalism; vi) harmonization.

leaders' attendance at international WASH/water fora. Also, as discussed in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** with respect to EOPO 4, the significant investment in knowledge and learning has fostered harmonisation with the global sector.

3.4 Locally-led development

Promoting locally-led development was not an explicit outcome or priority of WfW. However, Australia's International Development Policy[65] commitments to locally led development, which is more broadly a fundamental and long-standing principle of sustainable development practice[66], and CSO-led approaches[67] specifically.

The rationale for locally-led development has been defined from four perspectives[68] which are each reflected in DFAT's guidance note:[69]

- **Financial:** localisation is more cost-effective. National actors are cheaper than international ones, and funding them directly reduces transaction costs;
- **Ethical:** localisation should be built on equitable partnerships that treat local and national actors as equal partners who make necessary and valuable contributions;
- **Strategic:** the strategic objective of all international cooperation is to support and enhance the capacities of those 'receiving' international assistance. This is in the medium-term financial interest of the donors;
- **Effectiveness and sustainability**: local leadership, and local ownership is likely to deliver more effective aid and therefore more sustained outcomes.

A central theme in much of the literature on localisation is grounded in the principle of a meaningful transfer of power and authority. A framework proposed by Tesky and Chattier[70] sets out four domains within which donor programs might transfer power and authority to local partners:

- **Systemic:** development investments are integrated into the local partner's planning and budgeting system;
- **Strategic:** development investments are designed by the local partner, including its goal and the choice of the activities;
- **Spending:** financial management, control, and procurement are under the control of the local partner;
- **Staffing:** decisions about staff appointments, remuneration and management are made by the local partner.

The extent to which each of the above domains is evident in a development partnership is assessed against a four-point ordinal scale:

- **Statis:** international partner takes full responsibility

[65] https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-international-development-policy
[66] Arguably tracing from 'participatory development' championed by Robert Chambers throughout the 1990s and mainstreamed in the 'Grand Bargain Commitments' at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.
[67] https://acfid.asn.au/our-focus/inclusive-and-locally-led-development/
[68] Teskey, G. & Chattier, P. (2022) *Localisation: what could it mean for contractors*, Governance and Development Working Paper Series, Issue 13, March 2022
[69] https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/business-notifications/dfat-guidance-note-locally-led-development
[70] Ibid.

- **Consultation:** international partner seeks views of the local partner with no commitment to incorporate the viewpoints
- **Co-creation:** the international and local partners engage as full partners in design and implementation
- **Localisation proper:** full power and authority over all aspects of the development investment are vested in the local partner

Phase 2 of WfW was comprised of selected CSO partners from Phase 1, so essentially the Fund implementing partners were engaged in 2017, predating DFAT's increased focus on localisation. Considering the eight implementing organisations that were the contract holders in Phase 2, all but one are international organisations. The exception is the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) in India—a national CSO overseen by a national board. The four research organisations comprised two Australian and one UK-based universities, plus the International Water Management Institute (a CGIAR[71] Research Centre with offices in 13 countries). Hence, apart from one organisation, there are limited prospects for comprehensive 'localisation proper' according to the above scale.

Despite the Fund consisting overwhelmingly of international organisations, WfW demonstrated a diversity of approaches to locally-led development across the numerous CSO partnerships. To illustrate, using the above framework, the evaluation team compared two CSO projects operating in the same context (Cambodia), implemented by iDE and EMW, each pursing broadly similar agenda (increased sanitation coverage) as depicted in Figure 14

iDE	Systemic	Strategic	Spending	Staffing
Localisation Proper	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Co-creation	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	**Applicable**
Consultation	Not applicable	**Applicable**	Not applicable	Not applicable
Stasis	**Applicable**	Not applicable	**Applicable**	Not applicable

EMW	Systemic	Strategic	Spending	Staffing
Localisation Proper	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	**Applicable**
Co-creation	**Applicable**	Not applicable	**Applicable**	Not applicable
Consultation	Not applicable	**Applicable**	Not applicable	Not applicable
Stasis	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Figure 14: Locally-led development assessment against Tesky Chattier criteria

Localisation within WfW may be viewed at several levels: i) Fund-wide; ii) in-country CSO operations; iii) project engagement with counterparts.

Fund-level

At the Fund level, there was an explicit investment in partnership brokering that was set out in the design and well-resourced compared with other DFAT investments that have aligned with a 'partnership approach'. The aim was to broaden the basis for decision-making and governance—within the limits of DFAT's statutory requirement to oversee fiscal and strategy decisions. The partnering arrangements were agreed early in Phase 1 (March 2018) centring around a 'Fund Partnership Group' (FPG) comprising one representative from each CSO and RO plus

[71] Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

representatives from each of the Fund Coordinator and DFAT. Notably, representation from Australian NGOs (ANGO) with multiple WfW projects (WaterAid, Plan and World Vision) only involved the ANGO headquarters representative, not the country offices, meaning that localisation was not a strong focus.

Interviewees expressed diverse views about the functioning and merit of the FPG. Some were positive about the explicit forum for discussion of Fund issues, while others expressed frustration with the time taken up by internally-focussed issues that seemingly detracted from implementation. Still others seemed disappointed that concepts of localisation, especially in relation to power sharing, were not fully explored. A Fund Coordinator team member lamented:

> *I would say there were missed opportunities in the extension phase which caused localisation to be quite modest…this was reflected by CSO and RO partners at the Final Fund Event who would have liked more support for in-country locals to present their own work instead of Australia-based representatives presenting on their behalf.*

Some interviewees reflected that there is a fundamental power asymmetry in donor-recipient relationships that transcends partnership mechanisms. As noted above, there are limits to the extent to which DFAT is able to transfer power in relation to financial and strategic decision-making to local partners, which in turn places pragmatic limits on the nature of 'true partnership'.

In-country CSO operations

As noted above, CSOs and ROs engaged in various partnership arrangements with local actors in-country. As illustrated in Figure 14, the EMW operation in Cambodia is entirely managed by a four-member Khmer team who leverage local private business and strategic relationships at all tiers of government to achieve some of the highest increases in WASH coverage across the Fund. SNV, iDE, Plan International, WaterAid and World Vision are all international NGOs operating with locally-engaged staff (often long-term) and some expatriate management. In Nepal, international organisations are restricted from direct implementation and must partner with a local organisation.[72] World Vision PNG and WaterAid PNG each implement their projects through their country offices. The implication here for DFAT's locally-led development agenda is that a CSO modality inherently leans towards stronger aspects of locally-led development, but there is no single approach, and good practice is interpreted differently within different institutional arrangements.

Project-engagement with counterparts

Arguably, the concepts of consultation and co-creation are fundamental to 'systems strengthening' approaches that underpin WfW (EOPO 1). Of projects visited for this evaluation, SNV's engagement with *Rural Municipalities* and EMW's engagement with Commune Authorities were amongst the strongest cases of consultation and co-creation (also Plan in Indonesia). Water Aid and World Vision worked in good faith with subnational and national government counterparts and there were some good results, particularly in the co-creation of district WASH plans. However, the lack of commitment to provide technical and financial resources on the part of the PNG Government made outcomes in this area difficult to achieve.

A strength of the Fund was the focus on partnering with local RHOs in designing and delivering inclusive climate-resilient WASH. The evaluation team met with RHOs in Nepal, Cambodia and

[72] SNV partners with the Everest Club.

PNG and all reported that Fund partners had provided capacity strengthening support as well as involved them in activity design and implementation. SNV had a focus on disability inclusion and worked closely with locally based OPDs in rural municipalities. As described above, a solid achievement was the establishment of disability help desks at the municipality and ward level that are operated by the OPD. There are similar examples from PNG (the Western Province Women's Council, OPD and the Motu Koita Assembly in Port Moresby) and Cambodia (COPD and WOMEN) that have been described in previous sections of this report.

One member of the Fund Coordinator summed up the importance of engagement with RHOs for advancing inclusive climate-resilient WASH:

> *"Particularly in the Pacific, women's rights organisations and groups have been at the forefront of climate activism for years, so they are very much in the 'know' about climate risks, impacts and lived experience, and therefore why it is critical to engage them in WASH systems work."*

Whilst the increasing respect for RHO expertise and knowledge is commendable, it is critical for future programming to appropriately resource this kind of expertise given that these organisations are in high demand from multiple programs and donors and there is an overreliance of volunteerism leading to burnout.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The *Water for Women Fund* was a development investment funded by DFAT in the WASH sector. The Fund was implemented in a total of 16 countries across the region, investing AUD159.9 million over two phases spanning seven years from 2018 to 2025. This evaluation focused on the second phase (2.5 years; 2022 – 2025), which involved a pivot to emphasising climate-resilient inclusive WASH programming; and marked the end of a consistent 14-year investment in the WASH sector by DFAT via a CSO-led modality. The evaluation involved field work in three purposively sampled countries: PNG, Cambodia and Nepal over the period 11 November – 15 December 2024, involving approximately 90 hours of interviews with 246 stakeholders (123 women and 123 men).

The evaluation team found evidence of reasonable achievement against the Fund's four EOPOs, although the targets for sanitation and handwashing during Phase 2 were unmet. Sustainability of outcomes was assessed as variable and largely dependent on relevant national and sub-national government agencies having demonstrated technical and financial capacity and commitment to provide ongoing support for climate-resilient inclusive WASH services in communities. The Fund was coherent and relevant within DFAT's broader development priorities. The modality promoted efficiencies and locally-led development to some extent.

Fund partners implemented an array of approaches to strengthening inclusive climate-resilient WASH systems, but predominantly emphasised engagement with subnational government actors in relation to WASH sector governance and undertaking CRVA. This was complemented by work to strengthen community WASH committees (typical of broader WASH sector approaches) as well as progressing community members along the GEDSI continuum. There was a lesser focus on strengthening private sector actors during Phase 2 of the Fund, with 6 of 15 projects trialling and implementing private sector approaches. Among projects visited during the evaluation, the private sector was central to increasing sanitation coverage in the iDE and EMW projects in Cambodia. A key finding is that successful 'systems strengthening' requires a

comprehensive approach that works at all levels of government, community and private sector and is most successful when national government systems are strong. It may be that such comprehensive engagement requires a more joined up approach than is possible through a CSO-led modality. While access to WASH services (particularly drinking water) increased as a result of the Fund, there were few substantive breakthroughs or innovations with respect to improving access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (for example, in the way CLTS changed approaches to sanitation almost 20 years ago). The Fund appeared to be substantially behind in meeting its targets for water, sanitation, HWWS and institutional WASH. A key factor is a function of the challenges/time associated with achieving substantive reforms in WASH sector systems (as per EOPO 1), which in turn are expected to lead to improved WASH services. It may also be related to Fund partners being strongly focused on defining and actioning inclusive, climate-resilient WASH. Without diminishing the importance of integrating inclusion and resilience, it may be timely for WASH actors to reflect on the sector's *raison d'être*—that being preventing the deaths of children under five and improving the lives and wellbeing of all people and the environment.

More broadly, the strong focus on GEDSI in the Fund did result in WASH services that were discernibly different from business-as-usual (i.e. GEDSI unaware/harmful) WASH—including evidence of impacts that extend beyond the technical boundaries of WASH programming. This result has arguably accrued over more than a decade of focus on GEDSI in WASH, with substantial extra resourcing and expertise invested in the last seven years.

In contrast, while the notion of climate-resilient WASH has significantly advanced during the past two years, a key finding of this evaluation is that the practical implications beyond adopting a 'hazards' approach to siting WASH facilities is not fully developed. Few people could describe any material difference in WASH programming compared with previous phases. The implementation of CRVAs was the defining difference, but these were of variable quality and had limited influence on the specific nature of WASH interventions. What is seemingly required is a catchment-wide holistic approach to resilient water and sanitation management that involves significant investment in science (e.g. ground water mapping and hydrological studies) and engineering (e.g. affordable and accessible water and waste treatment plants for all), all framed by the best available, contextually relevant, climate science. But this vision extends well beyond the financing of CSO-led WASH programming; or the vision of ODA; or indeed global politics. The relevance of climate adaptation investments such as WfW are set against the broader existential threat of climate change which demands rapid decarbonisation of global economies—a failure of which will compromise even the very best climate adaptations and further disadvantage women and marginalised people.

Key **recommendations** arising from the findings of this evaluation include:

1. DFAT and/or CRC should develop guidance (including templates) to support robust and contextually relevant CRVA preparation to inform implementation of climate resilience investments.
2. In climate resilience programming DFAT should resource collaboration between research organisations and implementing organisations to continue advancement of thinking and practice.
3. In the absence of a dedicated, centrally-managed WASH sector investment, DFAT should incentivise bilateral programs to engage across ministerial portfolios to address WASH issues in an integrated way, noting this may otherwise be overlooked by sector-centric programming.

4. Any DFAT programming in WASH should continue to focus on system strengthening in the relevant enabling institutions at all levels: national, subnational, community.
5. Any DFAT programming in WASH, environmental health, water supply development and community climate resilience should be strongly encouraged to include strategies that address faecal sludge management.
6. Any DFAT programming that challenges gender norms and is serious about not doing harm should be required to support/create GBV referral pathways.
7. DFAT investments should be encouraged to resource collaboration with rights-holder organisations in support of the development policy commitment to improving GEDSI and locally led development.

Appendix A: Evaluation Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Document purpose

This document sets out a plan to independently evaluate Phase 2 of the *Water for Women Fund (WfW)*—a development investment funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

This plan was informed by Terms of Reference (ToR) developed by DFAT and the *Climate resilient Communities Support Unit* (CRCSU), and with reference to DFAT's M&E Standard 9[73] and Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance.[74]

1.2 Fund background

The WfW Fund is the Australian Government's flagship water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) investment. It seeks to bring about 'improved health, gender equality and well-being in Asian and Pacific communities through climate-resilient and socially inclusive WASH projects and research'.[75] Managed by the Fund Coordinator (GHD) and funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) between 2018 and 2025, the Fund supported civil society organisations (CSOs) and research organisations (ROs) to deliver 20 WASH projects in 16 countries across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific (approximately AUD 160 million total funding).

The Fund has been implemented in two phases. The first phase focused on supporting effective and sustainable WASH outcomes through processes that were equitable and inclusive of women and girls, people with disabilities and other potentially marginalised groups due to their identities. The second phase built on this to also focus on strengthening community climate resilience through inclusive WASH. Five projects were completed in 2022 at the end of Phase 1, and 15 projects pivoted their foci for the second phase (2023-2025) across 11 countries. *Note: implementation of projects for phase 2 is between 2023-24*.

In addition, the Fund supported research and innovation through 20 research projects and 14 Innovation and Impact grants across the two phases. In the current phase of the Fund, there are four research partners undertaking seven new research projects (thirteen research projects were completed in 2018-2022).

1.3 Evaluation purpose, scope, and audience

Purpose

The overarching objective of this evaluation is to capture lessons[76] for future climate-resilient inclusive WASH programming. Secondary objectives include: i) contributing to DFAT's reporting against the Fund's end-of-program outcomes; ii) assessing the extent to which the Fund promoted locally-led development; iii) assessing the appropriateness and relevance of the Fund's design with respect to promoting inclusive, climate-resilient WASH outcomes.

[73] DFAT Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Standards (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
[74] Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance Note (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
[75] Water for Women Fund, https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/who-we-are/outline-of-the-fund.aspx
[76] Lessons will emphasise barriers and enablers in achieving climate-resilient inclusive WASH outcomes.

Scope

The evaluation will cover the second phase of the Fund (2023-25) which elevated the Australian Government's policy priority on climate-resilient inclusive WASH. The evaluation will consider the roles and perspectives of all key stakeholders: Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partners, Research Organisation (RO), the Fund Coordinator and Fund Partnership Group (FPG), partner governments, the private sector, DFAT staff and project beneficiaries.

The evaluation will involve a range of methods as set out in Section 2. Both primary and secondary data will be collected through a mixed methods approach comprising document review, remote key informant interviews, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and field observations. Face-to-face interviews and field observations will require in-country field work in three to four countries (likely to include Papua New Guinea (PNG), Cambodia and Bhutan) during November and December 2024.

The evaluation will deliver a sequence of products:

- A presentation of preliminary findings in the form of an *aide mémoire* to seek feedback and validation/refinement.
- A draft report in line with DFAT's M&E standards[77] (see Appendix A for indicative table of contents).
- A final report, incorporating consolidated corrections and prioritised feedback.[78]
- A summary brief of key lessons learned for dissemination by DFAT.

The evaluation team will also participate, as needed, in DFAT-facilitated climate-resilient, inclusive WASH learning events in April/May 2025.

Audience

The primary audience for the review will be DFAT; specifically, the Climate Integration and Programming Section (CIP) which commissioned this evaluation. DFAT's Pacific, Southeast Asia and South Asia bilateral and regional programs and Posts that prioritise WASH funding via their Development Partnership Plans (DPPs) and/or anticipate future support for climate-resilient, inclusive WASH will also be key audiences for these findings.

WASH sector CSOs and ROs may also utilise the evaluation findings to inform their own learning and planning for future work.

Secondary audiences may include other development donors, development practitioners and organisations administering climate-resilient, inclusive WASH.

The evaluation report and DFAT's management response will be published on the DFAT website and may be used by members of the public.

[77] DFAT Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Standards (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
[78] See indicative report structure in Appendix A.

2. Methodology

2.1 Approach

The evaluation team will adopt a 'utilisation focused approach'[79]—which is based on the premise that an evaluation should be judged by the extent to which it is useful for its intended users. Key principles that will guide application of the approach include:

- **User involvement:** we will routinely engage with DFAT representatives throughout the review process; and subsequently in the validation, drafting and finalisation stages.
- **Methodological pragmatism:** methods proposed for the review are practical and focused on efficiently obtaining the data required to inform learning, rather than pursuing methodological purity[80].
- **Equality and inclusion:** the review team will work with DFAT and partner representatives to optimise gender equality and disability inclusion in the sampling of evaluation participants and ensure that their diverse needs are met to the extent possible to facilitate participation. For example, where possible and appropriate, the review team will offer for women to interview women separately from men.
- **Readability:** in reporting we will adhere to principles of plain language and minimalism[81]—recognising the critical importance of communicating effectively to time-poor stakeholders.
- **Constructive stance:** we will emphasise the capture of lessons for program improvement and insights to inform future good practice rather than taking an 'audit' or fault-finding approach.

2.2 Evaluation questions

As noted in Section 1.3, the ToR proposed a primary objective concerned with capturing lessons in relation to climate-resilient inclusive WASH. This primary objective was further elaborated by secondary objectives and draft key evaluation questions (KEQ) focussed on: i) achievement of the Fund's four end-of-program outcomes; ii) integration of policy priorities related to climate resilience, GEDSI and locally led development; iii) the relevance of the Fund's design and approaches. The evaluation team distilled the core intention of this brief and rationalised the draft KEQs. These consolidated/revised KEQs are set out below with reference to prioritised Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria: **effectiveness**, **sustainability** and **coherence**. Some lessons may also be identified in relation to **relevance** (appropriateness) and **efficiency**—noting that these will receive lesser emphasis in circumstances where this is a final evaluation of the Fund with no current plans for a further phase of this modality by DFAT. A consolidated table of evaluation questions and how these will be used with particular stakeholders is contained in Appendix B.

[79] Patton, M.Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*, 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

[80] Evaluations typically take place in resource- and time-constrained contexts, and hence must employ appropriate and efficient data collection and assimilation methods that balance a tension between academic rigor and management efficiency.

[81] The ability to simplify without losing quality.

Effectiveness

In OECD guidance, the effectiveness criterion broadly concerns the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved.[82] In this evaluation, the key evaluation question for effectiveness is: *To what extent has the Fund achieved its intended EOPOs (for Phase 2), particularly in relation to strengthening climate-resilient, inclusive WASH services and systems?*

This evaluation will focus on capturing lessons learned in pursuit of four end-of-program outcomes (EOPO) defined for WfW. These focus on strengthened climate resilience and GEDSI:: WASH systems (EOPO1), WASH services (EOPO2), climate resilience and GEDSI transformation in households and institutions (EOPO3) and knowledge and learning (EOPO4).

WfW EOPOs

EOPO 1: Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector *systems* with greater emphasis on climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security.

EOPO 2: Increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH *services*, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.

EOPO 3: Strengthened climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (*GEDSI*) in households, communities, and institutions.

EOPO 4: Strengthened use of *new evidence*, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.

While the evaluation will be focused on lessons learned, and is not a systematic review of achievement of the four EOPOs across the Fund, it will nonetheless capture credible evidence and lessons about achievement of the four EOPOs in the second phase, drawing on purposively sampled stakeholders. In line with the primary and secondary objectives of the evaluation and a primary focus on lessons (see Section 1.3), these will be structured with reference to the three development policy priorities of **climate resilience**, **locally led development**, and **GEDSI** against each of the four EOPOs. Hence, from a conceptual standpoint, the lines of inquiry for the effectiveness criterion may be viewed as a matrix:

WfW EOPO: WASH Systems

Policy Priority	Effectiveness sub-questions
Climate resilience	*a) To what extent has the Fund improved climate- resilient, inclusive WASH systems?* *b) What approaches have been particularly successful and why? What have been less successful/more challenging and why?*
Locally led development	*c) To what extent has the Fund strengthened locally-led approaches to climate-resilient, inclusive WASH systems?* *d) What approaches have been particularly successful and less successful/more challenging and why?*
GEDSI	*e) To what extent has the Fund supported improved gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes in climate-resilient WASH system development?*

[82] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book

WfW EOPO: WASH Services

Policy Priority	Effectiveness sub-questions
Climate resilience	*a) To what extent has the Fund increased access to and use of climate- resilient, inclusive WASH services?* *b) What approaches have been particularly successful and less successful/more challenging and why?*
Locally led development	*c) What factors have impeded or supported the extent of local partner involvement in strengthening climate-resilient, inclusive WASH services?*
GEDSI	*d) To what extent has the Fund supported improved gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes in climate-resilient WASH services?*

WfW EOPO: GEDSI Transformation

Policy Priority	Effectiveness sub-questions
Climate resilience	*See 1a, 1b; and 2a, 2b*
Locally led development	*See 1c, 1d; and 2c*

WfW EOPO: Knowledge Learning

Policy Priority	Effectiveness sub-questions
Climate resilience	*a) In what important ways have approaches to integrating climate resilience evolved? What lessons have been learned about good practice approaches to climate resilience integration into WASH? To what extent have the MEL and Knowledge and Learning (K&L) arrangements including research, supported improvement?*
Locally led development	*b) What lessons have been learned about engaging local partners?*
GEDSI	*c) To what extent has the Fund improved gender equality and social inclusion outcomes and how has this influenced climate-resilient, inclusive WASH programming?* *d) What lessons have been learned and how can these enhance future climate-resilient, inclusive WASH programming?*

Sustainability

The sustainability criterion broadly concerns evidence that benefits will endure beyond the life of the investment. The key evaluation question here is: *To what extent are the outcomes of the Fund likely to be sustainable and enduring? Will they leave a legacy on climate-resilient, inclusive WASH services and systems and gender equality, disability and social inclusion in Fund target locations?*

Fund partners collaboratively defined four 'areas of work'[83] to operationalise the ambition for 'climate-resilient, inclusive WASH' as set out in the box below. Insofar as these work areas are widely understood by Fund stakeholders and are broadly aligned with common sustainability

[83] These work areas are drawn from Principle #5 of seven 'Principles of Inclusive Climate Resilience' collaboratively developed by the Fund.

drivers, the evaluation team will adopt the four work areas as the basis for sub-questions concerned with sustainability. Put another way, the Fund will have fostered sustainable outcomes insofar as the four work areas have been implemented in ways that promote inclusion and climate resilience in perpetuity.

WfW Areas of Work

• '**Hardware'**. Resilient and accessible infrastructure, service delivery and supply chains. Climate-resilient accessible infrastructure, technology, and services. Hardware must consider appropriate design standards, include operations and maintenance (O&M), pathways to equitable and inclusive norms change and meet community needs through a complete service delivery model.

• '**Software'**. Resilient and inclusive communities and individuals. Supporting adaptation and resilience of communities/individuals based on locally contextualised WASH approaches, informed by GEDSI and cultural factors.

• '**Orgware**'. Resilient systems build the capacity of institutions working with WASH (at all levels of government, including local governments, CSOs, research organisations, private sector, community groups) and recognise both formal systems as well as build capacity amongst informal systems, networks, and actors, ensuring equity and inclusion is a key outcome area. Including ongoing management and/or development of policy/regulatory/monitoring systems.

• **Financing**. Setting up financing arrangements for WASH and climate activities to add value to grant funding (ODA) provided by the Australian Government, including through additional national government support or additional private sector investment models.

Guiding sub-questions concerning sustainability include:

Fund Work Area	Sustainability sub-questions
Hardware	*What achievements in climate-resilient inclusive WASH hardware are expected to improve sustainability?*
Software	*What evidence suggests that communities are positioned to maintain climate- resilient, inclusive WASH systems and services in the future?*
Orgware	*What important institutional changes have been influenced to promote greater sustainability?*
Finance	*To what extent is financing of climate-resilient, inclusive WASH committed and reliable beyond the Fund?*

Coherence

The DAC criteria of coherence is understood to have 'internal' and 'external' dimensions. Internal coherence concerns the consistency and synergies within the Fund across the work of all partners. External coherence concerns alignment and coordination with other relevant actors in partner countries or more broadly across DFAT's development programming. The evaluation team will capture any relevant lessons in relation to these dimensions learned during Phase 2 of the Fund. Therefore, the key evaluation question relating to coherence is: *to what extent has the work of Fund partners been aligned and unified*?

Relevance/Appropriateness

The key evaluation question under the DAC criteria of relevance is*: How appropriate/relevant was the Fund's approach (including the program design and expected outcomes) in supporting improved climate-resilient, inclusive WASH (systems and services) and gender equality outcomes?*

Efficiency

The DAC efficiency criterion will not be a major focus of this evaluation, noting that there are no current plans to invest in the current modality of a dedicated regional climate-resilient, inclusive WASH Fund. The evaluation will however explore the question: *What are the key lessons on efficiency to consider for future climate-resilient, inclusive WASH investments or activities which DFAT may wish to fund?*

2.3 Sample

A purposive sample of Fund implementation sites/partners will be finalised by DFAT/CRCSU in consultation with Fund management and partners. The sample will consider the following criteria:

- **Regional representation:** projects drawn from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific
- **Performance:** projects reflecting strong and less strong performance over the life of the Fund
- **Learning:** projects demonstrating clear learning opportunities
- **Implementing partners:** a spread of implementing partner organisations across the sample, and a willingness to engage in the evaluation
- **Diversity:** representing a diversity of project approaches
- **DFAT priorities:** reflecting country and funding priorities of the Department
- **Partner considerations:** capacity and willingness of implementing partners to host the evaluation team within the timeframe
- **Logistics:** travel time/accessibility constraints within the timeframe of the evaluation

At the time of drafting this evaluation plan the sample was understood to include: PNG, Cambodia and Bhutan or Nepal (subject to confirmation from WfW Fund Coordinator). The following table summarises key categories of informant:

Category	Key informant	Location
Donor	DFAT Canberra	Virtual
Donor	DFAT Posts	Virtual, PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
WfW Fund Coordinator Team	Fund Coordinator staff/advisers	Virtual
WfW Fund Coordinator Team	Fund Coordinator, WfW Partnership Broker	Virtual
Implementing partners	World Vision	PNG
Implementing partners	WaterAid	PNG
Implementing partners	iDE	Cambodia
Implementing partners	Thrive Networks	Cambodia
Implementing partners	SNV	Bhutan
Implementing partners	UTS-ISF	Virtual

Counterparts	National Government Ministries	PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
Counterparts	Sub-national Government Ministries	PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
Counterparts	Private sector	PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan
Beneficiaries	Community WASH management groups/representatives	Target sites in PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
Beneficiaries	RHOs e.g. DPOs, women's groups etc.	Target sites in PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
Beneficiaries	Community leaders	Target sites in PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal
Beneficiaries	Residents/beneficiaries (including people of diverse genders, abilities and social marginalisation)	Target sites in PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan or Nepal

2.4 Data collection and analysis

A range of data collection methods and informants have been proposed to be able to triangulate findings of the evaluation. In line with DFAT's M&E Standard 9, and established international good practice, the evaluation team will seek diverse perspectives in relation to the key evaluation questions and will assimilate and synthesise these using content analysis methods.

Data collection will involve: [84]

- **Document review:** a review of key documents relating to WfW provided by DFAT, Fund management, and implementers and other relevant literature in relation to climate-resilient, inclusive WASH, and GEDSI outcomes in the target countries and regions.
- **Key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs):** semi-structured conversations[85] with purposively sampled stakeholders either individually or in small groups. Interviews will take place either remotely via Microsoft Teams (or similar) or in person during the field work. Participants will include representatives of:
    - DFAT staff (Canberra-based as well as those based at Posts (if appropriate) in the countries the evaluation team will visit)
    - Fund Coordinator staff and technical specialists
    - Implementing CSOs or ROs and partner organisations from the sampled countries
    - Relevant national and sub-national government representatives from the sampled countries
    - Community leaders from a selection of project sites in the countries of focus

[84] The ToR queried the prospect of undertaking a structured survey of implementing partners. The evaluation team advised against including this method on the basis of: a) the time required to design and implement quality surveys, b) the limited value of structured surveys in light of the primary focus of the evaluation on capturing nuanced learning, c) the tight timeframe available to undertake and conclude the evaluation, d) difficulties associated with achieving a response rate that provides the necessary statistical power. Experience suggests that structured surveys have greater utility earlier in the life of program implementation rather than as part of final evaluations.

[85] It is likely that fieldwork will predominantly involve key informant interviews. FGDs will be utilised in circumstances where a group of people with broadly similar engagement/perspectives in relation to the Fund (e.g. community members or committee members) are available for interview.

    - Rights-holder organisations (RHOs) active in the project sites in the countries of focus e.g. Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), women's organisations etc.
    - Community management groups in the project sites in the countries of focus who are responsible for climate-resilient and inclusive WASH
    - Community members within project sites in the countries of focus

  As much as is feasible, interviews will be conducted with separate groups to optimise participation for: 1) women, 2) men, and 3) people who are marginalised due to disability, or for other reasons. The composition of these groups will be determined in close consultation with the Fund Coordinating Team and the implementing CSOs, ROs and partner organisations who will be more familiar with which groups are most socially marginalised in each project site and how representatives of those groups would most prefer to participate.
- **Observations** of climate-resilient inclusive WASH infrastructure, behaviour, social dynamics (for example, relationships between partners and counterparts, participants) in the project sites in the countries of focus.

In situations where language translation is required, the evaluation team will seek the support of the implementing partner or DFAT Posts.

Rigor in findings will be supported by: (i) the sample frame which seeks triangulation of perspectives from multiple/diverse stakeholders and data sources; (ii) application of standards and good practice including interview technique; (iii) systematic analysis of findings; (iv) verification of preliminary findings with key stakeholders; and (v) professional judgement arising from formal expertise within the technical domain and extensive experience in international development programming.

Data from the document review, and notes from the interviews and FGDs will be analysed according to themes arising from the key evaluation questions using established content analysis methods. In practice, the review team will code narrative content against the evaluation themes using a selected software application[86]. Findings that reflect the dominant viewpoints from multiple stakeholders will be highlighted in the report, with exceptional or minority viewpoints also acknowledged—either supportive/positive or critical/negative where deemed useful.

The evaluation members will maintain their own interview notes/records and will routinely convene to triangulate emerging findings. If possible, the evaluation team will seek consensus based on evidence available. In instances when consensus is not possible within the team, we will document the diversity of perspectives and the underlying reasons. In the event that evidence is weak concerning particular evaluation questions the review team will declare that findings/recommendations are not possible with confidence.

2.5 Ethical considerations

The review team is familiar with international practice regarding ethical research. Specifically, this review will accommodate four principles of ethical research and evaluation described by DFAT: 1) Respect for human beings; 2) Beneficence; 3) Research merit and integrity and 4) Justice. Evaluation team members are signatories of the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) and *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*. The evaluation team leader has been a

[86] Likely a bespoke database application used on previous evaluations, or otherwise a commercial qualitative analysis package such as NVivo.

contributing author to DFAT's M&E Standards and provides quality oversight of DFAT's *Evaluation Improvement Strategy*.

All participants in interviews and focus group discussions will be asked to provide informed, voluntary, current and specific consent. Information about the research will be provided in ways which are accessible to the participants (e.g. in a language and format they are comfortable with), and they will be able to provide consent either in writing or verbally. As far as possible, the data they provide will be confidential and unidentifiable. Where deidentification is not possible, participants will be informed of this risk before they consent to participation. The review team has experience working in the project site countries as well as with diverse genders and socially marginalised groups and are familiar with facilitating an environment in which participants feel comfortable to participate (or refuse participation) freely. Where photos are requested, Free, Prior an Informed Consent (FPIC) will be sought.

Any potential risks – environmental or social – and ways to mitigate these risks will be discussed with DFAT/Fund representatives and implementing partners prior to data collection. In the particular case of community members/beneficiaries, in line with the principle of beneficence, only those residents at project sites who are currently involved in the WfW program will be invited to participate in the evaluation. The review team will seek guidance from program management staff concerning the appropriateness of offering modest material benefit to community participants in interviews/meetings.

To facilitate a participatory approach and to ensure the findings are representative and rigorous, as much as possible, participants of diverse genders, abilities, potential marginalisation and roles within the WfW program will be invited to participate in the evaluation in ways that they are comfortable with. This might include working with local representative groups such as Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), together with project staff who are familiar with the participants.

2.6 Limitations

The following challenges may have an influence on this review:

- **Time and resources:** the rigor of the data gathering and analysis processes for any evaluative exercise is ultimately constrained by the time and resources available. This is especially a concern for this review noting the breadth of issues to be assessed and the diversity of projects and contexts across the Fund.
- **Judgements:** the review will mostly involve rapid qualitative methods of inquiry and as such will draw on the informed professional judgements of the review team to interpret stakeholder perspectives.
- **Measurement:** human development changes are challenging to measure and system-wide changes frequently take time to emerge. This reality imposes a clear challenge on the task of judging the performance of development investments of this kind.
- **Attribution:** all development initiatives are implemented within 'open systems' such that multiple factors contribute to and/or detract from the anticipated changes. This renders the definitive attribution of changes to particular interventions challenging at best. The evaluation will be influenced by 'contribution analysis' thinking.
- **Potential for bias:** reliance on project partners in selecting communities, sites to visit and key informants to speak with along with the use of CSO teams for translation may present a risk of bias.

While acknowledging these typical limitations in evaluation practice, this plan provides the basis for addressing each and ensuring a high-quality product. The review team will work with DFAT and partner staff to maximise the validity of findings and conclusions. Known risk factors such as the imminent conclusion of the WfW Fund and project-specific evaluation activities have been factored into fieldwork scheduling. Fund management and implementing partner organisations in-country will facilitate access to key informants and project sites.

The *aide memoire* and feedback session as well as regular meetings will provide opportunities for clarification of the evaluation findings. The pervasive issues of measurement and attribution in evaluation will be addressed by following international good practice in the application of research methods and DFAT's evaluation standards.

As an independent evaluation, there may be circumstances in which DFAT or the Fund management or implementing partners disagree with findings. Beyond errors of fact which will be corrected by the evaluation team, DFAT may document such issues in a Management Response document.

3. Review management

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

In line with the utilisation focussed approach which underpins this review, the involvement of all key stakeholders will be key to success.

Stakeholder	Role
CRCSU and DFAT (Canberra and Posts)	• Commission the review • Develop and approve the ToR • Provide documents for desk review with WfW Fund • Approve the evaluation plan • Support arrangements for consultations with DFAT stakeholders • Arrange review team access to implementing partner organisations with WfW Fund • Facilitate in-country missions • Provide consolidated and prioritised feedback on draft findings • Facilitate dissemination and use of findings • Establish and manage the Evaluation Reference Group • Prepare a DFAT Management Response to the independent evaluation findings
WfW Fund Coordinators and Implementing partners (CSOs, ROs, partner organisations)	• Facilitate access to information and documents • Support arrangements with stakeholders to participate in consultations • Support review team data collection • Provide candid and informative responses to lines of inquiry • Provide feedback on draft findings
Evaluation team	• Undertake ethical research • Administration of the evaluation activities including field work

	• Align with DFAT M&E standards • Prepare quality and timely review products (review plan, aide memoire, report)
Evaluation Reference Group (DFAT and CRCSU representatives)	• Review of key evaluation products. • Engagement and constructive participation in ERG Meetings. • Informal advice and guidance on the strategic direction of the evaluation.

3.2 Review Team

The review team will involve three independent evaluators.

Evaluator	Role	Responsibilities
Dr Paul Crawford	Team Leader	• Lead and manage the evaluation team, including overseeing the inputs of the WASH/GEDSI Specialist and Climate Specialist • Lead Desktop Review of all relevant documentation and data related to the evaluation of this investment • Lead internal stakeholder interviews including with relevant DFAT staff and the Fund Coordinator team • Undertake field visits to interview and conduct focus group discussions with a select number of local government, communities/beneficiaries and CSO, RO and private sector representatives • Develop Aide Memoire upon completion of the field visits • Provide lead authorship of all evaluation documentation and ensure alignment with DFAT M&E standards • Ensure overall quality of deliverables and appropriate communication with DFAT • Other tasks and duties as required to ensure the smooth and effective delivery of the Evaluation.
Dr Naomi Francis	WASH & GEDSI Specialist	• Participate in the evaluation providing technical advice related to WASH and GEDSI • Contribute to Desktop Review of all relevant documentation and data • Take part in internal stakeholder interviews including with relevant DFAT staff and the Fund Coordinator team • Undertake field visits to interview and conduct focus group discussions with a select number of local government,

		communities/beneficiaries and CSO, RO and private sector representatives • Contribute to the Aide Memoire upon completion of the field visits • Provide inputs to draft and final report • Other tasks and duties as required to ensure the smooth and effective delivery of the Evaluation.
Dr Ingvar Anda	Climate Change & development specialist	• Participate in the evaluation providing technical advice related to climate • Contribute to Desktop Review of all relevant documentation and data • Take part in internal stakeholder interviews including with relevant DFAT staff and the Fund Coordinator team • Undertake field visits to interview and conduct focus group discussions with a select number of local government, communities/beneficiaries and CSO, RO and private sector representatives • Contribute to the Aide Memoire upon completion of the field visits • Provide inputs to draft and final report • Other tasks and duties as required to ensure the smooth and effective delivery of the Evaluation.

3.3 Timelines and deliverables

Key Milestones	Proposed/indicative timing
Inception meeting	8 October 2024
Review plan submission	16 October 2024
Data collection (virtual)	October/November 2024
In-country fieldwork (PNG, Cambodia, Bhutan)	November/December 2024
Aide Memoire presentation	Mid-December 2024
Draft report submission	10 January 2025
Final report submission	5 February 2025
Summary brief of key findings	19 February 2025

The key stages of the evaluation are depicted below in a Gantt chart. The evaluation team acknowledges that the above schedule is indicative and may require flexibility if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Activity	Oct				Nov				Dec				Jan				Feb	
Inception meeting																		
Review plan submission																		
Brisbane WfW Learning Event																		
Data collection (virtual)																		
Field work - PNG																		
Aide Memoire (AM) preparation																		
Field work - Bhutan																		
Field work - Cambodia																		
AM preparation and presentation																		
Draft report preparation and submission																		
Feedback from DFAT																		
Final report preparation and submission																		
Summary brief of key findings																		

Evaluation Plan Annex A: Illustrative Report Structure

Acknowledgements

Author Details

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
    - Synopsis
    - Background
    - Context
3. Methodology
    - Audience
    - Scope
    - Methods
    - Limitations
4. Findings, lessons
    - Overall assessment
    - Achievement of End-of-program Outcomes
        - Climate-Resilient, Inclusive WASH Systems
        - Climate-Resilient, Inclusive WASH Services
        - GEDSI
        - Learnings
    - Evidence of sustainability
    - Coherence and efficiency
5. Recommendations

Recommendations for supporting climate-resilient, inclusive WASH

6. Conclusion

Evaluation Plan Annex B: Question Guide

Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness

KEQ1: To what extent has the Fund achieved its intended EOPOs (for Phase 2), particularly in relation to strengthening climate-resilient, inclusive WASH services and systems (Phase 2)?

Sub-questions	DFAT	WfW Fund	Implementing partners	Counterparts	Beneficiaries
EOPO 1: To what extent has the Fund improved climate-resilient inclusive WASH systems? What approaches have been particularly successful and why? What have been less successful/more challenging and why?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EOPO 1: To what extent has the Fund strengthened locally-led approaches to climate-resilient inclusive WASH systems? What approaches have been particularly successful and less successful/more challenging and why?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
EOPO 1 & 3: To what extent has the Fund supported improved gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes in climate-resilient WASH system development?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EOPO 2: To what extent has the Fund improved climate-resilient inclusive WASH services? What approaches have been particularly successful and less successful/more challenging and why?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EOPO 2: What factors have impeded or supported the extent of local partner involvement in strengthening climate-resilient WASH services?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

EOPO 2 & 3: To what extent has the Fund supported improved gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes in climate-resilient WASH services?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EOPO 4: In what important ways have approaches to integrating climate resilience evolved? What lessons have been learned about good practice approaches to climate resilience integration into WASH? To what extent have the MEL and Knowledge and Learning (K&L) arrangements including research, supported improvement?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EOPO 4: What lessons have been learned about engaging local partners?	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
EOPO 4 & 3: To what extent has the Fund improved gender equality and social inclusion outcomes and how has this influenced climate-resilient inclusive WASH programming? What lessons have been learned and how can these enhance future climate- resilient, inclusive WASH programming?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Evaluation criteria: Sustainability

KEQ 2: To what extent are the outcomes of the Fund likely to be sustainable and enduring? Will they leave a legacy on climate-resilient, inclusive WASH services and systems and gender equality, disability and social inclusion in Fund target locations?

Sub-questions	DFAT	WfW Fund	Implementing partners	Counterparts	Beneficiaries
What innovations in climate-resilient WASH hardware are expected to improve sustainability?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What evidence suggests that communities are positioned to maintain climate- resilient WASH systems and services in the future?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
What important institutional changes have been influenced to promote greater sustainability?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
To what extent is financing of climate-resilient, inclusive WASH committed and reliable beyond the Fund?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Evaluation criteria: Coherence

KEQ 3: To what extent has the work of Fund partners been aligned and unified?

Sub-questions	DFAT	WfW Fund	Implementing partners	Counterparts	Beneficiaries
To what extent is the Fund coherent internally (with its various components) and externally (ie. with other WASH initiatives and programs).? How could this be improved?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
What lessons from the Fund should be considered by DFAT when determining support for future climate-resilient, inclusive WASH investments and/or activities?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Evaluation criteria: Relevance (appropriateness)

KEQ 4: How appropriate/relevant was the Fund's approach (including the program design and expected outcomes) in supporting improved climate-resilient, inclusive WASH (systems and services) and gender equality outcomes?

Sub-questions	DFAT	WfW Fund	Implementing partners	Counterparts	Beneficiaries
Was the design informed by evidence and best practice and did the assumptions within the design hold true?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
To what extent has the Fund met funder, partner, and (local) beneficiary needs and priorities?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
What lessons from the Fund could be applied to future investments and/or projects DFAT may wish to fund?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Evaluation criteria: Efficiency

KEQ 5: To what extent did the outcomes achieved under the Fund against the EOPOs justify the costs involved under the implementation model (including of the partnership approach, learning agenda) when compared with similar programs?

Sub-questions	DFAT	WfW Fund	Implementing partners	Counterparts	Beneficiaries
What are the key lessons on efficiency to consider for future climate-resilient, inclusive WASH investments or projects which bilateral desks/Posts and the CRC may wish to fund?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Appendix B: Interviewees

Name	Organisation and position	Date
Water for Women GEDSI advisors	GEDSI advisors from 11 partners	22/10/2024
Alison Baker	Fund Manager	31/10/2024
Bilal Akbar	Former Assistant Director, Water Security Section, DFAT	31/10/2024
Donna Leigh Holden	Independent Consultant (Partnerships broker)	31/10/2024
Zahra Bolouri	Knowledge and Learning Manager, Fund Coordinator	31/10/2024 (+ follow-up interview)
Inga Mepham	Monitoring, evaluation and Learning (MEL) Adviser, Fund Coordinator	31/10/2024 (+ follow-up interviews)
Jose Mott	Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist, Fund Coordinator	31/10/2024 (+ follow-up interviews)
Sameera Patoor-Brah	Assistant Director, Climate Resilience and Finance, DFAT	1/11/2024
Lee Leong	Grants Manager/WASH Specialist, Fund Coordinator	6/11/2024
Matthew Bond	WASH Specialist, Fund Coordinator	6/11/2024 (+ follow-up interview)
Aaron Buncle	Climate Change Advisor, Fund Coordinator	8/11/2024
Godfrey Bongomin	World Vision WASH Manager, PNG	11/11/2024
Bian Mawan	Provincial Environment Health Coordinator, Western Provincial Health Authority (WPHA), PNG	12/11/2024
Amura Duwabe	LLG Manager (represents all LLG managers in South Fly District), Fore-coast LLG, South Fly District, PNG	13/11/2024
Daui Gaire and members of the Western Province Women's Council	President and members of the Western Province Women's Council, PNG	13/11/2024
Kemrock Tom	Treasurer, Organization of People Living with Disability (OPD), Western Province, PNG	13/11/2024
Marella Isaboda	Provincial Advisor, Department of Community Development (CD), Western Province, PNG	13/11/2024
Rose Kehannie	Program coordinator, Inclusive Education Resource Center, Callan Services, Daru, Western Province, PNG	13/11/2024
Samuel Wingu	Ex-Mayor, Daru, Western Province, PNG	13/11/2024
Yakobo Gurel	Deputy Governor, Western Province, PNG	13/11/2024
Female community members, Adamorang Village	Adamorang Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024
Female community members, Sebe Village	Sebe Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024
Male community members, Adamorang Village	Adamorang Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024

Male community members, Sebe Village	Sebe Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024
Segela Gagole	Public Health Manager, Western Provincial Health Authority (WPHA), PNG	14/11/2024
WASH Committee, Adamorang Village	Adamorang Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024
WASH Committee, Sebe Village	Sebe Village, Western Province, PNG	14/11/2024
Douglas Haoda	School Inspector, South Fly District, Western Province, PNG	15/11/2024
George Nakel	WAVE Project Coordinator, Daru/South Fly Rural, World Vision, PNG	15/11/2024
Maureen Gebia	Project Officer, WAVE Project, Daru/South Fly Rural, World Vision, PNG	15/11/2024
Mr Lawaski	Head teacher, St John's Primary School, Daru, Western Province, PNG	15/11/2024
Nancy Wobo	GEDSI Officer, WAVE Project, Daru/South Fly Rural, World Vision, PNG	15/11/2024
WASH School Club focal point	WASH School Club focal point, St John's Primary School, Daru, Western Province, PNG	15/11/2024
Adrian Kinau	Senior Policy Coordination and Monitoring Officer, Health Policy Division, Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PMNEC)	18/11/2024
Avea Avaroa	Assistant Secretary for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Division, National Department of Education, PNG	18/11/2024
Honk Kiap	Water PNG	18/11/2024
Pipi Dai	Water PNG	18/11/2024
Rosslyn Melua	Director, Health Policy Division, Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PMNEC)	18/11/2024
Ata Vagi	Water Service Manager for Pari Village, Port Moresby, PNG and representative of the Motu Koita Assembly	19/11/2024
Clare Hanley	Head of Learning and Evidence, WaterAid Australia	19/11/2024
Donald Kanini	Senior Programs Manager - Port Moresby, WaterAid PNG	19/11/2024
Edmond Bannick	Communication and Promotion Officer, WASH Programme Management Unit (PMU)	19/11/2024
Lizzy Jenkins	Assistant Director, Australian High Commission, PNG	19/11/2024
Takale Tuna	Director, WASH Programme Management Unit (PMU)	19/11/2024
Commune Council members, Kampong Khleang Village	Commune Council, Kampong Khleang Village, Siem Reap, Cambodia	2/12/2024
Household head (and site visit)	Household Sky Latrine, Kampong Khleang Village, Siem Reap, Cambodia	2/12/2024
Tyler Kozole	WASH Program Director, iDE, Cambodia	2/12/2024
Arunima Shrestha	WASH Program Fellow, iDE, Cambodia	3/12/2024 (+ follow-up interview)
Hat Tin (and site visit)	Latrine Business Owner, Siem Reap, Cambodia	3/12/2024
iDE sales agents	Demonstration of a household sale by iDE staff, Siem Reap, Cambodia	3/12/2024
iDE staff	iDE, Siem Reap, Cambodia	3/12/2024

Members of the Chrey Commune Council and volunteers	Chrey Commune CCWC and female volunteers, Cambodia	4/12/2024
Mr Sin Bory and Mr Mr Srey Chunly	Kampong Trabek District Official and District WASH Committee Chair, Cambodia	4/12/2024
Members of the Ampil Krav Commune Council and DWG chair	Ampil Krav Commune Council and DWG chair, Sithor Kandal district, Cambodia	5/12/2024
Members of the Prey Veng Province PDRD	Prey Veng Province PDRD, Cambodia	5/12/2024
CAPRED staff members	Cambodia Australia Partnership for Resilient Economic Development (CAPRED) members	6/12/2024
CWA, COPD and WOMEN members	Cambodian Water Supply Association (CWA), Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO) and Women's Organization for Modern Economy and Nursing (WOMEN)	6/12/2024
Faith Considine	Second Secretary, Economic and ODA Section, Australian Embassy, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Iv Bunthoeun	Project Manager, East Meets West, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Kim Hor	Country Director, East Meets West, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Sokunthea Ly	Senior Program Manager, Australian Embassy, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Sen Rae	Program Coordinator for WASH and Health, WaterAid, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Soukum Sou	Head of Programs, WaterAid, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Tak Niem	Water Resources Specialist, WaterAid, Cambodia	6/12/2024
Bimala Bisunke	Project Coordinator, Everest Club, Dailekh, Nepal	9/12/2024
Heman Paneru	Research Officer, SNV, Nepal	9/12/2024
Nadira Khawaja	Water Sector Leader, SNV, Nepal	9/12/2024
Ratan Bahadur Budhathoki	Project Leader, Climate-resilient Rural WASH, SNV, Nepal	9/12/2024
Chairperson and female entrepreneur	Rural Municipality WASH Coordination committee, Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	10/12/2024
OPD members	Organisation of Disabled People (OPD), Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	10/12/2024
Teachers and students	Primary School, Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	10/12/2024
Village WASH committee members	Village WASH committee, Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	10/12/2024
Everest Club Members	Everest Club, Dailekh, Nepal	11/12/2024
Mr Assa	Health Centre, Ward no 2, Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	11/12/2024
Village WASH committee members	Village WASH committee, Painyachaur ward no 2, Dungeshwor RM, Dailekh, Nepal	11/12/2024
Rajit Ojha	Senior Divisional Engineer, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage management, Nepal	12/12/2024
Anil Aryal	National Researcher, Water Resources Management, IWMI, Nepal	13/12/2024
Kavitha Kasynathan	Head of Development, Australian Embassy, Nepal	13/12/2024
Lenneke Braam	Country Director Nepal and Bhutan, SNV	13/12/2024
Mr Vinesh	IWMI, Nepal	13/12/2024
Santosh Nepal	Researcher - Water Resources and Climate Change, IWMI, Nepal	13/12/2024
Isobel Davis	Water and Development Consultant, Fund Coordinator	16/12/2024
Regina Souter	Director / Principle Research Fellow, International Water Centre, Griffith University, Australia	16/12/2024

Sue Cavill	Independent Consultant (GEDSI)	16/12/2024
Tom Rankin	Senior WASH Advisor, Plan International Australia	16/12/2024
Tshering Choden	(ex) GEDSI Advisor, SNV Bhutan, Nepal, Laos	16/12/2024
Jamie Meyers	Research and Learning Manager, Sanitation Learning Hub, Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom	17/12/2024
Melita Grant	Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Sydney, Australia	17/12/2024
Ruhil Iyer	Research Officer, Sanitation Learning Hub, Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom	17/12/2024
Elise Mann	Director, Global Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), iDE	18/12/2024
Novika Noerdiyanti	Project Manager, Yayasan Plan International Indonesia	18/12/2024
Wahyu Triwahyudi	Senior Advisor, WASH and Water Security, Plan International Australia	18/12/2024
Jane Wilbur	Assistant Professor at the International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom	19/12/2024
Kate Duggan	Director, Griffin Consulting	19/12/2024
Rob Dreibelbis	Professor of Hygiene and Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom	19/12/2024
Juliette Willets	Professor, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Sydney, Australia	23/12/2024
Jeremy Kohlitz	Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Sydney, Australia	7/01/2025
Chelsea Huggett	Head of Strategy, WaterAid Australia	9/01/2025
Pisey Chuon	Administration and GEDSI Manager, iDE, Cambodia	9/01/2025

Appendix C: Evaluability Assessment

Background

- This note is an evaluability assessment of the theory of change for Phase 2 of the *Water for Women Fund (WfW)*—an investment by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).
- This note was prepared as part of an independent final evaluation of WfW commissioned by DFAT during October – December 2024.
- A clear and conforming program logic or theory of change[87] is a requirement of DFAT's design, monitoring and evaluation (M&E standards) and is necessary to articulate the basis for judging the success of a development investment.
    - M&E may be understood as a set of processes/methods to test the theory of change—to confirm that intended changes are happening, and to verify the ongoing merit of those changes.
- This evaluability assessment refers to a version of the theory of change developed for Phase 2 of WfW.[88]
- This assessment is done on a purely technical basis informed by DFAT's M&E Standards and program theory conventions more broadly. The evaluation team respects that WfW has involved a long history with multiple stakeholders involved in crafting various theories of change, in good faith.

Goal

Improved health, gender equality and wellbeing of Asian and Pacific communities through climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable WASH

- A goal statement defines the basis for judging the 'relevance'[89] of a development investment and the nature of its intended 'impact'[90]; that is, the 'significant and lasting change' that the investment will contribute towards but not necessarily achieve on its own or during the lifetime of the investment. It is typically framed by the policy/development priorities of Australia and the partner country and reflects key needs of specified beneficiaries.
- The WfW goal appropriately defines the target beneficiaries as 'communities in Asia and the Pacific'.
    - The goal could be strengthened through a narrower focus on Fund partner countries within the three large regions—noting it is implausible that a CSO fund of this scope

[87] A 'theory of change' is a form of program logic that sets out the roles of different classes of actor who will influence intended social changes.
[88] N.B. This evaluability assessment focusses on the Goal and four EOPOs since this is scope of the final evaluation. The ToC also specifies three Intermediate Outcomes, though these are non-conforming statements and substantively re-state the intent of the EOPOs.
[89] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2474
[90] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e4269

and scale could contribute to public health and wellbeing outcomes across all countries in South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

- The significant and lasting change anticipated by the WfW goal is clearly articulated as "*improved health, gender equality and wellbeing"*.
- However, the goal is non-conforming from phraseology and logic standpoints:
    - **Phraseology:** the goal is not phrased as a grammatically entire/correct sentence; rather it is a sentence fragment lacking a subject ("*Improved health, gender equality and welling of Asian and Pacific communities")*. Further, the goal is not phrased as an 'end-state'. A better conforming phrasing could be: "***Asian and Pacific communities in target countries have improved their health, gender equality and wellbeing***".
    - **Logic:** The goal uses a conjunction ("*through"*) which compresses two levels of causality into a single level in the logic. The practical effect is that the text appearing after the word "*through*" is the substantive focus of the EOPOs in the level below (i.e. inclusive resilient WASH is *a means to* improved health and wellbeing). Further, there is circularity in the logic of the goal statement insofar as '*equality and inclusion*' appears either side of the word "*through*", with the effect that 'equality and inclusion' will be realised *through* 'equality and inclusion' (i.e. a non-sensical circularity).

EOPOs

- An EOPO statement defines what can reasonably be expected by the end of investment.
    - More broadly, in program theory an 'outcome' is a change in performance/behaviour expected among a class of counterpart/change agent.
    - The extent to which an outcome is achieved is a measure of 'effectiveness'[91]; and whether it is expected to endure is a measure of 'sustainability'[92].
- All four WfW EOPOs are variously non-conforming with DFAT M&E standards and program theory conventions. This has practical implications for M&E and for conveying the achievements of the Fund more broadly.

EOPO 1

Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security

- The implied subject/actor in EOPO 1 is national and subnational governments with responsibility for WASH sector systems. These actors are an appropriate/plausible means

[91] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e3395

[92] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e4964

to influence the changes in community health and wellbeing as defined in the goal above. As such, the logic between EOPO 1 and the goal is sound.

- However, the phrasing of EOPO 1 is non-conforming:
    - EOPO 1 is not succinct, and hence is difficult to easily grasp, especially for non-English speakers.
    - It is not phrased as a grammatically correct end-state. Better conforming phrasing could be: "***National and subnational WASH actors have strengthened sector governance and sustainability in relation to climate resilience, GEDSI and safely managed WASH***".

EOPO 2

Increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members

- Whereas the subject/actor of EOPO 1 is appropriately focussed on change agents (e.g. governments and private sector actors), the subject/actor in EOPO 2 is communities—which is the stated subject/actor in the goal above. The practical effect of this is to create circularity in the logic between EOPO 2 and the goal (tantamount to saying [EOPO 2] 'community members will have better WASH *in order that* [Goal] 'communities have better WASH').
- A better conforming interpretation of EOPO 2 would explicitly state who (i.e. which change agent) will deliver better WASH access to communities. This would presumably involve national and subnational WASH sector actors who are strengthening access to WASH services; e.g. "***National and subnational WASH sector actors have delivered increased access to climate-resilient WASH services in marginalised communities"***.

EOPO 3

Strengthened climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions

- As with EOPO 2 above, the phrasing of EOPO 3 is non-conforming because the subject/actor is 'communities', which is already the subject of the goal. The practical effect is tantamount to saying that [EOPO 3] 'communities will have better gender equality and inclusion' *in order that* [Goal] 'communities will have better gender equality and inclusion'.
- A better conforming interpretation of EOPO 3 would be to define change agents who will be empowered to influence greater equality and inclusion within target communities on an enduring basis. Such a focus would be consistent with the ethos of WfW as a 'systems strengthening' Fund; e.g "***National and subnational WASH actors are transforming GEDSI and climate resilience in planning, delivering and governing WASH services in marginalised communities***".
- However, while the above suggestion is a conforming outcome, it is arguably redundant insofar as GEDSI and climate resilience are already integrated into EOPOs 1 and 2.
- EOPO 3 is problematic insofar as it permits WfW to invest in discrete GEDSI and climate resilience work without any reference to WASH—which is the *raison d'etre* of the Fund. Put another way, the positioning of 'WASH' (EOPOs 1 and 2) and 'GEDSI/climate resilience'

(EOPO 3) as discrete outcomes at the *same level* in the theory of change has the effect of making these agenda equal/competing priorities in the Fund without any specified causality between them. More helpful would have been to eliminate EOPO 3 (noting that GEDSI/climate resilience are already integrated into all WASH systems strengthening (EOPO 1) and WASH service delivery (EOPO 2)); or for the design to spell out the *causal relationship between* WASH and GEDSI/resilience.[93]

- The integration of GEDSI/climate resilience into EOPOs 1 and 2 alongside the discrete focus on GEDSI/climate resilience in EOPO 3 has seemingly been done in good faith to bring strong emphasis to these important policy priorities. While this is laudable, it creates a confusing and non-conforming theory of change. A practical consequence is that the evaluation of progress against EOPOs 1, 2 and 4 will require an assessment of the extent to which GEDSI and climate resilience has been integrated in these work domains[94]; and an evaluation of EOPO 3 will require the same assessment. Put simply, EOPO 3 is redundant because it is already a cross-cutting policy priority reflected in the other three EOPOs.[95]

EOPO 4

Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors

- EOPO 4 is challenging from a linguistic/communication standpoint. Arguably, a less dense phrasing in the active voice (i.e. with the subject at the start of the sentence) would provide a more communicable and measurable outcome; e.g. "***National and international WASH sector organisations are incorporating GEDSI and climate resilience innovations and evidence from WfW to improve their practices".***

[93] As it stands, there is ongoing debate within the Fund in relation to whether WfW uses WASH as a *means* to influencing GEDSI and climate resilience outcomes in communities; *or* if GEDSI and climate resilience are a *means* to strengthening the sustainability of WASH interventions in communities. In retrospect, it would have been helpful for the design to clarify/specify the underlying hypothesis/'theory of change' of WfW; and for the M&E to then test this theory in order to advance sector knowledge.
[94] i.e. WASH systems strengthening, WASH service delivery and knowledge and learning, respectively.
[95] N.B. The only other logical explanation for why EOPO 3 is needed is if the WfW Fund has scope to pursue GEDSI and climate resilience outcomes that extend beyond WASH-related work. While this may also be laudable, given the policy and moral priority of GEDSI and climate resilience, it is likely to run afoul of government audit regulations which require development funding to be acquitted against sector/funding allocations. Ordinarily, a sector program (e.g. in agriculture) cannot pursue other sector priorities (e.g. bridge building).