A guide to support planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning

Integrating Adaptive Programming with Theory of Change
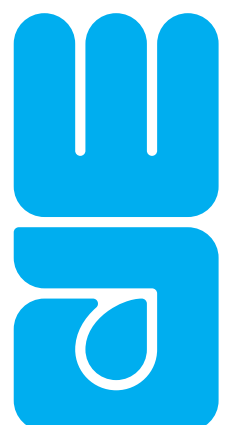
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About this guide

We work in complex, constantly-changing environments, requiring us to learn and adapt in order to achieve our mission. This guide outlines how you can use adaptive programming principles (introduced to WaterAid in 2015) to: plan and design learning-oriented initiatives[1]; monitor progress (both for accountability and learning); and manage adaptively in response to change, evidence and opportunity.

Thank you to all the WaterAid staff for their input and review in developing this guide. Please contact david.shaw@wateraid.org.au for more information, feedback or questions.

Who should use it?

At WaterAid, we want all staff to learn and adapt as part of the normal 'rhythm of business', something that is part of your everyday activities. For this reason, the guide is designed to be read and used by anyone, including:

- Senior leaders: To provide effective leadership concerning the design, adaptation and learning from (and across) initiatives;

- Program managers: To support the strategic and practical planning and management of initiatives, as well as management of staff dedicated to them;

- Front line staff: To connect the essential importance of everyday activities and decisions to the changes and intentions the initiative aims to support.

When to use the guide

Ideally you should apply this guide across the life of your initiative. You want to be planning how you will learn, reflect and adapt at the strategy or proposal development stage, then implementing these processes as part of your ongoing work.

However, this will not always be possible. For initiatives that have already started, you can use parts of the guide to improve ongoing pieces of work. This is particularly suggested where there is a strong need to improve your monitoring processes.

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1   The term 'initiatives' is used to cover the broad range of strategies, grants or projects you may be working on. Depending on your specific initiative, some steps will be more relevant than others. This is particularly the case for external grants, where funding and duration will influence how deeply the process can be feasibly applied. For multi-year initiatives with funding in excess of $500,000 we expect all steps to be completed.

Contents

Introduction

Before we start: Some words on the importance of culture

WaterAid is proud of its culture. We are values-driven and people-focused. Our culture sets the foundation on which our success is built.

We believe that organisational culture is central to our effectiveness. The working environment for our staff must encourage the motivation, autonomy and trust (Honig, 2018) needed to acquire a deep understanding of the local context and to operate in an adaptive, learning oriented way (Booth, 2015).

We believe the relationship between organisational culture and our effectiveness is symbiotic; they rely on each other to flourish. A supportive and enabling culture is important for questioning how we work and why change happens. In turn, exploring how we contribute to change and understand the impact of our work can strengthen organisational culture (USAID, 2018).

We want an organisational culture that enables our effectiveness through an environment in which staff:

- use everyday political thinking and awareness of local context to stay informed about important developments and opportunities;

- focus on respectful, trusting relationships with each other, and stakeholders, to enable open communication; and

- embrace reflection to inform responsive management decisions and continuous learning from generated evidence and knowledge.

Adaptive Programming: why

Development is a complex process but frequently, development work is not conducted in a way that recognises or responds to that complexity (Serrat, 2009). Complexity, in this sense, refers to the uncertain and non-linear interaction between people and organisations. Most development challenges are complex because they seek to reform behaviours, norms and incentives (Wild, et al., 2015). The process of reform introduces change, which brings about unpredictability (Snowden, 2007).

For WaterAid, the people and organisations we work with may include national and sub-national government, CSO partners and the private sector, community members, donors and staff. It also includes the different politics, relationships, education, experiences and incentives that influence how each person thinks and acts. The environment we work in is therefore complex.

Recognising the complex and unpredictable nature of our work, this guide sets out our adaptive programming approach. Adaptive programming means applying methods, practices and tactics that support ongoing learning, to test and refine responses in a particular context (Booth, 2014). Adaptation is not about tweaking activities but about instilling a learning approach at the heart of programming (Denney, 2018) to address locally defined problems or bottlenecks (Andrews, et al., 2012).

Through adaptive programming, the outcomes and activities for an initiative are not 'locked in' during the design phase (Derbyshire & Donovan, 2016). Instead, adaptive programming encourages shifts and refinements to be made that are informed by an on-going analysis of context (Faustino, 2014). Adaptive programming puts 'learning at the centre' (Valters, et al., 2016) through supporting:

- management practices and decision-making structures that allow the learning they generate to shape program activities;

- incorporating what matters into monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) – including accountability for learning and strategic accountability; and

- breaking down previously held boundaries between design, implementation, accountability and learning.

Adaptive Programming: what

Adaptive programming concepts were introduced to WaterAid in 2015 and we have been refining our thinking and approach since that time. This guide builds on the lessons and experience from practice, particularly drawing on:

- the WaterAid team in Cambodia, who have embedded adaptive programming principles through the implementation of their country strategy;

- the *WaSH and Sports for Development Program* in Papua New Guinea had adaptive programming principles at its core; and most recently,

- through the design and implementation of *Water for Women Fund*, programs in Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

The table below sets out the component parts of our adaptive programming approach. The components break down an initiative into constituent parts that help provide a framework for applying adaptive programming (Nichols, 2005). As you work through the design and management of your initiative, each should be considered to support you through the process.

The following sections of this guide are structured around the six components set out in the table below, which provides a summary of what each involves:

Component	Content
Scope	• Undertake context analysis • Identify your broader goal • Agree strategic intents and visions of success • Complete stakeholder mapping to identify individuals and organisations relevant to initiative, and relationships between them • Scope out potential partners to understand their incentives, and agree roles and responsibilities
Process	• Map out intermediate changes for the initiative • Create monitoring framework • Review the Theory of Change
People	• Identify the mix of skills, expertise and experience required of the team managing the initiative • Identify external resources (steering group, mentors, community of practice, etc.) who can support and challenge key decisions • Agree processes and systems to support performance management and team appraisals
Partnerships	• Undertake joint capacity assessment and development plans • Establish formal agreements with primary partners
Learning	• Agree a learning agenda for your initiative • Hold quarterly cycles of action and reflection, to check-in on plans and progress, draw out evidence and lessons from experience and agree most significant changes • Based on evidence and reflections, make necessary adaptations
Accountability	• For projects/grants with secured funding, produce implementation plans that set out activities, budgets and timeframes to ensure key deliverables can be effectively managed • For directly supported service delivery, ensure agreed quality standards have been met • Consider safeguards and establish complaints management systems

Adaptive programming: How

We use a "Theory of Change" approach as a tool for supporting the design and management of adaptive programs, but based on a fundamental commitment to ongoing analysis of the context and learning driving decision-making.

Our conceptual understanding of Theory of Change has been shaped by guidelines developed by Hivos (van Es, et al., 2015) and through training (on *Program Logic*) and conversations with staff from Clear Horizon. Applying and adapting the concepts and frameworks developed by these organisations has been central to our experimental practice of learning what works for us.

Working with adaptive programming over the last five years, we have found that developing a Theory of Change supports a more robust design process, enables assumptions to be identified and provides an anchor around which adaptations can be made.

Adaptive programs do not 'lock in' fixed changes or results, but the scope and ambition of an initiative needs to be defined. Similarly, the process of change - getting from where we are now, to where we want to be - will be somewhat unpredictable. But, the process of defining how a team believes change happens, as well as the assumptions underpinning change, is important.

Developing a Theory of Change drives you to ask critical questions of all aspects of your initiative's design and implementation. To guide the process of unpacking change, three 'spheres' have been defined:

- The sphere of interest relates to the context an initiative is being implemented in, and the broader goals it aims to support;

- The sphere of influence refers to the changes an initiative seeks to contribute to;

- The sphere of control comprises the deliverables and activities an initiative is responsible for - the things we think we need to do in order to influence change.

A Theory of Change helps to analyse and better understand the unpredictable and complex context an initiative will be implemented in and chart a pathway for change. However, this should not be a one-off exercise; a Theory of Change should be tested, contested and adapted through ongoing cycles of learning and reflection across the life of initiative, with these updates clearly documented to show how context and knowledge have shifted over time, and how an initiative has adapted in response.

This makes it an ideal process to use in the context of adaptive programming.

Figure 1 sets out an example of a completed visualisation of a Theory of Change. Theories of change can be visualised through many different formats and there is not necessarily one best way. The approach set out in this guide is the preferred model for WaterAid, but you should feel encouraged to use whatever approach best works for your initiative.
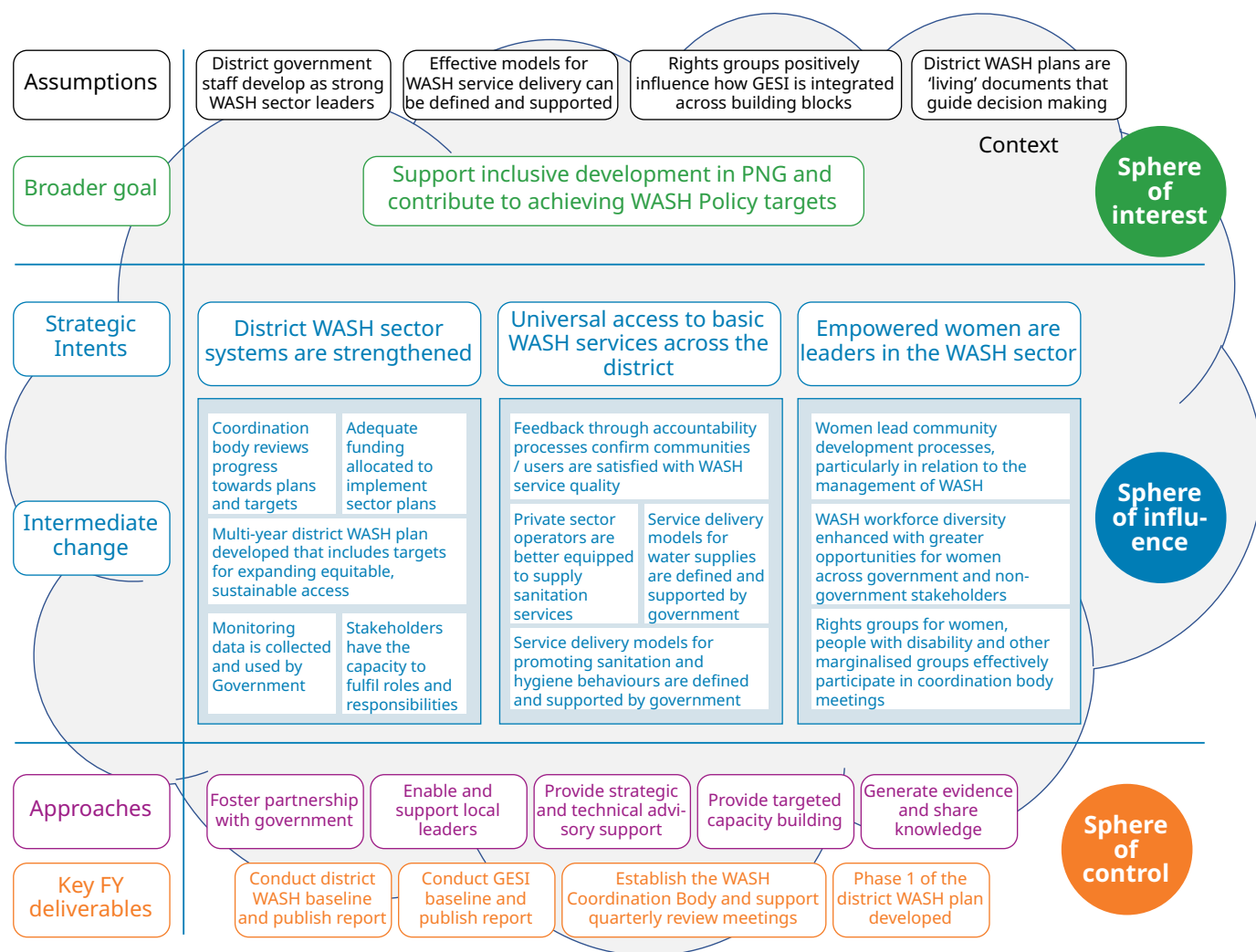
Figure 1. Example Theory of Change

Assumptions: District government staff develop as strong WASH sector leaders / Effective models for WASH service delivery can be defined and supported / Rights groups positively influence how GESI is integrated across building blocks / District WASH plans are 'living' documents that guide decision making

Context

Sphere of interest

Broader goal: Support inclusive development in PNG and contribute to achieving WASH Policy targets

Strategic Intents:
- District WASH sector systems are strengthened
- Universal access to basic WASH services across the district
- Empowered women are leaders in the WASH sector

Sphere of influence

Intermediate change:

District WASH sector systems are strengthened:
- Coordination body reviews progress towards plans and targets
- Adequate funding allocated to implement sector plans
- Multi-year district WASH plan developed that includes targets for expanding equitable, sustainable access
- Monitoring data is collected and used by Government
- Stakeholders have the capacity to fulfil roles and responsibilities

Universal access to basic WASH services across the district:
- Feedback through accountability processes confirm communities / users are satisfied with WASH service quality
- Private sector operators are better equipped to supply sanitation services
- Service delivery models for water supplies are defined and supported by government
- Service delivery models for promoting sanitation and hygiene behaviours are defined and supported by government

Empowered women are leaders in the WASH sector:
- Women lead community development processes, particularly in relation to the management of WASH
- WASH workforce diversity enhanced with greater opportunities for women across government and non-government stakeholders
- Rights groups for women, people with disability and other marginalised groups effectively participate in coordination body meetings

Approaches:
- Foster partnership with government
- Enable and support local leaders
- Provide strategic and technical advisory support
- Provide targeted capacity building
- Generate evidence and share knowledge

Sphere of control

Key FY deliverables:
- Conduct district WASH baseline and publish report
- Conduct GESI baseline and publish report
- Establish the WASH Coordination Body and support quarterly review meetings
- Phase 1 of the district WASH plan developed

Conclusion

WaterAid needs motivated, autonomous staff who are trusted to make management decisions based on a contextual understanding of an initiative and in response to new knowledge or evidence. We embrace adaptive programming and use Theory of Change to facilitate reflective and responsive practice within initiatives that seek to strengthen WASH sector systems.

We remain open to learning how we can improve our processes and systems to continually enhance how they enable effective management. This guide sets out our current thinking and approach to planning, monitoring, evaluating and learning from supported initiatives.

Component 1: Scope

Defining scope will help to situate the initiative within the wider context it will be implemented in and set out the changes it aims to contribute towards. Defining scope involves five key steps:

- undertake context analysis;
- identify your broader goal;
- agree the strategic intents and visions of success;
- complete stakeholder mapping to identify individuals and organisations relevant to initiative, and relationships between them; and
- scope out potential partners to understand their incentives, and agree roles and responsibilities.

The rest of this section goes into more detail as to what is involved in each step.

Part A: Context analysis

It is essential to have an informed appreciation of the power, interests, incentives, agency and ideas that shape and influence the context in which you work to inform the approaches your initiative will take (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014).

For initiatives that relate to a specific grant, this detailed analysis may not always be required, especially where an analysis of context has been undertaken recently as part of developing a country or thematic strategy. Similarly, conducting these assessments may not always be required where tacit knowledge is sufficiently informed to identify the areas of interest.

We use a combination of three approaches to support a context analysis:

- Political Economy Analysis;
- Sector Strengthening Building Block Analysis; and
- Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Analysis.

What's involved, as well as the tools available to support you, are outlined below.

1. Political economy analysis

Political economy analysis aims to deepen understanding of the incentives, relationships and balance of power between different groups and individuals. Findings from a political economy analysis can be used to guide the development of initiatives, particularly in relation to realistic strategic intents and intermediate outcomes (Mcloughlin, 2014).

WaterAid has developed a Political Economy Analysis toolkit (PEA) to help guide you through the analysis process. The toolkit contains four tools, each of which includes facilitation guidance, a set of core questions to ask, and participatory exercises to help visualise the political economy features being analysed.

Depending on the nature of the initiative being designed and the stage of its implementation, different PEA tools will be appropriate. The tools can assist with:

    i)   preparing and reviewing country strategies;

    ii) designing sector-wide initiatives;

    iii) designing or implementing grants; and

    iv) informing everyday thinking about the political aspects of your work.

2. Sector System Building Block Analysis

WaterAid's global strategy identifies the importance of: strengthening WASH sector systems to support sustainable services; embed gender equity and social inclusion; and encourage integration with other development sectors.

Although there is no blueprint for an effective WASH sector, certain characteristics are consistently recognised as essential (Battle, 2017). To support an analysis of sector building blocks, WaterAid has developed a Sector Strengthening Design Toolkit that sets out a range of tools to guide the analysis process. Exercises 1, 3, 4 and 5 are particularly relevant.

As a minimum, exercise 5 (the situation analysis tool) is conducted to explore the relative strength of different building blocks. While initiatives are not expected to address all building blocks, it is assumed that they will contribute to at least one. Undertaking the situation analysis will help prioritise the most strategic aspects of the system to target. Annex A sets out potential questions to help guide building block analysis, as well as support ongoing monitoring.

For guidance on undertaking a gender equality analysis of sector building blocks, please refer to 'Practical guidance to address gender equality while strengthening WASH systems'. To access this document, please contact the WaterAid Australia team.

3. Gender equity and social inclusion analysis

Gender analysis examines roles and relations from inter-personal, household, community, provincial and national levels. It can look at both the public and private spheres of people's lived experiences. It seeks to understand the differing priorities, needs, activities and responsibilities of individuals and stakeholders. An analysis of gender issues must also recognise other diversity factors that affect all members of society, such as age, ethnicity, class, caste and other socioeconomic conditions.

To gain a broader understanding of gender dynamics, the following is recommended:

1. Gather and assess secondary data, for example sex-disaggregated information on access to services (particularly WASH and health), educational attainment, literacy, income and livelihood, mobility, workload, health and nutrition, morbidity and mortality, violence, etc.

2. Analyse policies and laws related to women's rights (for example, Ratified Conventions such as CEDAW, Plans of Action, Gender Policy, Strategy, Monitoring and Reporting Commitments).

3. Look at information about cultural norms, values, and practices related to gender (e.g. expectations on individuals around how they should behave or act, rites of passage into adolescence, adulthood, marriage, etc.).

Based on an analysis of the above, select key issues to probe for a deeper understanding through:

- mapping institutions and stakeholders engaged with the issue. Institutions could be either formal or non-formal, and either public or private (e.g. Cultural/Religious, Legal/Judicial, Market/Economic, Political, Bureaucratic, etc.);

- interviews with identified institutions and stakeholders to explore their interests, motivations, characteristics and relations with one another; and

- gathering first-hand information about the lived experiences, attitudes and opinions of key groups and actors encountering the issue.

Once your political economy, sector system and GESI analyses are completed, you should prepare a short summary of your findings to include in your initiative design document (Annex B). The summary should identify areas of interest for your initiative, for example, aspects of the context where your initiative could add-value in terms of supporting sector reform; addressing evidence gaps; or targeting work at other locally identified issues.

A context summary may reveal numerous areas of interest for your initiative, but it is unlikely you will be able to address them all. It is important you consider the issues and agree priority ones for your initiative.

Part B: Identifying broader goal

A broader goal sets out a high level change your initiative will contribute towards. It should draw on the analysis and summary assessment from your context review, as well as be framed by WaterAid's global vision, mission and strategic aims. The broad goal is in your 'sphere of interest'; it is not something your initiative will address in and of itself, rather it links your initiative to the context you work in.

The process of defining a broad goal helps to situate, at a high level, issues that are of interest, but are external to your initiative. A short statement summarising the broader goal for your initiative should be defined, ideally in no more than 15 words. This should be included in your initiative design document (Annex B), together with an overview of how your initiative will contribute to it.

Part C: Defining strategic intents

Ideally, three to five strategic intents should be defined that are tangible and realistic. Strategic intents should be ambitious, setting out a stretch for success, while being grounded in context. As you work through this process, please keep the following in mind:

> *"We have to be careful in balancing big dreams and bold ideas with also recognizing that typically change happens in steps."*
>
> Former US President Barack Obama, April 2019

Strategic intents should be:

- A statement outlining change at the outcome level.
- Phrased as specifically as possible – what should change and in what way.
- Ambitious, but realistic.

How your strategic intents are framed will be influenced by several factors, including:

- whether the initiative is a country/departmental strategy, a thematic program of work, or for a specific grant;
- the timeframe over which the initiative will be implemented;
- the financial resources and budget available or desired; and
- the availability of staff and other resources to support implementation

Strategic intents should be framed in simple language and be not more than 10 words in length.

To complement the Theory of Change diagram, a brief written narrative should be developed that provides an overview of the thinking, analysis and decisions made to reach this point. The brief should include clear visions of success for the strategic intents; describing what change the initiative aims to influence. Depending on the nature of the initiative, the brief could be a useful touch-point for checking back in with sector stakeholders, development

partners and government representatives, or members of the WaterAid federation. Providing an opportunity for others to review the strategic intents encourages greater buy-in around the defined priorities, clarity on WaterAid's role and positioning, as well as an opportunity to check our interpretation of the context. This narrative should be included in your initiative design document (Annex B).

Having defined an ambitious, but realistic set of strategic intents, the next step in the Theory of Change can be completed, as illustrated below in Figure 2.
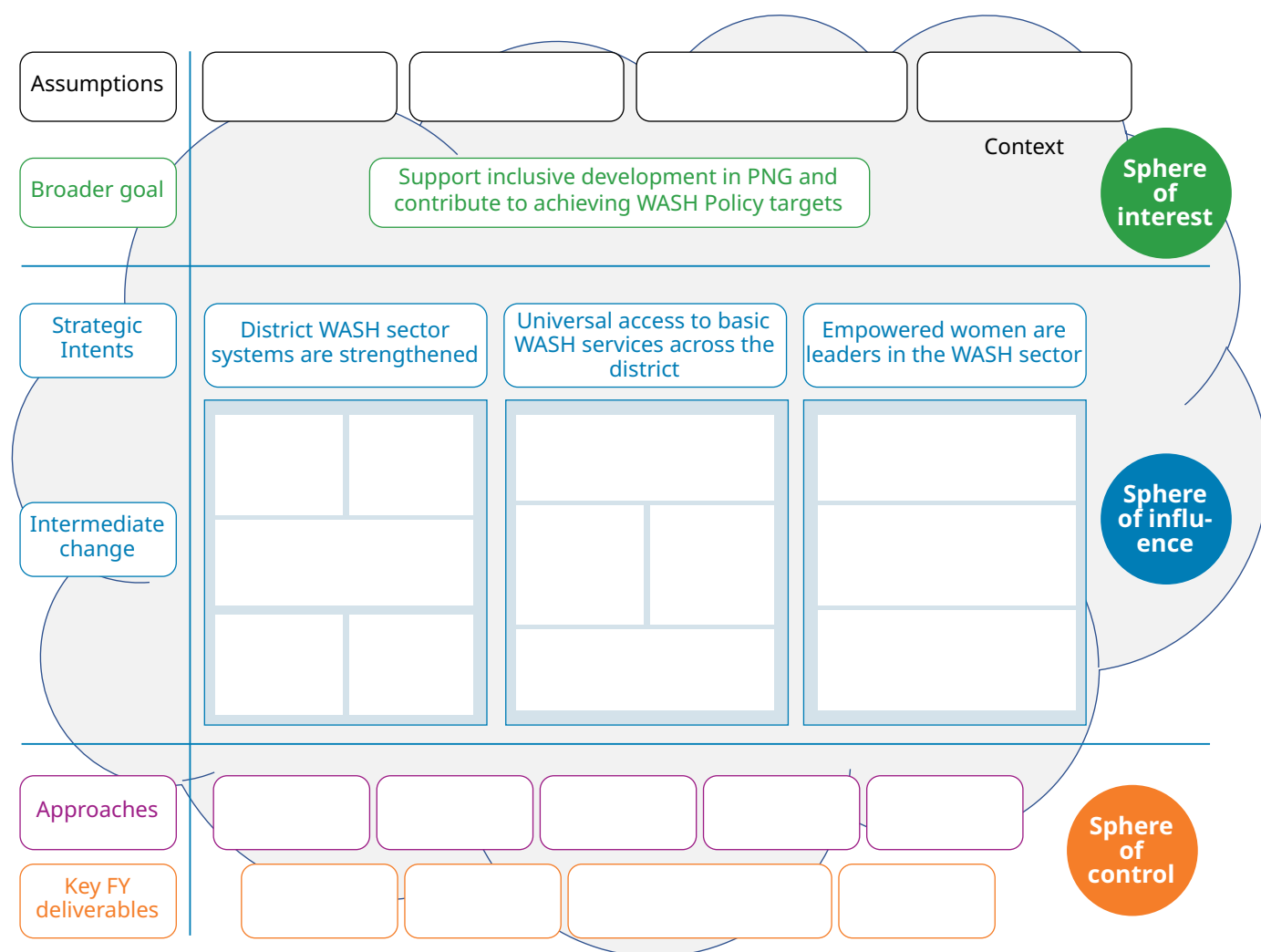
Figure 2. Example Theory of Change, with broader goals and strategic intents filled in

The approach to setting strategic intents is not a "set and forget" exercise. It is important that the intents are routinely tested to check whether the level of ambition is reflective of reality – and whether the intents themselves remain relevant and appropriate as context changes. Component 5 sets out how we approach that.

Part D: Complete stakeholder mapping

The following two parts (D and E) draw on processes and tools from WaterAid's Partnerships webpage most relevant to adaptive programming. If you want to learn more about all aspects of partnerships, this page contains links to numerous resources.

Your partnerships will be improved by understanding who the key stakeholders are relevant to a given initiative, what the relationships look like between them, and where your existing relationships (if any) fit within this web.

A stakeholder mapping is a simple exercise to help you do this. You can do it on your own, with other team members and/or with external stakeholders. All that you need is large sheets of paper, different coloured pens and a camera (optional). WaterAid and Partnerships in Practice have produced a comprehensive tool that guides you through this activity. It gives you step-by-step instructions, a number of questions to answer to help you understand more about your partnerships and links to further readings.

Whist the stakeholder mapping process is ideal for the scoping phase of an initiative, it can also be helpful in reviewing existing partnerships for initiatives already being implemented.
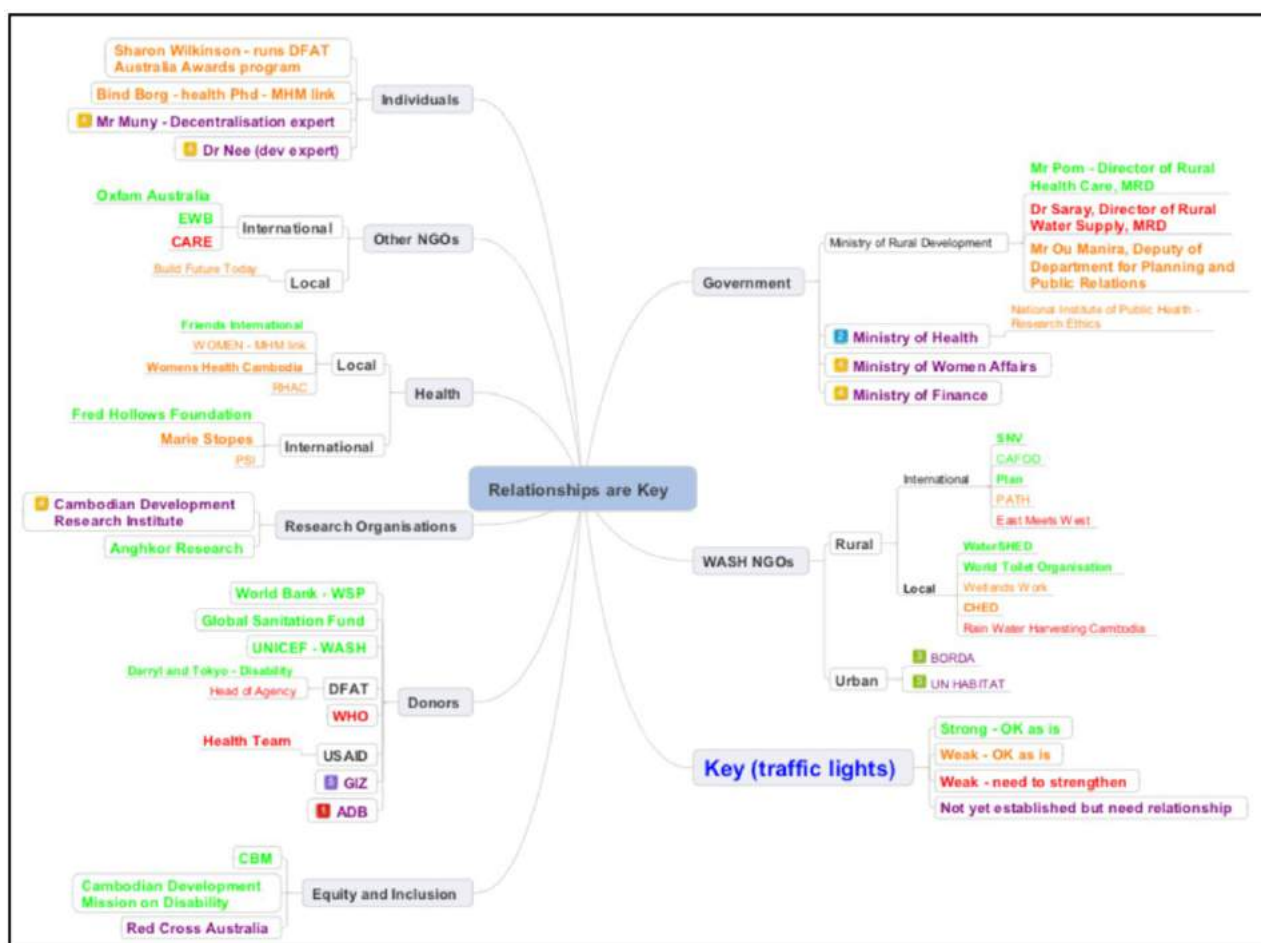

Figure 3. Example of a stakeholder map, done at a country-strategy level.
Credit: WaterAid Cambodia

Part E: Scope out potential partners

With potential partners identified, you need to approach these organisations to work through the basis for a partnership to and ensure those organisations are appropriately involved in subsequent components set out in this guide. Different partners have different reasons for being in a partnership. Their incentives for being involved depend on a range of factors, including their size, needs, sector affiliation and resourcing they will contribute or receive.

WaterAid and Partnerships in Practice have another tool that will help you explore what different partners' priority incentives are and to check their expectations are being met.

Working in partnership requires effective coordination and collaboration, with clear roles and responsibilities identified for each partner. Tool 3 in the WaterAid Partnerships in Practice toolkit will help you highlight roles and responsibilities of each partner. It also highlights any gaps/unfulfilled roles and current capacity needs.

Both of these exercises are simple, requiring only flipchart paper, coloured markers/pens, post-it notes and a camera (optional) to complete.

**Component 2:
Process**

Having analysed the context, identified your broader goals, and defined your strategic intents, you are ready to begin the next step. At the process stage you (together with your partners) will:

- define the intermediate changes for your strategic intents;
- create a monitoring framework; and
- critically review the Theory of Change.

The steps involved in each component are outlined below.

Part A: Mapping out pathways of change

Thinking back to the quote from President Obama, change typically happens in steps. To achieve your strategic intents, there are likely a series of intermediate changes that are necessary to move from the current situation to that described by your strategic intents.

Mapping out what you think those intermediate changes are is an important part of developing your Theory of Change. Defining the intermediate changes helps to draw out a pathway for achieving your strategic intent, as well as guide the development of a monitoring framework (which can be used to structure critical reflection and inform adaptation).

To start the process of mapping out intermediate changes, it can be helpful to work backwards from your strategic intent. In doing so, you will need to think about what kind of changes are required to achieve it; those changes may relate to institutional processes and practices, or particular attitudes, behaviours or capacities of stakeholders.

There will likely be a range of perspectives and ideas about different intermediate changes. This is okay and provides an opportunity to agree the most likely, given the time and resources available to support it. For some initiatives, you may want to retain a record of all identified intermediate changes, together with the rationale for why the most likely was decided.

For each strategic intent, a small number (ideally no more than five) of intermediate changes should be agreed. Statements describing intermediate changes should be framed as changes, rather than as activities or objectives. Taken together, these changes should set out a realistic pathway of how you think the strategic intent will be achieved.

In defining each pathway, the relationships and linkages between different intermediate changes should be described in your initiative's design document (Annex B). Change pathways for different intents may be interrelated and interdependent, with progress in one pathway required to enable progress in another. This is okay - change need not be linear.

Where initiatives include a focus on sector strengthening, findings from your analysis and the questions in Annex A may provide a useful starting point for defining intermediate changes. Where initiatives focus on gender equality, WaterAid's gender guidance materials may provide a useful reference. For more information about these guidance materials please contact the WaterAid Australia team.

How change happens

Having agreed strategic intents and change pathways, the next step is to draw out ideas about how change happens – and therefore the type of approaches and ways of working the initiative will support. Examples of (some, but not all) possible approaches you could consider include:

- brokering partnerships, relationships and coalitions;
- supporting collective action and social movements;
- enabling local leaders and leadership;
- generating evidence and sharing knowledge;
- providing strategic and technical advisory support;
- coordinating campaigns and working with the media for advocacy;
- supporting capacity building; and
- developing the private sector for WASH services.

All initiatives will be different, so represent opportunities to test and learn about different ways of working. To generate ideas for potential approaches that could be supported, we encourage you to be creative and think how WaterAid could work differently to bring about change. The creative process should not ignore lessons from the past, or approaches that have proven to be effective. But, you should not feel constrained or limited by what you think your initiative could do.

Having identified potential approaches, you need to consider how they could support achievement of your intermediate changes and strategic intents. To support the assessment, it may be useful to agree a small set of questions to prompt critical reflection, such as:

- How do you see this approach contributing to identified change pathways?
- How does the approach tap into change processes that are already taking place?
- What opportunities and challenges could the approach encounter?
- Who else is doing similar/different work; how would this add value to that?

In selecting the chosen mix of approaches, it is important to document why they were considered the most appropriate and relevant. The supporting design document (Annex B) should be updated to capture this.

This selection of approaches may generate ideas for key deliverables that your initiative could commit to during the first phase of implementation. These ideas for key deliverables should be noted as they could be used to guide the development of implementation plans for grants/projects or other funded work. More information on implementation plans is sets out in the 'accountability' section.

With the pathways of change identified and approaches selected, those sections of your Theory of Change can be updated.

Part B: Critical review

Once Part A has been completed, the design of your initiative should be interrogated to assess how all the pieces fit together. When designing initiatives, it is natural to approach the process with a positive frame of mind. However, it is also important to take a critical review to explore what could go wrong and draw out key assumptions.

When developing a Theory of Change, a series of assumptions are made about what, how and why change will happen. Assumptions are also made about the external context and our response to it. In many cases, these assumptions are implicit and go unchallenged. However, because these assumptions underpin the design of an initiative they should be made explicit, monitored and tested.

The critical review is a good opportunity to step back and check the assumptions being made. Assumptions could relate to any aspect of initiative, including:

- the external context;
- strategic intents, intermediate changes and the relationships within change pathways; and
- how change happens.

A workshop setting is ideal for the review process. Where possible, conducting a review with people unfamiliar with the initiative could provide a useful external perspective and sounding board for testing your thinking and assumptions. Keep the following questions in mind during this critique:

- What could go wrong?
- Is it plausible?
- Are there any evidence/knowledge gaps?
- Are relationships and linkages clear?
- Has anything important been missed?

Notes from discussions around these critical questions should capture key points and any agreed revisions to your Theory of Change. The supporting design document (Annex B) should be updated to reflect these.

Assumptions identified through the review process should be assessed in terms of a) how likely it is to be wrong, and b) the consequence if it is wrong. Adopting a risk analysis approach to assessing assumptions will identify the most critical ones for your initiative. The risk management plan for your initiative should be updated to include assumptions found to require a risk response. The Theory of Change and supporting narrative should also be updated to include these assumptions. For further guidance on risk management, please contact the WaterAid Australia team.

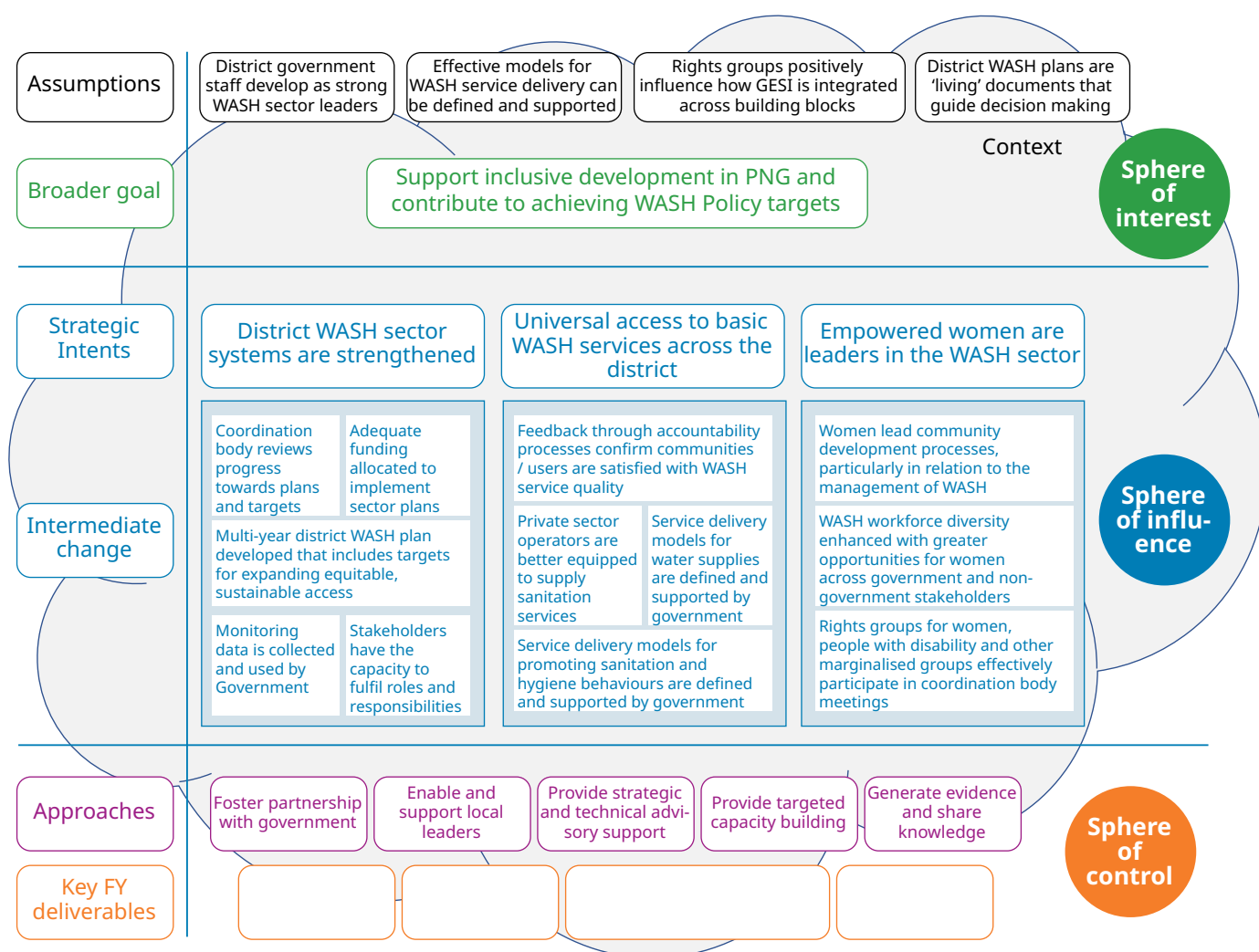Figure 4 sets out what your Theory of Change may now look like.

Figure 4. Example Theory of Change, with broader goals, strategic intents, change pathways, approaches and assumptions filled in

Part C: Creating a monitoring framework

Having developed your Theory of Change this far, you can now use it to design a monitoring framework for your strategic intents and intermediate outcomes. Annex C sets out WaterAid's preferred template for a monitoring framework, which when completed, should be used to guide data collection, analysis, reflection and reporting. The monitoring framework is a critical part of your initiative that can drive learning and adaptation based on evidence and experience.

We promote a question-led approach to monitoring, which we think is more appropriate for learning-focused, adaptive initiatives being supported in complex environments. A question-led approach can include both qualitative and quantitative data. The purpose is to encourage analysis and reflection of evidence to understand what change is taking place and how your initiative is contributing to it.

For each strategic intent and intermediate change, an open-ended question should be agreed. This lead monitoring question could be a reframing of the strategic intent or intermediate change statement. However, in order to analyse and answer that lead question, a small set of sub-questions should also be agreed.

The purpose of defining a sub-set of questions is to break down the lead question into distinct aspects that can be consistently explored over the period of your initiative. For a strategic intent, the sub-questions should focus on analysing evidence within the change pathway and encourage reflection on how the initiative could be more effective. Defining these monitoring questions will also inform what information you need to collect as part of your baseline. An example is provided below:

Strategic intent or intermediate change	Lead monitoring question	Sub-questions

Strategic intent:
 	
District WASH sector systems are strengthened
	To what extent have district WASH sector systems been strengthened?	• What progress has been made in the change pathway?
		• What are the areas or aspects of greatest strength and challenge?
		• What should the initiative do:
		  ○ More of
		  ○ Less of
		  ○ Differently

Intermediate change: Coordination body reviews progress towards plans and targets	How effectively is the coordination body reviewing progress towards plans and targets?	• How regularly does the coordinate body meet? • Are all relevant stakeholders involved in coordination body meetings and do participants find them effective? • How is progress towards plans and targets reviewed by the coordination body? • To what extent are reports documenting progress towards plans and targets produced?
Intermediate change: Monitoring data is collected and used by Government	How effectively is WASH access monitoring data being collected and used by government?	• How appropriate are indicators for monitoring WASH services and how well aligned are they to the District WASH plan? • To what extent are roles and responsibilities for collecting and analysing WASH service data agreed and understood? • How effective are the agreed processes for collecting and analysing WASH service data? • How is data on WASH services being shared and used?

If your initiative is a grant or other donor funded piece of work, you must ensure any indicators or other required data are built into your monitoring framework.

If your initiative includes the direct delivery of WASH services (i.e. WaterAid is funding the construction of water supplies, or efforts to improve access to sanitation, or the promote of hygiene behaviours), your monitoring framework will need to reflect this. WaterAid Australia supports the use of mWater/RapidWASH for collecting and analysing this type of data and we have organisational requirements on the level of detail required. For more information around these requirments, please contact the WaterAid Australia team.

Information sources

Once sub-questions have been defined and agreed, the next step is to establish where and how information to answer them will be sourced; who has responsibility for doing it; and when (how frequently) it will be done. It may be the case that not all intermediate changes will be monitored on an annual basis.

There is no expectation that new data will need to be collected to answer all of your agreed questions. Where possible, reusing information already created and captured in meeting minutes, project reports, research papers, or photos and films should be done. However, there will almost certainly be a need to collect some new information or validate existing data. Primary data could be collected through observation, interviews and focus groups or through workshops and consultations. Clarifying when and how new information will be collected, analysed and documented should be agreed as the monitoring framework is developed; and factored into more detailed implementation plans.

Annex D sets out a strength of evidence assessment that should be referred to as you develop your monitoring framework. At least a 'moderate' level must be achieved for any single intermediate change and we should aim for 'strong' evidence to support an analysis of strategic intents.

Reviewing your monitoring framework

Having completed the monitoring framework for all strategic intents and intermediate changes, a reality check should be made to consider how appropriate it is. We recognise that in developing monitoring frameworks, there can be a tendency to want to collect more and more information. We need to guard against overburdening ourselves with generating reams of information, while not providing sufficient time to analyse, interpret and use it. When making a reality check of the monitoring framework, attention should be given to:

- the quantity, frequency and timing of monitoring to be conducted; and
- the resources (human and financial) available to support it.

Updates to the monitoring framework should be made after this review. It may be the case that not all aspects of change pathways can be monitored with the available resources. If this is the case, the decision to not monitor certain aspects must be included in the supporting design document (Annex B).

During the development of annual implementation plans, key deliverables for the year will be defined. Once these key deliverables have been agreed, your monitoring framework should be updated with them, as well as the qualitative and quantitative data required to analyse and report on them.

Developing a monitoring framework overlaps with aspects of both the 'learning' and 'accountability' components of WaterAid's approach to adaptive programming:

- Learning: Understanding about change (strategic intents and intermediate changes)
- Accountability: Understanding about progress (deliverables) and quality

More information about these components is set out in the respective section.

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Component 3:
People

Having developed the Theory of Change, now is a good time to think through the capacities, skills and resources that will be required to achieve it. Through this component of our adaptive programming approach you will:

- identify the mix of skills, expertise and experience required of the team managing the initiative;

- identify external resources (steering group, mentors, community of practice, etc.) who can support and challenge key decisions; and

- agree processes and systems to support performance management and team appraisals.

The steps involved in each component are outlined below.

Part A: Identifying skills, expertise and experience required

The key competencies, qualifications, expertise and experience of the team implementing an initiative should be determined by the 'scope' and 'process' circles. The financial resources (both realised and potential), as well as the timeframe over which an initiative will be implemented, will obviously influence how many team members the initiative can support.

As noted in the introduction, WaterAid recognises the fundamental importance of culture and the need to foster trust, motivation and autonomy of staff in order to provide the basis from which we can be effective. Building teams with a commitment to developing these key factors and implementing adaptively, with a focus on learning, can take time.

There are some core competencies that may be required for all teams that should be nurtured, including:

- leadership;
- relevant sectoral and/or technical knowledge;
- partnership and relationship building;
- political economy and context analysis;
- critical thinking, reflection and curiosity;
- decision-making and problem-solving; and
- communication and listening abilities.

A team structure should be produced and included in your design document (Annex B), setting out the positions you think will need to be in place to support the initiative. For any new roles, descriptions setting out required competencies, qualifications, expertise and experience should be produced. Reference to role descriptions should be made during performance management conversations, which could also be a good time check they reflect the reality of actual responsibilities.

To assist the development of core competencies and capacity building more broadly, WaterAid Australia staff can provide structured support as part of a strategic body of work.

Part B: Identifying external resources

For some initiatives, there may be value in identifying external people or groups with specific knowledge relevant to its scope (e.g. specific technical expertise, or actors supporting similar work in other locations). These individuals or groups could provide critical support, challenge, ideas or feedback at key moments throughout an initiative's design and implementation. For initiatives with limited financial and human resources available, the opportunity to draw in external support may enhance processes for both accountability and learning.
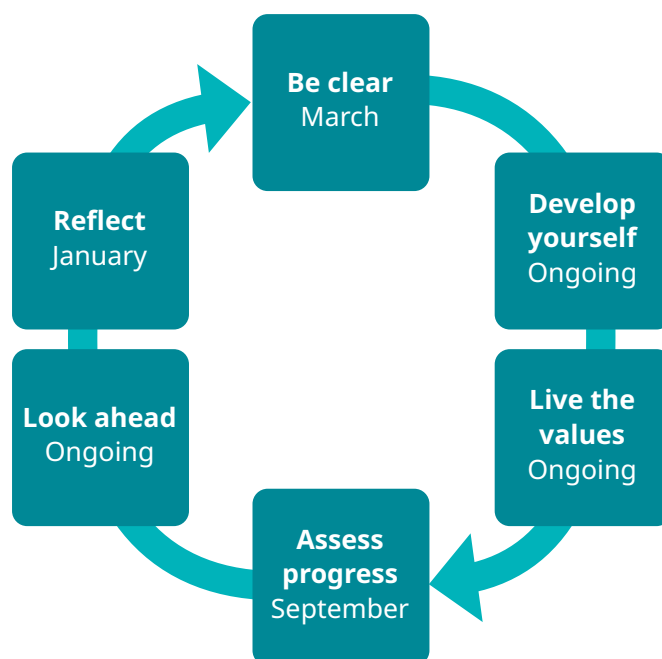
If working with external individuals or groups, consideration should be given to the formal or informal nature of their involvement and whether specific Terms of Reference, Contracts or other documentation should be agreed.

Part C: Performance management

WaterAid is committed to supporting all staff to be their best at work. WaterAid's approach to performance management is set out in our 'Be Your Best' cycle that provides support and guidance for employees and managers. More information about the cycle is available on the **Be Your Best** webpage. An overview is also presented in the following text box. WaterAid Australia staff will also be able to support and provide more advise and support, if required.

Overview: Be Your Best

Getting the best out of people is easiest through regular, honest and positive conversations about what is expected, what is going well, what is not going so well and what we need to do about it. Being our best all year round is the only way we will be able to deliver our ambitious strategy and build our future.

Be clear
March

Develop yourself
Ongoing

Live the values
Ongoing

Assess progress
September

Look ahead
Ongoing

Reflect
January

**Component 4:
Partnership**

Having agreed people required to undertake your initiative, you can now focus on formalising the partnerships needed to deliver change. In the Partnership component you:

- undertake joint capacity assessment and development plans; and
- establish formal agreements with primary partners.

This section builds off work undertaken as part of component 1 (Scope) and again references tools available on [WaterAid's Partnerships webpage](#)

Part A: Perform capacity assessments and produce organisational development plans

With partners identified and roles and responsibilities explored, you can now look at capacity strengthening aspects of your partnerships. WaterAid is committed to strengthening capacity of others as a pillar of ensuring sustainability of WASH services. For certain types of partners, most likely local NGOs, civil society networks, and possibly local government counterparts, strengthening their capacity will be a key component of your initiative.

The [Capacity Needs Assessment toolkit](#) produced by WaterAid and Freshwater Action Network (with the support of DFID) can help you with this process. Partners are graded on a series of measures related to their organisation, for example strategy, human resources and culture, from low to high. There are three tools, each for a different partner type:

i) NGOs;
ii) networks; and
iii) local government.

You can complete the assessment with partners, or they can complete it as a self-assessment.

You should then produce an organisational development plan, which outlines focus areas for capacity strengthening based on the assessment findings. Template capacity development plans are available [at this link](#). You and your partners should review these plans periodically (at least annually) to identify progress and update as required.

Part B: Establish formal agreements

With an understanding of who and what is involved in the partnerships needed to complete your initiative, and partner's capacity assessed, you can now proceed to making formal arrangements with prospective partners. The [final tool in the WaterAid Partnerships in Practice toolkit](#) takes you through the instruments (e.g. partnership agreements, governance structures, decision-making processes and communications tools, etc.) that can be put in place to manage the partnership.

Again, this is a straightforward process, requiring flipchart paper, markers and the time and space for reflective discussion to complete. It can be completed with partners, your team only, or both. The tool takes you through the process, outlining the formal arrangements you need to think through putting in place.

WaterAid Australia is able to assist you with contracting and partnership agreements, both providing templates and support to complete them.

WaterAid Papua New Guinea

As discussed at the start of this document, adaptive approaches are focused on changing in response to what you learn, both from analysis of context, and your own experience through implementation. Learning-focused monitoring explores if your initiative is contributing to the envisaged changes, if the underlying theory of how for change happens holds true, and inform how to adjust and adapt.

With the other aspects of your initiative design completed, it is now time to build in the learning aspects. This component will help you:

- agree a learning agenda for your initiative; and

- hold quarterly cycles of action and reflection, to check-in on plans and progress, draw out evidence and lessons from experience and agree most significant changes.

The steps involved are outlined below.

Part A: Agree a learning agenda

With the Theory of Change and monitoring framework developed, an opportunity exists to agree any aspects of enquiry for deeper learning. Areas of enquiry could include supported approaches, change pathways or underlying assumptions. Choosing critical areas of enquiry will help to focus on what matters, to fill knowledge gaps and pursue a learning agenda. The resources available to an initiative will determine how many areas of enquiry can be explored.

Areas of enquiry may be identified because they are:

- critical to the change process;

- challenging, uncertain or relate to aspects we know least about; and/or

- concern high-risk assumptions.

To help identify and prioritise areas of enquiry, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- What do you want to know about this area?

- Why is this a priority?

- What are you curious about and why?

- How will you document, share and use the evidence and information generated?

Considering these questions will help to develop a learning agenda for your initiative. The learning agenda should include the questions we want to answer and potential data collection methods to be used. In developing the learning agenda, it would also be important to discuss roles and responsibilities for data collection and analysis, as well as the type of learning products to be produced.

It may be possible to explore and answer your learning agenda through the approach to monitoring set out in that framework; albeit with additional or more focused analysis. Alternatively, you may need to undertake specific research that complements the monitoring data you plan to collect; or the learning agenda may require a separate, dedicated piece of research to more deeply investigate and understand the area of interest.

As you refine your learning agenda, now is a good time to identify any opportunity to learn from other initiatives being managed by your team, department or country, as well as possibilities to learn from initiatives across WaterAid's global federation.

A short overview of each area of enquiry should be documented in your initiative design document (Annex B), including any learning products (research papers, briefing notes, evaluations, blogs, etc.) to be developed in relation to it.

Part B: Hold cycles of action and reflection

To ensure the adaptive management of initiatives, and to promote opportunities for learning, we encourage regular meetings to check-in on:

- how local context has changed, emerging opportunities and the momentum for change;
- relationships with stakeholders, partners, coalitions and leaders;
- your Theory of Change and whether key assumptions are holding true; and
- progress with implementation plans and whether supported approaches are effective.

These could be framed as quarterly reflection workshops, regular adaptive programming meetings, or whatever works best for your initiative. The meetings/workshops should be designed flexibly, allowing time and space for relevant topics to be discussed as needed. It may not be possible to check-in on all aspects during a single meeting and there may be benefit to timing different sessions to complement key points in the annual initiative management/ business cycle.

For WaterAid, two key opportunities for reflection relate to the development of business plans and annual reporting. If your initiative is donor funded, or from other restricted income sources, it may work to a different financial and/or implementation year. However, finding a time when collective reflection sessions are able to inform multiple initiatives will help to gain the most value and benefit from bringing people and teams together. Organising collective sessions will provide an opportunity to build and nurture team culture and provide recognition of key successes.

Reflection sessions could be structured in a way that encourages a regular revisiting of key components set out in this guide. Sessions could also be designed in a way the encourages a review and reflection on the design document and the critical analysis that fed into its development. This could include:

- **Local context:** revisiting your political economy, sector systems building block, and gender equity and social inclusion analysis, with a view to understanding if, why and how the context has changed;

- **Relationships with stakeholders, partners, coalitions and leaders:** reviewing your stakeholder mapping and capacity development plans, as well as creating an opportunity for reflection with partners on experiences and ways of working; and

- **Change pathways:** stepping back to repeat a process of critical reflection on the design (as set out in Component 2, Part B), as well as your monitoring framework.

Short, summary notes capturing key decisions from reflection sessions should be documented. If any changes to your initiative's Theory of Change, or components from this framework are agreed, your design document (and other relevant documentation) should be updated. For donor-funded initiatives, or initiatives financed by other restricted income sources, you will need to ensure any adaptations are made in line with contract requirements.

For WaterAid, a key moment for reflection is to inform development of annual reports. From a learning perspective, timing a reflection session to support the annual report process could be an important moment to review evidence about the achievement of deliverables, progress towards intermediate changes, the effectiveness of different approaches and to draw out successes that should be celebrated. This process should also be used to think about implications for future work to ensure lessons from experience drive continual improvement. If appropriate, undertaking a reflection session with key stakeholders could be an opportunity to test how evidence has been interpreted and challenge what the initiative could do next.

As well as being an opportunity for reflection, producing an annual report is also a key accountability mechanism. In order to ensure processes are fit for purpose, WaterAid has split the annual report into two: an accountability report checking on progress against key deliverables outlined in business plans; and an outcome report designed to understand our contributions to change and organisational effectiveness. More information about WaterAid's annual reporting process is set out in Component 6.

WaterAid/ Jerry Galea

While holding a commitment to being adaptive, we must also remain accountable. This section outlines:

- the core documentation that should be produced for any initiative;

- WaterAid's global Quality Program Standards which all initiatives must meet; and

- safeguarding measures and establishment of complaints management systems.

The steps involved are outlined below.

Part A: Produce core documentation

As part of WaterAid's approach, initiatives are accountable for producing the following set of core documents. For initiatives funded by donors or other sources of restricted income, variations on this set of core documentation may exist, particularly the development of detailed implementation plans. The key point is that, on an annual basis, all initiatives should have a plan developed to aid effective management, and monitoring should inform an understanding of progress, contributions to change and critical thinking about future work. WaterAid's core documentation is:

- Initiative design document
- Baseline
- Annual business plan
- Quarterly reflection
- Annual reports
- Evaluations

Templates for all of these documents have been developed. The WaterAid Australia team can provide you with them on request. More detail about what each document involves is provided across the next several pages.

Figure 5 sets out when these processes should occur across the financial year. Numbers in the diagram correspond to different months across the year (i.e. 01 = April; 12 = March).
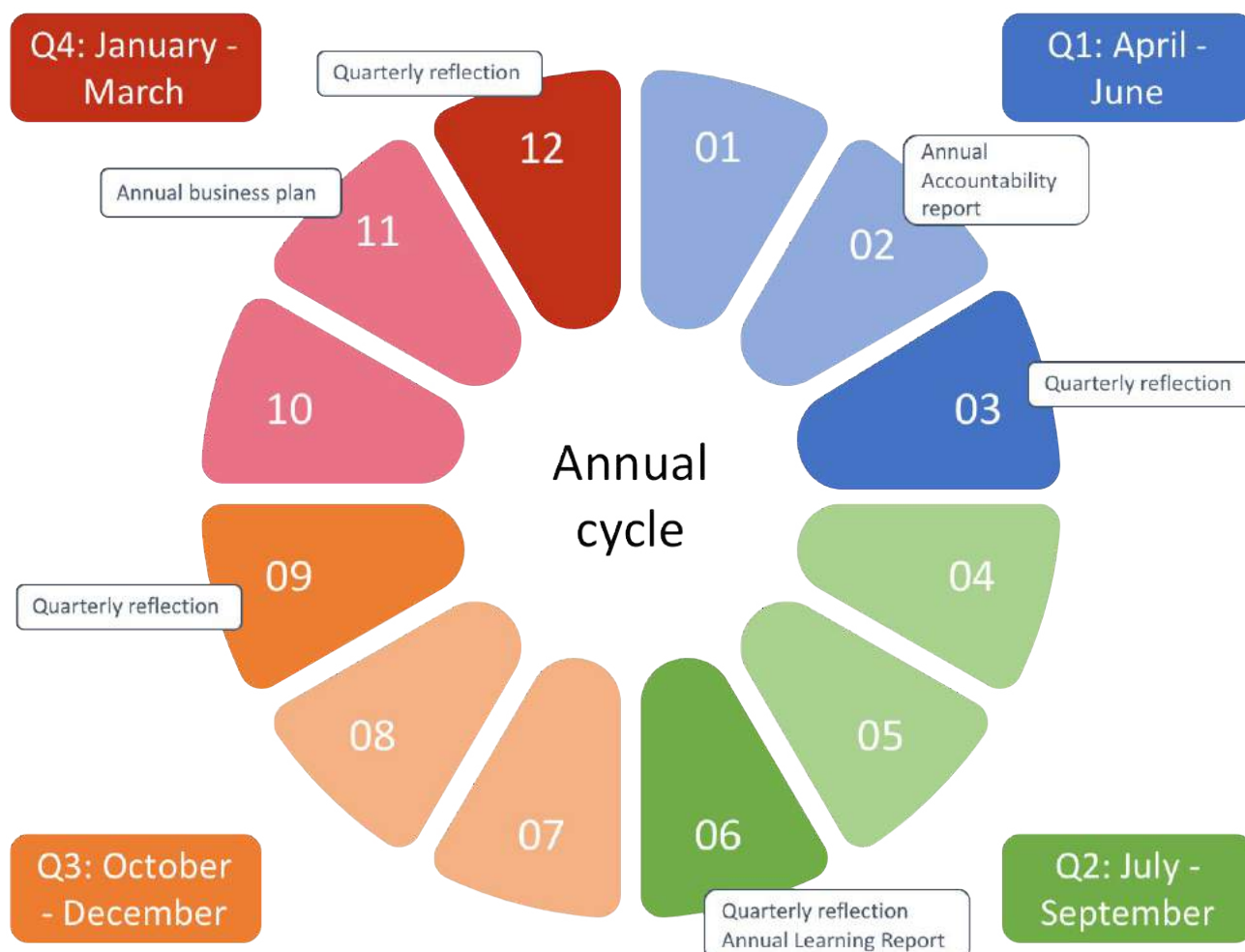
Figure 5. WaterAid's annual process cycle

Initiative design d ocument

The design document for your initiative has been referenced throughout this guide (Annex B). The design document sets out a supporting narrative for each component of our adaptive programming approach and your Theory of Change.

Design documents should be completed for country, thematic and departmental strategies, as well as specific grants and projects funded through restricted, designated or unrestricted sources.

Where donor requirements call for grants or projects to be presented in particular formats, you should ensure alignment with those specific conditions. However, we encourage you to follow as much of the process outlined in this guide as possible to support the development of a well-considered design.

Baseline

All initiatives should conduct an appropriate baseline capturing relevant information about agreed strategic intents and intermediate changes. The scope and detail to be included in a baseline will need to be determined by the complexity of the initiative and the resources available to support it.

Where possible, baselines should draw on existing data, rather than being processes that require the collection and analysis of primary data. However, we recognise that for most initiatives, some primary data will be required. Baseline data should be analysed and documented during the preliminary stages of your initiative. A record of baseline data should be retained for reference during moments of reflection to better understand progress, as well as support end-of-initiative evaluations (where appropriate) to inform assessments of impact.

Annual business plans

Annual business plans should be developed for country and thematic strategies, as well as key departments (for example, the Policy and Programs team in Melbourne). Business plans follow a similar structure to the components of our adaptive programming approach and set out priorities for the coming year to support implementation.

Business plans are an important accountability mechanism, but also enable more effective collaboration and coordination between teams and departments. Staff leading respective strategies are responsible for the process of developing their annual business plan. The planning process should be both participatory and collaborative, bringing together team members, as well as partners and other stakeholders, where appropriate.

A template for annual business plans can be provided by the WaterAid Australia team. We encourage teams to begin the process of developing plans towards the end of the calendar year (November/December), as we have a final submission date of end-February. WaterAid Australia's Board review and approve annual business plans in March.

WaterAid's annual business plan template explicitly links activities and deliverables with the intermediate changes you think they will contribute towards. We suggest that when key deliverables are defined for your initiative, you include them in your Theory of Change and in your monitoring framework. When updating your monitoring framework with key deliverables, it will be important to establish what relevant data will need to be collected and analysed to report progress.

For initiatives funded by donors or other restricted income sources, annual plans should be developed in line with donor requirements and templates. However, where opportunities allow, we do encourage the principles of adaptive programming and rigor of the Theory of Change approach to be applied and used.

Implementation plans

Implementation plans are not required for WaterAid country or thematic annual business plans. However, they are a requirement for donor, or restricted-income funded work.

Implementation plans are a key accountability mechanism. They strengthen the link between intermediate changes, key deliverables and activities, together with the budget required to deliver them. WaterAid Australia have developed a template that could be used where donor or contract requirements allow. The template builds from the business plan in terms of linking activities and deliverables with the intermediate changes, but also includes a timeline to illustrate when you plan to undertake agreed activities, as well as the person responsible for leading it. This template can be made available on request.

While developing detailed implementation plans may feel like it doesn't fit with adaptive programming, this is not necessarily the case. Being adaptive does not mean not having a plan. Quite the opposite. To be adaptive, a plan is required from which adaptations can be made. To make informed, considered and appropriate adaptation, we need to know what should change and why. Implementation plans are a critical part of our adaptive programming approach that allow us to know whether we have done what we said we were going to. Having that fundamental evidence enables a more effective analysis of how (or whether) we have contributed to change; or whether we are doing the right things in the right way. Detailed implementation plans allow us to make the case for our contributions to change.

Quarterly reflections

As set out in Component 5, Part B, quarterly reflections provide an opportunity to pause and reflect on key aspects of your initiative.

Please note that we do not require that donor funded initiatives conduct separate quarterly reflection processes. However, we do anticipate that evidence, insights and analysis from related grants and projects are brought to reflection sessions organised at a country or departmental level.

A brief note capturing key points of discussion, agreed actions and any identified (or proposed) adaptations to the design of supported initiatives should be produced and shared. Further guidance on how you could run the process, and a template report, can be provided by the WaterAid Australia team.

Annual Report

Annual reports should be completed for all initiatives that developed annual business plans. We now require two annual reports - one accountability-focused report that checks on progress against key business plan deliverables, and a second outcome report which is a reflective, learning-focused process designed to understand our contributions to change and improve effectiveness.

A template for the accountability-focused annual report has been developed, and can be provided on request. Teams leading its development are encouraged to begin the process towards the end of the financial year (March), as we have a final submission date of end-May. WaterAid Australia's Board review and endorse annual reports in June.

Guidance, and a template, for producing the outcomes-focused report have been developed by the WaterAid Australia team and can be provided on request. As this report is focused more on internal learnings to improve programming it can be completed later in the year. Teams are encouraged to commence work in May and submit by end-September.

A key step to completing both reports is keeping your initiative's M&E framework (Annex C) up to date. This framework will enable you to more easily complete these reports, providing a record of progress and summary of evidence that can be used to identify successes and consider implications.

For initiatives funded by donors or other restricted income sources, annual reports should be developed in line with donor requirements and templates. However, where opportunities allow, we do encourage you to apply the analysis, reflection and documentation that are part of our adaptive programming and Theory of Change approach.

Evaluation

WaterAid's evaluation policy requires that all country strategies and all projects with budgets exceeding $500,000 should have both a mid-term review and end-of initiative evaluation. Donor requirements for reviews and evaluations should also be adhered to, if they differ from those set out in WaterAid's policy. Evaluation processes should be planned and resourced accordingly.

The evaluation policy sets out the key purposes of evaluation for WaterAid, as well as the criteria and standards that should be applied.

WaterAid Australia will be able to assist in sharing a copy of the global policy, as well as supporting any evaluation process, if required.

Part B: Program Quality Standards

The Quality Program Standards are global and apply to all members of the WaterAid federation. The standards apply both to what we do and to how we do it. The quality of supported work is critical to bring about the change we seek, to protect WaterAid's reputation and to influence the practice of others in the WASH sector.

The standards include risk critical standards (what we must see), minimum standards (what we expect to see); and the full standards we are working towards (what we want to see). Everyone concerned with programs must apply the standards in all aspects of supported work. A copy of the Quality Program Standards is available here.

Part C: Safeguards and Complaints Management

Everything that we do at WaterAid is guided by our values. WaterAid are committed to the safeguarding of people and assets and everyone involved in delivering or representing WaterAid initiatives, including staff, volunteers, contractors and partners should be aware of and abide by WaterAid policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct.

We strive to uphold the highest standards of excellence in all that we do but recognise that this cannot always be the case. If we make a mistake, we need to be informed so we can uphold our commitments and improve our effectiveness. Complaints Management Systems should be established to document and respond to any expressions of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by WaterAid or anyone directly involved in the delivery of our work. Management of complaints should follow the five key stages outlined in WaterAid Australia's Complaints Policy, however mechanisms for receiving complaints should be context specific to ensure they are appropriate and accessible.

Please contact WaterAid Australia's Program Operations team for further guidance and to access any key documents.

WaterAid Papua New Guinea

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Annex A: Sector systems building block questions

Note: The table below sets out potential questions to help guide the analysis and monitoring of system building blocks. A set of questions for each block have been defined, but we do not expect them to be applied dogmatically or to restrict what type of assessment could be undertaken. They are a guide to help spark thinking and conversation. Each initiative could select the questions of most relevance to them, or define other questions that relate more specifically to the focus of work. Agreed questions should be used to develop a baseline for your initiative and form the basis of ongoing monitoring and reflection over its duration. Documenting an analysis of these questions over time will provide qualitative evidence of change.

The exceptions are the 1 or 2 questions highlighted in green for each block; these are mandatory for any initiative working on that particular aspect. Having the mandatory questions will enable a higher-level/cross-program analysis of change to be undertaken.

Building blocks	Description	Questions
Policy, strategy and planning	Coherent policies endorsed by Government have a clear poverty focus designed to address country specific challenges and priorities. Policies are supported by implementation strategies and plans are routinely developed and used by stakeholders. An enabling legal framework provides regulatory guidance.	How well do WASH-related policies adequately address the critical challenges faced?
		Are sector policies transparent, inclusive, equitable and gender sensitive?
		How well do policies/plans establish targets for service provision that include quality, access and equity aspects?
		Are strategies for achieving policy objectives clearly defined and operational?
		Are annual plans developed through a participatory and inclusive process to achieve policy targets?
		How could gender dynamics in government the workforce be described and to what extent is that reflected in how gender is included in policies, programming and practice?

Building blocks	Description	Questions
Institutional arrangements and capacity	Progressive decentralisation of sector functions to WASH institutions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Institutions possess the human, technical and financial resources required to deliver on their responsibilities.	To what extent has decentralisation been achieved? Has both financial and decision-making responsibility been decentralised?
		Are institutional roles and responsibilities for WASH in different locations (rural/urban; household/community; schools; health care facilities) clearly defined?
		Do the institutions responsible for WASH have the capacity and resources to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively?
		What skills and knowledge are being strengthened to ensure the workforce have the required competencies and capabilities?
		Are regulatory mechanisms for WASH at a national, sub-national and local level in place and operational?
Sector coordination	Sector-wide approach to development planning, donor harmonisation, multi-stakeholder platforms enabling meaningful participation of non-state actors at different levels	Do stakeholders (including NGOs) align their approaches with national policy and guidelines?
		Is there a mechanism to support collaboration and coordination between stakeholders in the sector (including rights groups, small scale private sector, media etc)?
		Is there an effective annual review process that tracks progress towards sector plans and targets? Are all relevant stakeholders involved in the review process?
		How well do government ministries responsible for WASH coordinate with each other (including the Ministry of Finance)?
		Does a common mechanism exist for funding support to be channelled into the sector?

Building blocks	Description	Questions
Financing	Clearly defined sector budgeting process linked to a medium-term sector investment plan, joint financing agreements between government and donors, strategies for sustainable sector financing	Do criteria exist for determining the equitable allocation of funds and are they applied?
		How well are the life cycle costs of service delivery known and budgeted for?
		Are there strategies to provide financing for on-going costs, including large-scale capital and maintenance expenditure and replacement costs? Are there national guidelines on tariff collection and are these enforced?
		Has an adequate budget for the proposed scope of work set out in the annual WASH plan been agreed? What proportion of the budget was currently utilised?
		Are medium-term funding commitments for WASH sufficient to meet targets?
Service delivery models	A defined approach and standards for extending coverage/uptake and maintaining quality of services and behaviours. Models for service delivery could include working with utilities, private sector providers through market systems, through local NGOs, government extension workers, rights groups or other mechanisms appropriate to context.	Are there nationally accepted/approved technology options and approaches for promoting behaviour changes that should be used in different locations (rural/urban; household/community; schools; health care facilities)?
		Are there nationally accepted/approved design and construction standards to ensure the quality of infrastructure in different locations (rural/urban; household/community; schools; health care facilities)?
		Are service levels and performance criteria clearly defined and understood by service providers and consumers?
		To what extent have appropriate models for service delivery been defined for different locations? How effectively are the models being applied in practice?
		Are post-construction support systems in place to develop and support service providers?
		Are roles and responsibilities for all components of defined service delivery models clear (e.g. design, installation/implementation, monitoring, maintenance, repair etc)?

Building blocks	Description	Questions
		Are end-users/citizens involved in planning the type of service to be provided (or technology to be adopted)?
		Is there a service authority or regulator role which ensures that service providers meet nationally set guidelines and standards?
Monitoring	Sector information management capacity, agreed framework for performance assessment (equity, sustainability), access to information and independent monitoring of sector performance	Are there nationally agreed indicators and standards for service delivery that are consistently monitored?
		To what extent is data on gender and disability incorporated into national indicators and standards?
		How well is monitoring data on WASH access being used to inform decision-making?
		Is there a national monitoring system which records WASH data and other relevant sector information?
		How is monitoring data used to inform sector coordination and planning processes?
Accountability	Transparent accountability mechanisms enable users to hold government and those responsible for service provision to account; as well as enable government to hold service providers accountable. Accountability mechanisms can be used to explain decisions, allocations or performance, as well as inform future work.	How effective are mechanisms that enable users/citizens to hold governments accountable for WASH decision making?
		What processes enable users/citizens to hold service providers to account?
		To what extent are governments willing and able to hold service providers to account?
		To what extent is feedback through accountability mechanisms used to inform critical reflection of progress/performance and guide future work?
		How diverse is the range of users/stakeholders providing feedback through accountability mechanisms?

Building blocks	Description	Questions
GESI	Addressing the gender and disability-based causes of unequal access to WASH and working to transform harmful roles, norms and relations	**How well are the barriers to achieving greater gender equity and social inclusion being addressed?**
		How are women participating in sector forums, including coordination processes?
		To what extent is the contribution of women, people with disability and/or other marginalised population groups leading to change across other building blocks?
		How well is sex and age disaggregated data being monitored and used?
		To what extent do service delivery models address the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups?
Water security and the environment	Water resource protection and management is coordinated and threats to water resources are monitored and inform resilience planning.	How are threats to water security identified and what process is in place to assess them?
		Are plans to monitor priority threats developed and to what extent are monitoring plans used?
		How effective has monitoring data been in managing and/or addressing realised threats?
		Are water allocations determined in line with sustainable use, social equity and economic efficiency?

Annex B: Initiative design document

Initiative name:	
Country:	
Donor:	
Duration:	
Total Budget:	

Table of Contents

Abbreviations, acronyms and initialisations

Executive summary (0.5 page)

This section should be completed once all other sections are finished. It should set out a clear, concise overview of the purpose and scope of your initiative, drawing from information presented in subsequent sections.

Theory of Change diagram (1 page)

Use this section to present the visual representation of your initiative's Theory of Change.

Context analysis (0.5 / 1 page)

This section should set out a summary of key findings from your:

- Political Economy Analysis;
- Sector System Building Block Analysis; and
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis.[2]

The summary should define the agreed areas of interest for your initiative, for example, aspects of the context where your initiative could add-value in terms of supporting sector reform; addressing evidence gaps; or targeting work at other locally identified issues. It provides the rationale for why this initiative is needed.

Broader goal (0.25 / 0.5 page)

This section should present the broader goal for your initiative. Drawing on your context analysis and WaterAid's global vision, please provide:

- a brief statement defining the broader goal;
- references to any relevant documentation related to the broader goal; and
- a short summary of how this initiative will contribute to the broader goal.

Partnership (1 page)

This section should be used to present analysis from your:

- stakeholder mapping;
- partnership scoping; and
- summary findings from capacity assessments, including agreed priority areas and approaches for capacity development

The section should focus on the roles and responsibilities different partners will have, as well as the overarching principles of the partnership.

Strategic intents (0.5 page per strategic intent)

This section should provide information about the agreed set of strategic intents for your initiative. For each strategic intent, the following should be provided:

- a clear statement setting out what the strategic intent is; and
- supportive description for each intent outlining:
  - how it was identified;
  - why it is strategically important; and
  - what success would look like if the intent was realised.

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[2] For initiatives that relate to a specific grant, this detailed analysis may not always be required, especially where an analysis of context or partnerships has been undertaken recently as part of a country or thematic strategy. References to context analysis or stakeholder mapping performed elsewhere should be provided instead

(Optional) Other strategic intents that were identified but not included in the Theory of Change, together with a note stating why they were not prioritised for this initiative.

Intermediate changes (0.5 / 1 page per strategic intent)

This section should describe the defined change pathway for each strategic intent. Sub-sections for each strategic intent should be presented, describing the agreed intermediate changes. Relationships and linkages between different intermediate changes (and/or change pathways) should be described.

The following should be provided:
- For each strategic intent pathway:
    - o a description of each intermediate change; and
    - o an overview the relationship and linkage between intermediate changes;
- Overview of the relationship and linkage between different change pathways

Approaches (1 page)

This section should set out responses to the following, using the suggested table format below:
- a summary of agreed approaches;
- an overview of why they are most appropriate and relevant; and
- for each approach, a short response to the agreed assessment questions

Approach summary	Why is this appropriate and relevant	Response to assessment questions

Assumptions and Risk (0.5 page)

This section should set out assumptions identified through the critical review of your Theory of Change. Each assumption should be assessed in terms of: a) how likely it is to be wrong; and b) the consequence if it is wrong. The table below should be completed for each assumption and also used to inform development of your initiative's risk matrix and management plan. The risk matrix contains a number of risk categories that should be considered for all initiatives. A completed risk matrix should be included as Annex 1.

Assumptions and/or Risks	Likelihood (L / M / H)	Consequence (L / M / H)

Monitoring and evaluation (0.5 page)

This section should provide a narrative overview of the key monitoring and evaluation approaches and processes to be used. This section should be complemented with Annex 2, the development of a clear monitoring framework.

Implementation plan (0.5 page)

This section should give an overview of key priorities for the year, including defining a set of deliverables that are designed to drive progress towards intermediate changes. This section should be complemented with Annex 3, a detailed implementation plan.

Learning agenda (1 page)

This section should set out critical areas of enquiry for your initiative. A short overview of each area should be developed that includes:

- the question(s) of interest;
- roles, responsibilities, resources and timeframe;
- how evidence and lessons will be documented, including any research papers, briefing notes, reports, evaluations, blogs, etc; and
- how evidence and lessons will be shared internally and with other stakeholders.

People (1 page)

This section should set out an organogram or similar diagram to present the structure of the team supporting your initiative. The diagram could indicate core competencies and FTE demands for defined roles. If an organogram is not available please list key positions for this initiative and what their role will be. You need to identify who will be responsible for managing the initiative. Any external support required should also be clearly defined.

Budget (0.25 – 0.5 page)

This section should provide a narrative overview of key considerations in relation to the budget (which should be included as Annex 4). It should outline identified funding for the initiative, if there are any match-funding, additional fundraising targets or in-kind contributions, and any constraints impacting the budget. It should provide an overview of how the budget was developed (i.e. who was involved in process, and if pricing guidance was used to develop budget recoveries).

Compliance (0.5 page)

If funding has been identified, this section should provide confirmation that critical DFAT and donor compliance requirements can be met.

Annexes

Annex 1: Risk matrix

Annex 2: Monitoring framework
To be developed in Excel

Annex 3: Implementation plan
To be developed in Excel

Annex 4: Budget

Note: please complete one table for each Strategic Intent. It may be easier to work with this table in Excel and present as a complementary document. Additional rows can be included if more intermediate changes have been identified, or if more than one monitoring question/indicator has been defined.

		Monitoring					Analysis, interpretation and reporting			
	1. Statement	2. Monitoring question	3. Sub-questions: What do we need to know in order to answer the question/ indicator?	How/ where will we get the information?	Who is responsible for this?	When will it be done/ how regularly?	High-level responses to sub-questions (3)	Other relevant information	Interpretation of evidence and summary response to (2)	RAG rating
Strategic intent										
Inter-mediate changes										
Delivera-bles										

Annex D: Strength of evidence

The following is adapted from a strength of evidence matrix developed by Clear Horizon.

Level	Description
Strong evidence	Evidence derived from multiple reliable sources such as independent reviews and/or evaluations, quality assured monitoring data, partner reports (supported/validated by WaterAid monitoring trips), and independent research conducted in the sector.
Moderate evidence	Evidence derived from a more limited range of sources such as partner reports, records of monitoring visits or records of discussions with partners and other stakeholders.
Weak evidence	Includes non-validated assertions, personal opinions and anecdotes.

WaterAid