



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION

NATIONAL WASH COORDINATION ADVICE PAPER



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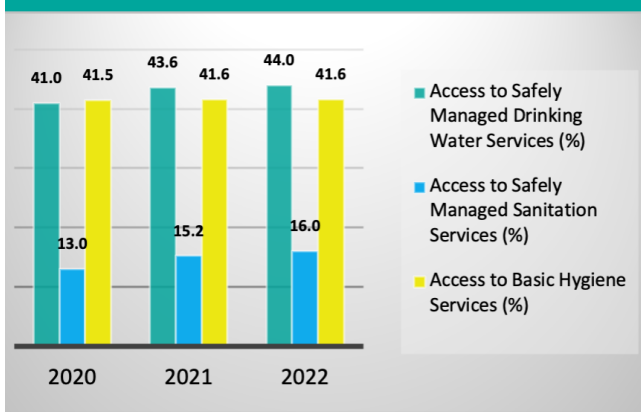
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Background

Ghana's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector encounters significant coordination challenges despite the existence of multiple platforms and institutional arrangements. This becomes clear when considering that less than half of the population in Ghana has access to safely managed water and sanitation services, and basic hygiene services. Other challenges include limited uptake of sanitation and hygiene services in the rural areas; stagnating progress in eradicating open defecation and rise in water resources pollution through malpractices in activities such as mining, sand winning and agriculture.

Figure 1: Access to water and sanitation



Source: JMP 2020-2023

Attaining universal access to WASH Services in a sustainable manner is a basic human development need and an accelerator for the attainment of many National targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on ending poverty; ending hunger; good health; education; climate change; energy; protecting the environment; promoting economic growth among others. This underscores the need for improved synergy within and across the

WASH Sector. The WASH Sector's integration with other sectors, is also highlighted by WHO's 2019 estimate of 21 daily deaths from preventable WASH-related diseases.

Moreover, addressing issues such as the water-energy nexus and combatting water pollution, are critical in supporting government development efforts.

In the area of utility services infrastructure management, there is limited coordination between service providers such as water, electricity, telecoms, and road. Consequently, some utility infrastructure has been invaded and destroyed, which has implications for the extension of utility infrastructure and provision of sustained services.

The Sector issues have persisted overtime because of poor coordination and to some extent the disconnect among WASH related institutions responsible for strengthening WASH systems to bridge the gaps and attain sustainable services for all.

As part of its development coordination mandate, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) organised a National WASH Coordination Workshop to address coordination challenges by bringing together stakeholders to deliberate and propose a unified approach for the sector. The workshop served as a precursor to this advice paper, providing discernments that underline the importance of collaboration, a shared vision, and implementing an effective coordination framework to enhance the sector's performance and achieve sustainable and universal access to WASH services by 2030.

Purpose

This advice paper generally aims to provide targeted guidance to contribute towards addressing the identified coordination challenges within the WASH sector. Specifically:

- It synthesises the outcomes of the National WASH Coordination Workshop into actionable advice, proposing a structured approach to enhance inter and intra-organizational cooperation and governance. The intention is to contribute towards bridging the current coordination gaps, streamlining communication, and proposing unified protocols and frameworks.
- It aims to suggest areas to strengthen the harmonisation of efforts of all WASH stakeholders, and fostering a collaborative atmosphere for policy implementation and service delivery.
- It also seeks to improve the efficacy of WASH initiatives, thereby contributing to Ghana's national development targets and supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 – ensuring sustainable access to water and sanitation for all.
- Finally, the paper envisions promoting a coordinated and integrated response to the WASH challenges, essential for Ghana's population's health, well-being, and prosperity.

Conditions for Effective Coordination

Coordination in the WASH sector refers to the harmonious operation and collaboration among various stakeholders to achieve a common goal of improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene. It is about aligning strategies, pooling resources, and sharing information to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure that interventions are complementary and efficient. The conditions for an effectively coordinated sector are:

1. An established clear and shared vision among all stakeholders;
2. Established mechanisms for information sharing and joint planning to foster trust and transparency;
3. Recognition of the roles and expertise of different organisations;
4. Commitment to a collective impact rather than individual success; and
5. Regular monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning.

WASH Sector Governance in Ghana

The WASH Sector governance in Ghana entails institutions and stakeholders that provide WASH services, regulations and policies, strategies and planning. The stakeholders

include central and local government agencies, the private sector, development partners, NGOs, academia, and communities. A multi-pronged approach has been adopted, focusing

on improving inter-institutional collaboration, policy and regulatory enforcement, financial management, and service delivery standards. Some of the approaches include the establishment of a WASH Sector Working Group; WASH Technical Working Groups; Joint Sector Reviews among others. Establishing the WASH Sector Working Group (SWG), led by the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) is one of the structures comprising various sector ministers and other stakeholders including non-government agencies, that has been a step towards promoting synergies across different sectors that impact WASH. Its operationalisation has provided a platform for stakeholders to collaborate on budget submissions, sector performance reviews, and key policy deliberations. This group promote sector planning and implementation considering socio-economic and spatial equity, promoting efficient and effective long-term and annual planning, monitoring, and policy

guidance. Though the WASH SWG is playing a vital role in strengthening coordination, its engagement is centered at the national, with limited engagement at the subnational levels.

Institutional capacity has however improved through targeted actions taken by the MSWR. These include assuming leadership in the programme management process, engaging with partners to finance sector events, and strengthening the Policy Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, and Evaluation Directorate (PPBMED) capabilities.

Community participation and accountability mechanisms have been encouraged. Local communities have been engaged in the policy formulation, planning, implementation and reporting processes, enabling them to monitor service delivery and participate in decision-making.

Figure 2: Nexus of WASH Coordination Outcomes



Coordination Challenges in WASH Policy Formulation and Implementation

1. Inadequate Inter-organisational Collaboration

Limited collaboration and communication among stakeholders impede policy alignment and joint decision-making, fostering fragmented initiatives rather than cohesive approaches. For example, the Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs), fundamental for performance assessment and strategic guidance, have not been carried out with the required frequency and rigour. As a result, comprehensive and consistent tracking of the sector's progress remains a challenge.

Again, insufficient inter-sectoral coordination among government agencies exacerbates these issues, while inadequate communication channels and weak governance structures contribute to overlapping mandates and unclear responsibilities. The policy-making and implementation processes are split across different ministries. While MSWR formulates the policy, implementation at the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) level is conducted through the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation, and Rural Development (MLGDRD), leading to misalignment and inefficiencies in carrying out WASH initiatives and effectively tracking implementation.

2. Low Resource Mobilisation and Optimisation

Obstacles in coordinating resource mobilisation pose significant challenges, including difficulties garnering adequate financial, technical, and human resources from diverse stakeholders to support WASH programs and projects. These challenges,

such as funding constraints, donor priorities, bureaucratic procedures, and competition for limited resources, threaten the scalability and sustainability of WASH interventions.

Another limitation is the difficulty in tracking the quantum of investment and use of resources mobilised because multiple institutions budget for WASH activities. In addition, limited coordination in utilising the mobilised resources among allied institutions hinders the effective implementation of comprehensive WASH programmes and projects, leading to non-achievement of overall sector objectives.

3. Fragmented Data Standardisation and Reporting

Data fragmentation across multiple stakeholders leads to duplication of efforts and inconsistent standards, hindering data integration. The Sector Information System (SIS), designed to capture performance indicators, is not fully operational. This is as a result of lack of baseline data and integration with other management information systems. A major attendant effect has been the sector's inability to collect and analyse comprehensive data for informed decision-making.

4. Low adoption of circular economy principles and practices

Transitioning from a linear to a circular economy and the indispensable coordination required are key to sustainable resource management. There is presently a roadmap housed with strategies and actions to transit to a circular economy. However, the absence of comprehensive policy frameworks and

guidelines for implementing and managing the outlined WASH strategies in the roadmap has resulted in uncertainties and inconsistencies in approach among stakeholders.

Most importantly, low levels of awareness and understanding among stakeholders about the concept of circular economy

and its relevance to the WASH sector are hindering efforts to promote its adoption and implementation. Existing regulatory barriers and legal constraints that may impede the adoption of circular economy practices include outdated regulations or a lack of incentives for sustainable resource management.

Implication - Bridging Coordination Gaps for Improved Development Impact in Ghana's WASH Sector

Ghana, in the year 2023, renewed its commitment, solidarity, and transformative actions to achieve the SDGs. The process aimed to create prosperity for all, eliminate poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the environment. To accelerate the implementation of the agenda, SDG target 6.2 has been selected in addition to other targets (16.6, 8.5, 4.1 and 7.3).

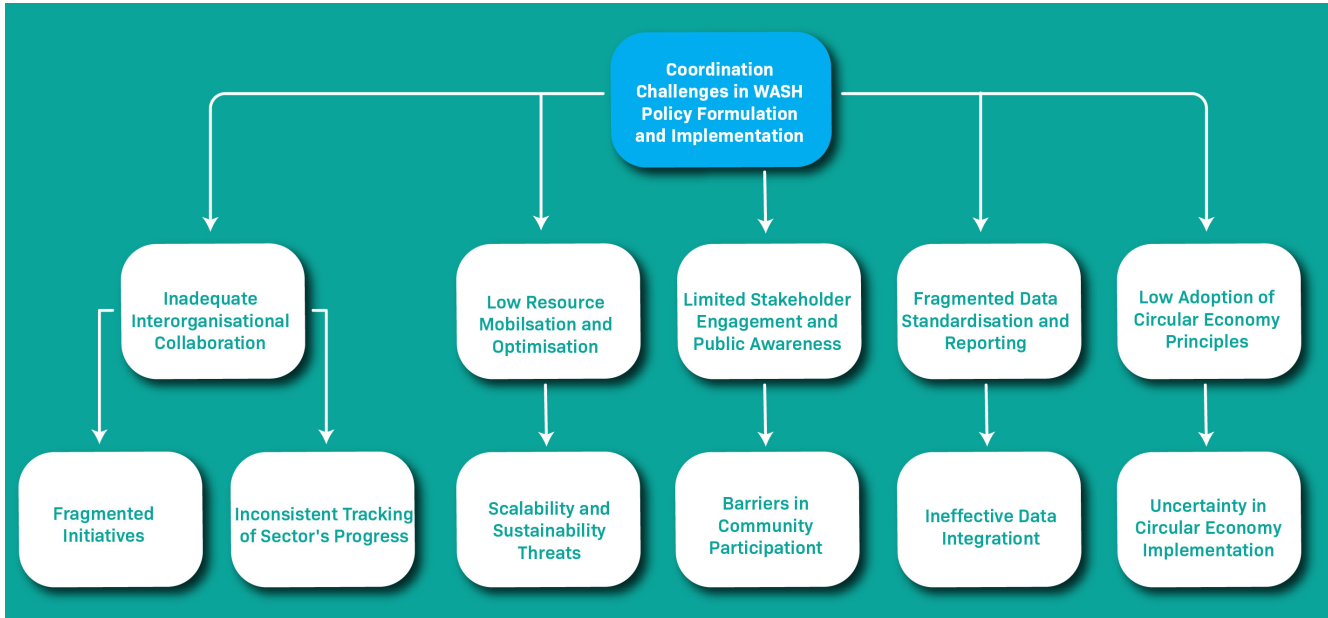
Addressing coordination gaps in Ghana's WASH sector is therefore necessary for the sector's functionality and broader development impacts, particularly in achieving SDG target 6.2.

Effective coordination within the WASH sector has profound implications for development. It could lead to better-managed resources, more impactful programmes, and a more strategic approach to achieving national

and international goals. However, gaps in coordination can undermine these efforts. The WASH Coordination Workshop highlighted the need for stronger partnerships, better data systems for planning and decision-making, and more inclusive approaches that bring together all stakeholders.

For instance, the lack of a fully functional SIS limits the sector's ability to track progress and make informed decisions to improve water, sanitation and hygiene. Additionally, inconsistent commitment and fragmented coordination efforts among stakeholders have resulted in uneven progress across regions and communities in attaining WASH services. Without addressing these gaps, the sector risks failing to achieve national and international development goals while compromising millions of Ghanaians' health, dignity, and well-being.

Figure 3: The Nexus of WASH Coordination Challenges



Recommendation

The matrix below provides proposed recommendations for careful consideration by institutions and stakeholders within and across the WASH Sector. These recommendations should be implemented within a short to medium term to ensure the required WASH results are achieved while addressing the persistent WASH coordination issues.

Limited Institutional Collaboration

Recommendation	Targeted institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Sensitise allied WASH institutions/departments on the need to collaborate and support programmes	MDAs – MoH, MOFA, MOE, MOH, Ministry of Roads, MOTI, Social Welfare etc.	MSWR	Quarterly	Effective sensitisation of allied WASH actors	Activity reports
Standardize process to align WASH policies, Development Programmes with District MTDP and WASH related plans of other allied institutions.	MDAs – MoH, MOFA, MOE, MOH, Ministry of Roads, MOTI, Social Welfare etc.	MSWR NDPC	Fourth quarter	framework developed	Meeting reports, framework for standardizing WASH plans of other allied institutions

Recommendation	Targeted institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Expand the Water and sanitation sector working group [WSSWG] to include inter-allied institutions	MDAs – MoH, MOFA, MOE, MOH, Ministry of Roads, MOTI, Social Welfare etc.	MSWR	first quarter 2025	WSSWG membership includes inter-allied institutions	Minutes of meetings
Facilitate stakeholder dialogue and consensus-building processes to identify common WASH goals and develop shared agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MDAs with WASH mandate » MMDAs » DPs » Civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MSWR » NDPC 	2024/2025	Establishment of shared WASH goals and agendas	NMTDPF Activity reports, Development plans etc.
Establish WASH focal points at the MDAs, RCCs and MMDA levels to facilitate interactions and implementation of WASH interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MMDAs » RCCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MSWR » MLGDRD » NDPC » OHLGS 	2025	WASH focal points identified at the MMDA level	Activity reports, memo, communique
Establish a coordination platform for utility services on infrastructure management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » GWCL » CWSA » ECG » Ministry of roads and highway » Telecoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MSWR » NDPC 	2025	Coordination platform for utility services on infrastructure management established	Activity reports, memos, communique

Resource Mobilisation and Optimisation

Recommendations	Targeted Institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Advocate for increased funding and resource allocation for WASH programmes and projects through targeted fundraising efforts and donor engagement strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Philanthropic Organisations » Donor Agencies, » Private Sector Entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSWR NDPC 	fourth quarter 2024	Increased financial and technical support for WASH initiatives	MSWR, MMDA, and allied institutions' WASH budget expenditure
Develop strategies to effectively promote resource sharing and mobilisation among allied institutions towards WASH programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ MDAs with WASH mandate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSWR NDPC 	fourth quarter	Increased resource sharing and mobilisation	Development plans

Recommendations	Targeted Institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Link WASH programme and plans to national budget and expenditure.		MSWR All WASH/ allied Institutions	2024/2025	WASH programme/ actions mainstreamed in 2026-2029 MTDP	2026-2029 MTDP/ Strategic Plans
Develop a framework for coordinating investment from multiple partners and resources allocation	MSWR MLGRD	MSWR	2024	Framework on coordinating WASH intervention developed	MSWR development plan
Strategy being implemented for the past 5 years in tracking					

Public Participation and Advocacy

Recommendations	Targeted Institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Broaden provision in the national development frameworks	WASH policy » MDAs with WASH mandate » RCCs » MMDAs » DPs » Civil society	MSWR NDPC	2024/2025	Level of alignment of WASH within MTNDPF	MTNDPF 2026-2029
Promote effective local and community-level engagement	» Community-based organisations » Communities	NDPC MMDAs	Quarterly	Enhanced community-level awareness	Public engagement records and documentaries, Public Participation Action Plan

Fragmented Data Standardisation and Reporting

Recommendations	Targeted Institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Establish a functional technical link between MSWR and MMDAs	» MSWR » MLGDRD » OHLGS	NDPC	Third quarter of 2024	Institutionalised approach for strengthening capacity on WASH	Meeting reports, memos

Roll out of the SIS and its subsidiary M&E Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MDAs with WASH mandate » RCCs » MMDAs 	<p>MSWR GSS NDPC MLGDRD</p>	Fourth quarter 2024	Number of indicators that data is generated through SIS	Functional SIS
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Low adoption of circular economy principles and practices

Recommendation	Targeted institution	Action by	Timeframe	KPIs	MOV
Implement awareness campaigns and training programs to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the circular economy concept and its relevance to the WASH sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MDAs with WASH mandate » RCCs » MMDAs » Private sector 	<p>MSWR MESTI NDPC</p>	Quarterly	Increased awareness and understanding among stakeholders	Training reports, pictures
Encourage public and private sector collaboration to phase out harmful practices and transition towards sustainable alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MDAs with WASH mandate » RCC » MMDAs » DPs » Civil society » Private sector 	<p>MSWR NDPC MESTI</p>	Quarterly	Deepened adoption of sustainable alternatives	Reports, minutes, pictures, documentaries
Develop a framework and guidelines for circular economy for implementing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » MDAs with WASH mandate » RCCs » MMDAs » DPs » Civil society » Private sector 	<p>MSWR NDPC MESTI</p>	Four quarter 2024	Framework established to guide stakeholders	Existing framework and guidelines for circular economy

ANNEX 1: NATIONAL WASH COORDINATION WORKSHOP AT VOLTA HOTEL FROM 13TH AND 14TH FEBRUARY 2024

Participating Institutions

 <p>Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR)</p>	 <p>WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION</p> <p><i>Sustainable Water Management for all and by all</i></p>	 <p>National Development Planning Commission</p> <p>Republic of Ghana</p>
 <p>Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)</p>	 <p>MINISTRY OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE</p>	 <p>Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI)</p> <p>Republic of Ghana</p>
 <p>Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation, and Rural Development (MLGDRD)</p>	 <p>Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR)</p> <p>Republic of Ghana</p>	 <p>GHANA HEALTH SERVICE</p> <p>Your Health • Our Concern</p>
	 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, GHANA</p>	 <p>SDGs Advisory Unit Office of the President</p> <p>Republic of Ghana</p>



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Ghana Coalition of NGOs in the
Water and Sanitation Sector



Global
Communities
Ghana



WaterAid



for every child



Eastern Region Regional
Coordinating Council
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ANNEX 2: COORDINATION WORKSHOP IN PICTURES





