



# **New Expectations & Game-Changing Ambitions for the Water Action Decade**

ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON WATER ACCESS,  
SANITATION & HYGIENE IN THE WORKPLACE

**INSIGHTS REPORT 2022**

## ABOUT WASH4WORK

WASH4Work is a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2016 to mobilize business action on water access, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in workplace operations, in communities where companies operate, and across supply chains.

### WASH4Work aims to:

- Demonstrate business leadership on WASH in the workplace
- Share knowledge, leading practice and advocate best-in-class standards
- Continuously evolve the business case for prioritizing WASH in corporate water stewardship actions
- Connect members to scale up WASH impact
- Support the implementation of climate resilient WASH actions

The United Nations Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate hosts the WASH4Work Secretariat.

### Steering Group 2022

*Chair:* Kate Holme, WaterAid

*Vice-Chair:* Michael Alexander, Diageo

Mai-Lan Ha, CEO Water Mandate

Madhu Rajesh, Coca-Cola

Francisco Cordero, Gap Inc.

Alison Gilbert, Gap Inc.

Alexandra Knezovich, Toilet Board Coalition

Davide Nardi, UNICEF

Ida Aagenaes, Unilever

Ruth Loftus, WaterAid

Donna Laviolette, Xylem

Andrea Montuori, Xylem

### Secretariat

Cheryl Hicks, Senior Advisor

Gregg Brill, Technical Lead

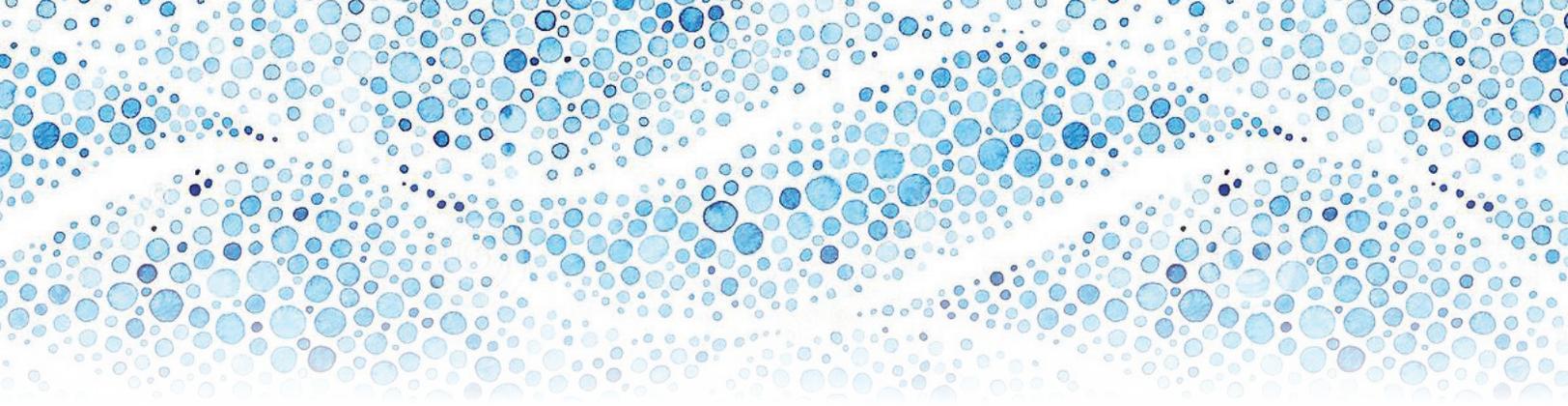
Giuliana Chaves Moreira, Research Associate

Leo Rodriguez, Engagement Associate

Ilsa Ruiz, Senior Communications and Events Manager

### Members of WASH4Work





## MESSAGE FROM THE Chair and Vice-Chair



We look back over our three years of chairing WASH4Work with pride in how far we've all progressed as a coalition—a unique collaboration between WASH non-governmental organizations and corporates. Our numbers have grown as more companies recognize the importance of WASH to the long-term growth of their business.

Important workstreams on climate resilient WASH, consistent reporting on WASH impacts to business, and implementing WASH through supply chains have been exciting and thought-leading pieces of work, focusing on practical tools that support corporate WASH investment and delivery. Members have come together and played active and key roles in these workstreams to ensure the learnings of many are combined into guidance and thought leadership, enabling all of us and others to accelerate our journeys and amplify our shared impact. This collaboration is at the heart of the value WASH4Work brings.

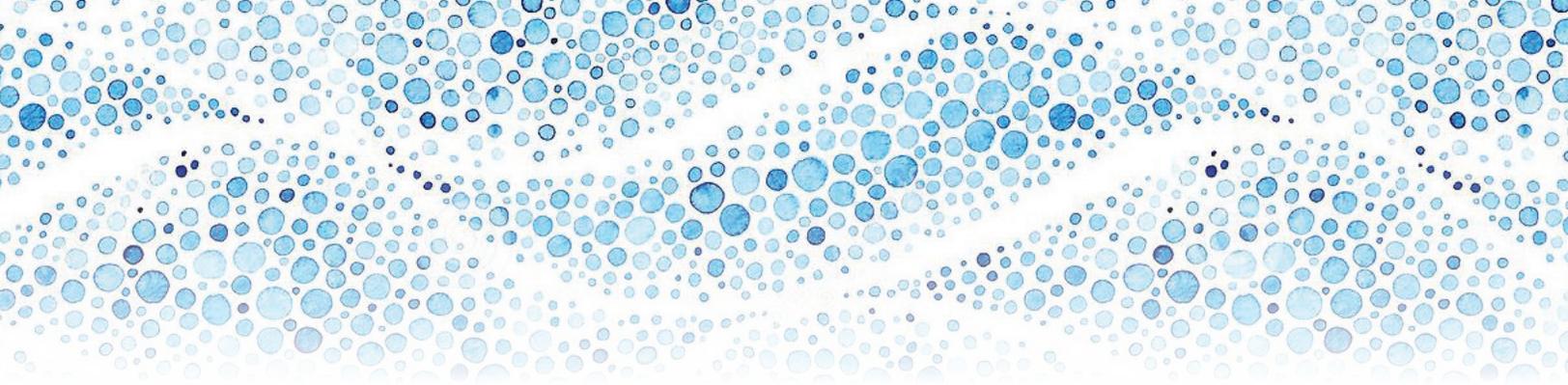
We hope that you find this paper, with the summary of insights gained over 2022, a helpful reference as you work through your own WASH journey. We now move into our transition period of handover with the new chairs, Madhu Rajesh from Coca-Cola and Scott McCready from Alliance for Water Stewardship, confident and excited about the leadership and direction they will bring and looking forward to remaining part of that journey into 2023 (a big year for water) and beyond.”

### **KATE HOLME**

Strategic Partnerships Director,  
WaterAid  
Chair, WASH4Work (2020–2022)

### **MICHAEL ALEXANDER**

Global Head of Environment,  
Diageo  
Vice-Chair, WASH4Work (2020–2022)



# Introduction

**In 2023 global governments and stakeholders will come together for the first UN Water Conference in 40 years, and the expectations are high to forge much more ambitious commitments to game-changing actions for the water action decade to 2030.**

It is recognized that progress on the global goals to achieve universal access to safely managed and climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) still lag behind 2030 targets and that a minimum 4x acceleration will be required (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program on SDG 6, 2021).

There are now higher expectations on business to bring climate-resilient solutions, increased investments, and to extend corporate responsibility, traceability and accountability for WASH access beyond workplace operations to supply chains, communities and employee/worker homes.

**Business risks associated with lack of WASH access are increasing.**

Businesses rely on healthy people and communities for continuity and growth. Unsafe and unreliable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services at work or at home, and in communities, affects worker health and safety, productivity and security of business-critical raw materials. Lack of access to WASH in communities where businesses operate and withdraw water directly affects reputation, trust and license to operate.

Climate change is already disrupting the quality and quantity of water supplies, and the sustainability of sanitation and hygiene behaviors, especially for the most vulnerable. This sets back progress, causing a need for re-investment.

New mandatory sustainability reporting regulations (CSRD, EU 2023) are increasing pressure on businesses to provide more disclosure on exposure to risks due to lack of access to WASH, and the actions businesses are taking to mitigate these risks. The price of WASH risk has been calculated at \$6 billion amongst just 10 global companies (CDP 2022). It is expected that new reporting and disclosure requirements will lead to increased investor pressure as well.

“ **There are now higher expectations on business to bring climate-resilient solutions, increased investments, and to extend corporate responsibility, traceability and accountability for WASH access beyond workplace operations to supply chains and employee homes.** ”

---

**The business case for investing in WASH access is getting stronger.**

The business benefits of ensuring WASH access are starting to be more defined; going beyond basic compliance to unlock multiple benefits. Important links are being made on how WASH access can contribute to corporate water stewardship commitments to improved water quality and quantity, as well as to broader corporate sustainability goals including gender equality, improved health and well-being, education, climate resilience and economic opportunities for communities.

“ **Financial return on investment (ROI) of WASH for business has been calculated at \$1.32–\$2.05 averaged return—and \$5.11–\$9.04 on the high end—for every \$1 invested.**

---

There is new evidence of financial returns for the business on WASH investments as well. A study released in 2022 revealed proof of positive returns in the form of increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and overall health improvements. Financial return on investment (ROI) of WASH for business has been calculated at \$1.32–\$2.05 averaged return—and \$5.11–\$9.04 on the high end—for every \$1 invested (WaterAid 2022).

Businesses have a unique opportunity to change the game and close the gap on WASH access through the broad reach and influence of their workforces and supply chains. Yet business achievements on WASH access are currently not accounted for in the World Health Organization/ UNICEF joint monitoring program for measuring progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. Measuring collective business progress on WASH in the workplace through a standardized reporting method can demonstrate business contributions to closing the 4x acceleration gap.

In 2022 the WASH4Work program has focused on preparing businesses for these important shifts in new expectations and game-changing ambitions for water, sanitation and hygiene access in the water action decade to 2030.

## ABOUT THIS PAPER

This paper is a tool for all businesses large and small, whether just beginning a WASH action journey, or seeking to align with fellow business leaders on WASH action, leading practice and priorities to achieve 2030 commitments. It summarizes key findings and learnings from WASH4Work’s activities in 2022 as well as an outlook to our priorities in 2023.

### This paper is organized into three sections:

#### SECTION 1

**Navigating New Expectations: A Standardized Accounting Framework for WASH Benefits & Financial ROI**

#### SECTION 2

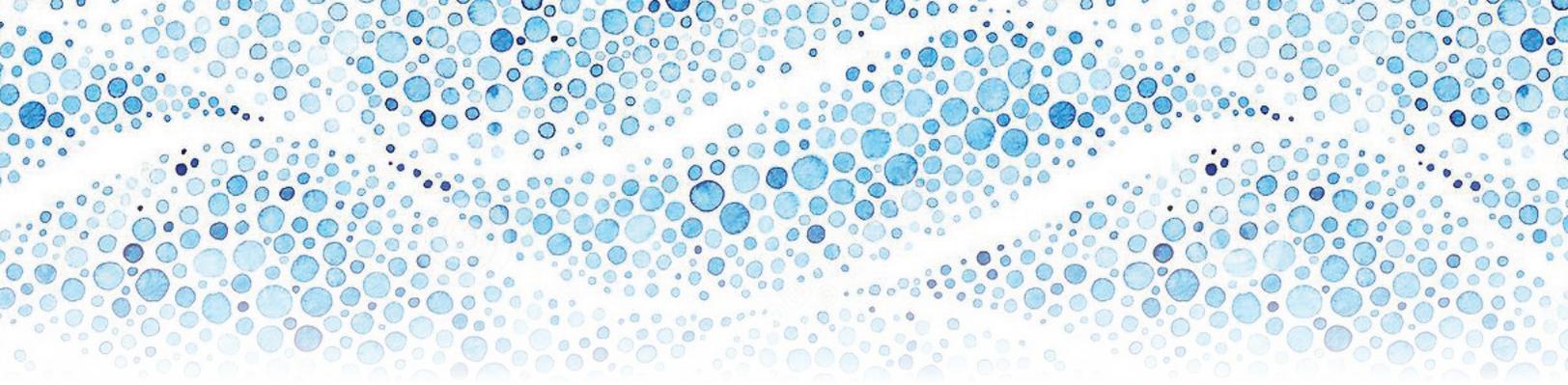
**Consensus on New Ambitions: The COP27 Business Declaration on Climate Resilient WASH**

#### SECTION 3

**Closing the Gap by 2030: WASH in the Supply Chain**

#### CONCLUSIONS & CALL TO ACTION 2023

**Measuring Collective Progress on WASH in the Workplace**



## SECTION 1

# Navigating New Expectations: A Standardized Accounting Framework for WASH Benefits & Financial ROI

To prepare businesses for new mandatory sustainability reporting laws, increasing pressure to provide more disclosure on businesses' exposure to risks due to lack of access to WASH, and the actions businesses are taking to mitigate these risks, WASH4Work has initiated a project to develop a standardized accounting framework for WASH benefits and financial ROI to be launched at the UN Water Conference in March 2023.

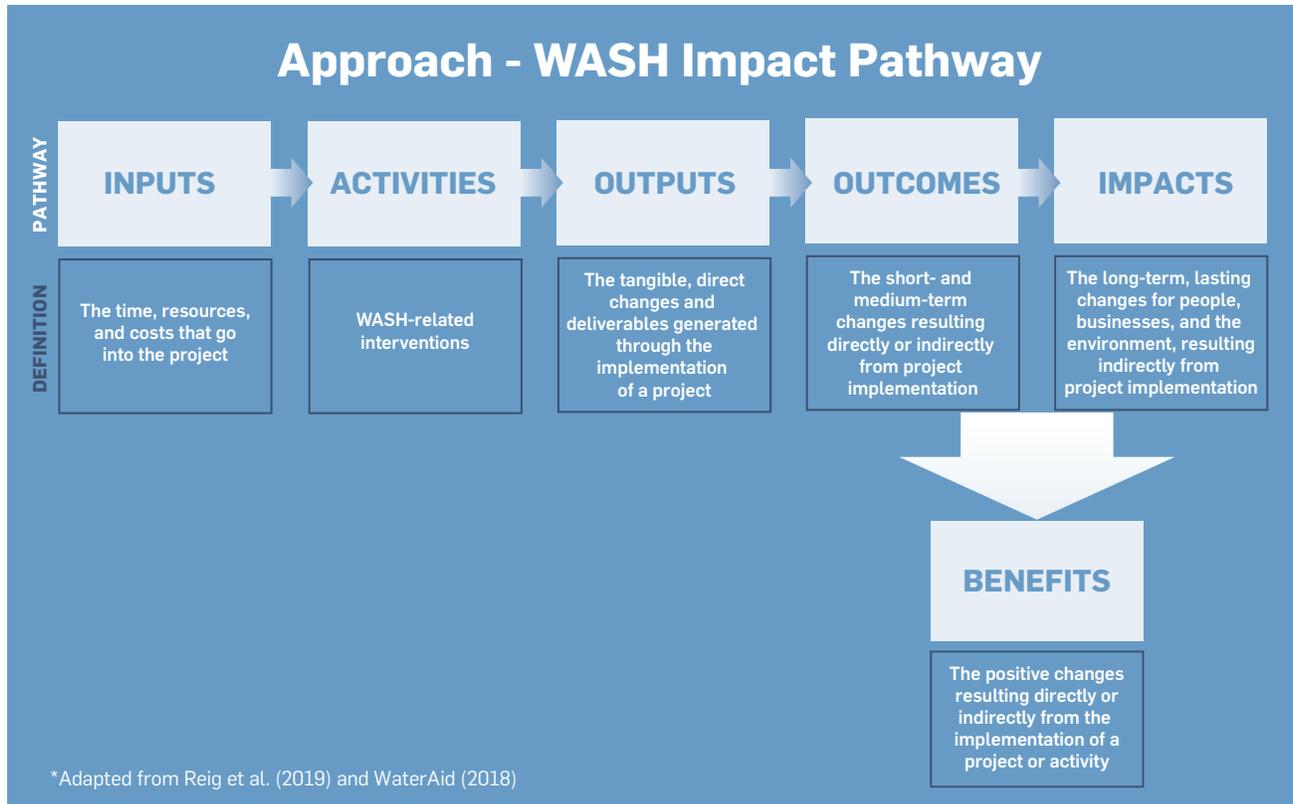
The framework aims to enable businesses to seamlessly embed WASH benefit accounting into their overall corporate water stewardship accounting and reporting. A standardized WASH benefits accounting framework will align with current industry-standard volumetric water benefits accounting method (VWBA). The project team includes members of the CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, LimnoTech, Water.org, WaterAid, Coca-Cola, Diageo, Gap Inc., Microsoft, Starbucks and Xylem.

**Historically the impacts of corporate investments in WASH access have been measured in terms of the number of people (beneficiaries) reached. In addition, WASH investments have not been linked to corporate water stewardship goals for quantifying the volumetric water benefits of water stewardship activities. The WASH Benefits Accounting Framework will go beyond beneficiary counting to understand the broader and multiple benefits and impacts of WASH investments (social, environmental, economic), including the benefits of WASH access on water quality and quantity stewardship goals.**

**The WASH benefit accounting framework aims to:**

- Strengthen the business case for investing in WASH; to go beyond beneficiary counting to a standardized framework and guidance for identifying and accounting for the broader impacts, outcomes and benefits of investing in WASH such as: social, environmental, economic, health, well-being and resilience.
- Make more concrete and science-based linkages between the benefits of WASH access and water quality, quantity, replenishment and resilience, and corporate water stewardship goals.
- Embed into the framework the integrated, systems-level approach of climate-resilient WASH.
- Provide guidance for business on the use and implementation of the standardized accounting framework.

**FIGURE 1.**



## PROGRESS 2022

In 2022 the project defined the WASH impact pathways to fit the approach of the industry-accepted VWBA method (Figure 1).

A landscape assessment of current WASH accounting and reporting methods has been conducted to identify the key WASH activities associated with business investments in WASH access. Through a multi-stakeholder consultation, desired outputs, outcomes and impacts to be accounted for have been defined.

The outputs, outcomes and impacts identified were further refined into a set of core and advanced indicators. Core indicators have been selected based on their quantifiability, priority, relevance and ease of use for business. Advanced indicators were selected to include more qualitative benefits that are more complex to quantify, or may not be a priority for all WASH investments.

## OUTLOOK 2023

Accounting methods will be defined for the core indicator set.

The WASH Benefits Accounting Framework will be launched in March 2023. Guidance for business use will be developed in 2023 alongside piloting of the accounting framework by a selection of companies.

In addition to socio-economic and environmental benefits, financial ROI of WASH activities for the business will also be included based on the accounting method established by WaterAid. Highlights from new findings on the financial ROI of WASH investments released by WaterAid in 2022 are included in this section.

## BOOSTING BUSINESS

### WHY INVESTING IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PAYS OFF (WaterAid 2022)

Between 2018 and 2022, WaterAid—in collaboration with Diageo, Gap Inc., HSBC, Twinings and Ekaterra (which was part of Unilever when this project started)—conducted a first-of-its kind research project to show the business benefits of investing in WASH. The project set out to test a theory around quantifying business benefits and generate robust evidence of the financial value of investing in WASH, to encourage more companies to invest directly in their own business facilities and leverage their influence to persuade suppliers to act. Data was collected from ten workplaces in four different sectors across four countries: tea estates in India and Kenya, apparel and leather supply chains in Bangladesh and India, and agricultural smallholder farmers in Tanzania.

The project showed the business benefits of investing in WASH, looking at the effect it has on absenteeism, productivity, attrition, punctuality and the number of medical incidents at each workplace.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- A **29 percent decrease** in absenteeism in leather tanneries in India, and a **21 percent drop** in absenteeism in the tea estate study in Kenya.
- A **5 percent drop** in workplace medical incidents on the tea estates in India, and a **22 percent decrease** in workplace medical incidents on the tea estate in Kenya.
- A **27 percent** boost in productivity after the intervention on the tea estates in India, **5 percent increase** in punctuality at the ready-made garment factories (RMG) in Bangladesh, and **6 percent increase** at the leather tanneries in India.
- For every \$1 invested overall, the apparel and leather sector projects combined delivered a **\$1.32 ROI** (ranging from \$-5.40 to \$9.04) during the project period.
- For every \$1 invested overall, the tea sector projects combined saw a **\$2.05 return** (ranging from \$-0.17 to \$5.11).

Financial ROI for the business was calculated, along with projections for investment costs and benefits, over a 10-year period. The ROI figures reported in this summary are overall results for sectors, aggregated across countries and several district workplace locations, with the intention of drawing some useful conclusions around the business benefits of investing in WASH.

Source: WaterAid, WASH4Work, Ekaterra, Unilever. (2022). Boosting business: why investing in water, sanitation and hygiene pays off. Tea estate in Kenya. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoo256/files/boosting-business-why-investing-in-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-in-kenyas-tea-estates-pays-off.pdf>

# INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROJECTS: GUIDANCE FOR COMPANIES (WaterAid 2022)

Applying a gender lens to company WASH strategies and projects creates significant potential to make those investments go further and achieve greater impacts that result in better, more sustainable WASH outcomes; are critical on the pathway to gender equality and women's empowerment; and put women and girls at the centre and go beyond WASH projects that are 'just' taps and toilets.

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES FOR COMPANIES:

**WASH projects do not automatically lead to empowerment.** Empowerment is not a one-off activity. It is a process that includes change at individual, household, community, sub-national and national level.

**Prioritize women's knowledge, inputs and expertise.** Support WASH implementing partners to work with specialist women's rights groups or organizations to support capacity-building, project design and delivery. And ensure there is time and opportunity to listen to and draw on the knowledge of women in the targeted communities in project design and activities.

**Target more than just women and girls.** Men and boys are part of the solution—but this must be done in a way that protects and secures women's empowerment. Support NGO partners to work with experts who protect the rights of marginalized genders, to further understand the political and security context for these persons, and to engage in a way that causes them no further risk.

**Recognize, understand and respond to women in their diversity.** Different women have different levels of control and access to resources. Disability status, class, caste, religion, education, marital status, age, ethnicity, income, confidence and available free time all influence a woman's ability to engage in WASH decision-making. Projects must assess and design interventions to meet these differing needs and barriers.

**Ensure 'Do No Harm' principles are central to all women's empowerment and gender work.** This includes obvious harm (e.g., negative health effects of poor water quality) and unforeseen harm (e.g., a decrease in school attendance due to students from low-income families being required to attend hygiene clubs where donations are collected to improve facilities), and, crucially, understanding and working to prevent violence against women associated with WASH projects and service provision.

Finally, **one size does not fit all.** Gender roles and relations are context specific, so will vary by geographic, legal and cultural contexts and will change over time. The realities of gender in relation to WASH and everyday life need to be understood and analyzed for each project before activities and indicators are finalized.

**Significant evidence and decades of experience has shown how women and girls are disproportionately affected when communities lack clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. In 8/10 households without a water source on the premises, women and girls are responsible for water collection. Globally, women and girls spend over 200 million hours collecting water every day, placing them at risk of violence, and limiting access to education and other economic activities.**

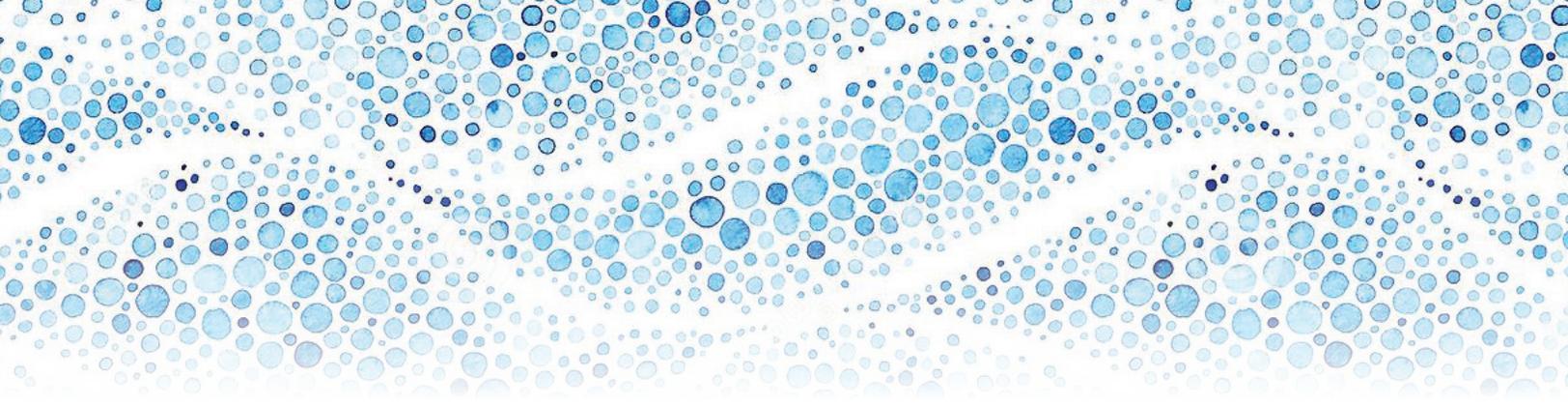
“ Globally, women and girls spend over 200 million hours collecting water every day, placing them at risk of violence, and limiting access to education and other economic activities.”

Source: WaterAid. (2022). *Integrating gender equality into water, sanitation and hygiene projects: Guidance for companies.* <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxooof256/files/integrar-a-igualdade-de-gnero-nos-projetos-de-gua-saneamento-e-higiene---orientaes-para-empresas.pdf>

## REVIEW OF CURRENT WASH DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

WASH4Work conducted a review of four key sustainability reporting and disclosure questionnaires for current WASH disclosure requirements: Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). A summary of the main conclusions of the analysis is provided below. AWS WASH Guidance, published in 2022, is included in the Appendix.

- AWS and CDP questionnaires refer most specifically to WASH, providing indicators and goals for companies on WASH disclosure and standards.
- In general, the WASH questions in the CDP questionnaire and in the AWS standard are focused on the WASH provision for workers.
- The GRI (303) does not mention the acronym ‘WASH’ and does not have any specific reporting disclosure requirement on sanitation and hygiene, though it does require disclosures on water withdrawal, discharge and consumption.
- The GRI is the only questionnaire which requires companies to report information about their suppliers, though companies have shared that other reporting and disclosure organizations have started to ask about their WASH-related risk exposure beyond operations in supply chains and communities where workers live.
- AWS, CDP and GRI questionnaires are primarily focused on water-related disclosures associated with water stewardship and less on sanitation, hygiene and broader WASH actions. However, AWS launched guidance on WASH in 2022 which is included in the appendix.



## SECTION 2

# Consensus on New Ambitions: The COP27 Business Declaration on Climate Resilient WASH

In our 2021 Insights Report, *Raising our Ambition to WASH Resilience*, WASH4Work set out to convene global WASH stakeholders and corporate members to develop consensus and alignment on the new expectations to integrate climate resilience considerations into WASH programs and investments—and what this means in the context of corporate water stewardship commitments.

On the occasion of the COP27 United Nations Climate Change Conference, global businesses and WASH expert organizations came together via the WASH4Work initiative to launch a joint statement of aligned commitments to taking action towards the advancement of SDGs 6 and 13 by 2030, with the goal of enabling millions of people to become more water secure and climate resilient.

“ **The urgency to address water-related climate risks is intensifying. Climate change directly affects the quality and quantity of water supplies and impacts the sustainability of WASH behaviors, especially for the most vulnerable.** ”

The declaration outlines the case for business action; considerations for further developing and applying a climate resilience framework to WASH programs and investments; and invites more businesses to join us in this COP27 declaration, to mobilize the leadership and partnerships needed to shape a more climate-resilient WASH-secure world.

## OUTLOOK 2023

- Continue to promote corporate support for the business declaration on climate-resilient WASH.
- Develop guidance for business on implementation of climate-resilient WASH framework considerations in WASH programs and investments in collaboration with global and local WASH stakeholders.

## **THE CASE FOR BUSINESS ACTION**

Water is the primary medium through which climate change influences the Earth's ecosystem and thus all economic, social and environmental functions that water supports.

Water-related climate risks arise from too much water, too little water and polluted water.

Climate change directly affects the quality and quantity of water supplies, and impacts on the sustainability of sanitation and hygiene behaviors, especially for the most vulnerable.

Unsafe and unreliable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services at home or at work impacts people's health, well-being and livelihoods.

Water security and climate resilience helps to enable healthy people and communities, business continuity and growth, across operations, supply chains and in the sourcing of raw materials.

## **HAVING ACCESS TO WASH HELPS TO BUILD PEOPLE'S RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE.**

- **In order to be resilient to the challenges that climate change brings, people along corporate value chains and in the communities where they live need to be water secure.**
- **Water security includes reliable access to sufficient quantities of good quality water, limited exposure and reduced vulnerability to water-related risks, and the capacity to manage the impacts from climate change at home and at work.**
- **Safely managed sanitation, hygiene and water supply reduces exposure to harmful diseases and underpins public health, enabling people to better cope with climate change impacts.**
- **Efficient and effective water supply services increase the amount of clean water people have access to in times of scarcity—for example, during extreme climate events.**
- **Increased water storage, in harmony with the environment, provides a critical buffer, delivering water when and where it is needed.**

*Sources: WASH4Work, UNICEF, WaterAid, Water.org and Pacific Institute*

## KEY MESSAGES

**1** As global businesses, we are committed to taking action towards universal access to WASH across our operations, supply chains and in the communities where we operate as part of our corporate water stewardship strategies.

**2** In the face of the growing risks of climate change we recognize that WASH access is an important component of climate and water resilience actions:

- Climate change is already impacting people's access to WASH through its significant impacts on the water cycle.
- Climate change disproportionality affects the most vulnerable, often combined with other existing hazards and vulnerabilities that impact people's level of resilience.
- Having access to WASH helps to build people's resilience to climate change, enabling improved water security, limiting exposure to water-related risks, and building the capacity to manage climate change impacts.

**3** Going forward we join global and local stakeholders in developing and applying a climate-resilient WASH framework to our water, sanitation and hygiene access programs and investments.

The framework for action will include the following considerations:

- Assessment of climate risk: Understanding the local context of climate change, water systems and water resources: hazards, exposure, and vulnerability;
- Impacts of climate risks on WASH: Understanding the impacts of climate change on WASH access, services continuity and reliability;
- Preparedness and adaptation: Planning for the timely response to expected climate impacts and potential adaptation of water supply, sanitation and hygiene services;
- Solutions and implementation: Identifying opportunities to improve WASH services with climate-smart low carbon infrastructure, technologies and capacity-building in communities;
- Testing and monitoring: Identifying opportunities to continuously improve the continuity and reliability of services through benchmarking, evaluation and validation;
- Reporting and disclosure: Contributing to advancements in leading practice by sharing learnings, findings and impacts in collaboration with our stakeholders.

**4** As global businesses we will leverage our broad reach and influence to help advocate for climate resilient WASH actions in partnership with global and local stakeholders.

*We, as the WASH4Work initiative, invite more businesses to join us in this COP27 declaration, to mobilize the leadership and partnership needed to shape a more climate resilient WASH-secure world.*

## WASH4WORK MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE DECLARATION



---

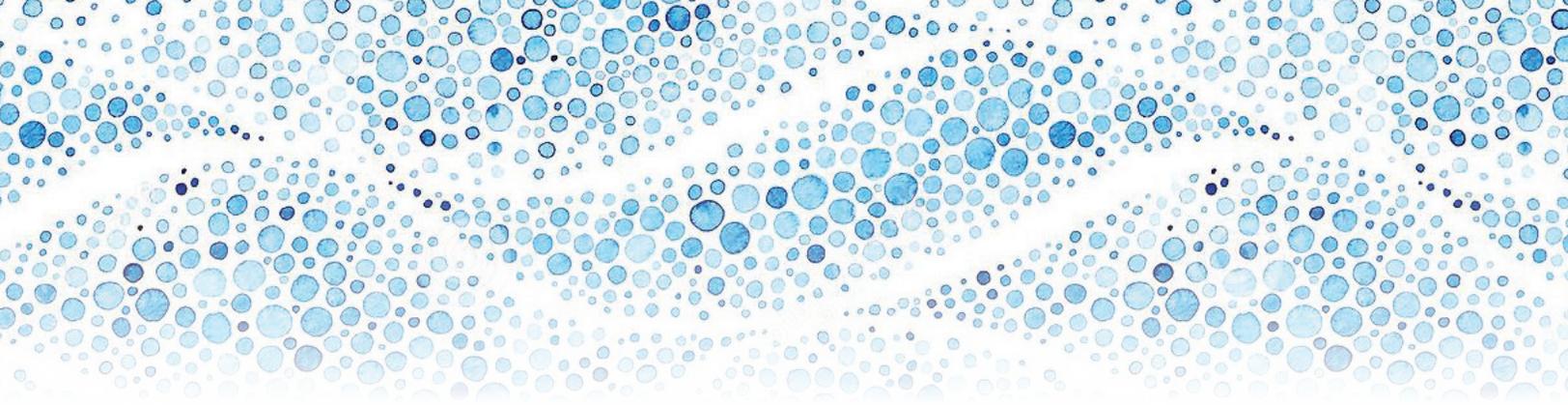
### Additional resources on climate resilient WASH

UNICEF and Global Water Partnership (GWP). (2017). WASH Climate Resilient Development. Strategic Framework. [https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/unicef-gwp/gwp\\_unicef\\_strategic\\_framework\\_web\\_artwork.pdf](https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/unicef-gwp/gwp_unicef_strategic_framework_web_artwork.pdf)

UNICEF. (2020). UNICEF Guidance note. How UNICEF regional and country offices can shift to climate resilient WASH programming. <https://www.unicef.org/media/109006/file/UNICEF-guidance-note-climate-shift.pdf>

Water.org. (2020). Increasing resiliency in the face of climate change. How WSS systems and financing can adapt to meet the challenge. [https://water.org/documents/248/Increasing\\_Resiliency\\_in\\_the\\_face\\_of\\_climate\\_change.pdf](https://water.org/documents/248/Increasing_Resiliency_in_the_face_of_climate_change.pdf)

WaterAid. (2021). Programme guidance for climate resilient WASH. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoof256/files/programme-guidance-for-climate-resilient-water-sanitation-and-hygiene.pdf>



## SECTION 3

# Closing the Gap by 2030: WASH in the Supply Chain

**A key area of growth and significant opportunity for business impact on WASH access lies within corporate supply chains, extending business actions on WASH to new geographies, industry sectors, and to small and medium-sized businesses.**

In the wake of growing business interest and understanding of the importance of WASH access, for business continuity and human rights, there are new expectations for companies to demonstrate concretely their exposure and actions on risks from lack of access to WASH across supply chains.

In 2022 WASH4Work conducted a consultation amongst its members to understand how companies are evolving their leading practice on WASH requirements in their supply chains, and to discuss how WASH4Work might support members' suppliers on their WASH implementation journeys through collective action.

Below is a selection of current approaches to WASH in the supply chain from WASH4Work members:

## DIAGEO

### Diageo

Diageo was an early adopter for integrating WASH into water stewardship and takes a holistic and context-based approach to water across its operations and supply chain. With a recognition of the interdependencies of their water-use and the impact on communities, supply chains and the environment, Diageo is striving to be best-in-class with its water stewardship strategy. Diageo's 10-year ESG action plan, Society 2030: Spirit of Progress puts this into action and focuses on supporting farmers, improving water use, replenishing water in water-stressed area and building community, as well as business, resilience.

Central to Diageo's approach on water is its focus on partnerships, particularly with WaterAid and CARE, to deliver the action on the ground. Partnerships, collective action and collaboration underpins Diageo's strategy and provides the subject matter expertise to make a tangible positive impact on its communities.

An example of this in action is Diageo's current pilot in Kenya with CARE International to ensure half of the WASH committee in the village are female. Diageo is putting into practice WaterAid's Gender Guidance it co-sponsored, to ensure that gender equality is embedded throughout, as when women are involved in the decisions on water, they disproportionately benefit from it: building community, business and supply chain resilience.

---

## Gap Inc.

### Gap Inc.

The Women + Water Alliance is a public-private partnership between the USAID and Gap Inc., which was launched in 2017. This initiative aims to improve and sustain the health and well-being of communities touched by the apparel industry in two states in India, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. In August 2022, the initiative announced that it had achieved its goal to empower two million people to improve their access to water and sanitation in India by 2023.

The implementing partners CARE, WaterAid, Water.org, and the Institute for Sustainable Communities have been working to empower women as advocates for their water needs, improve access to water and sanitation at the village and household levels, and advance water stewardship best practices for cotton farming. The Institute for Development Impact (IDI) and International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) support the Women + Water Alliance through program evaluation. The WASH and women's empowerment programming will continue to expand its impact through January 2023.

This year, the initiative also started a new phase by partnering with the Water Resilience Coalition, with the goal of bringing together other companies to help support on-the-ground partners in empowering women and communities to improve their water access. The next phase will evolve by bringing in new partners to reach even broader scale and new geographies, contributing to the Water Resilience Coalition's overarching goal to bring climate-resilient access to water, sanitation, and hygiene to 300 million people by 2030.

## Challenges and recommendations identified for implementing WASH across the value chain

- Aligning any activity with some local or national government priorities can help accelerate the process as well as ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. This is a challenge that can be addressed through collective action.
- Overlapping the geographies where companies operate with existing initiatives from other companies and stakeholders will enable the joining of forces to scale efforts. Having a platform where companies and stakeholders can build those relationships is valuable.
- Policies and procedures for tracking progress and reporting are very important, however collecting standardized and verifiable data from third party suppliers can be challenging. As many companies have suppliers in common there needs to be a standardized approach to reporting for suppliers across companies and industry sectors to decrease the reporting burden for suppliers.



## Starbucks

In August 2021, Starbucks expanded its water stewardship goals to include global operations, agricultural supply chain, and packaging, increasing the projected water conserved or replenished and addressing some of the biggest impacts on Starbucks water footprint. In addition, Starbucks will also prioritize action in high-risk basins to support watershed health and actively address ecosystem resilience and water equity. This approach aims to achieve sustainable water security for our business and works to reliably provide clean, safe water to high-risk communities.

As part of this ambitious commitment to water stewardship, Starbucks seeks to empower 5 million people through community-driven solutions with a focus on women, girls and marginalized groups through water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Through partnerships with leading global NGO partners and licensee partners, Starbucks promotes access and community resiliency to water stress by improving water quality, governance and replenishment in areas of highest risk. This work builds on Starbucks long history for supporting water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) initiatives in communities around the world through The Starbucks Foundation.

SCS Global Services worked with Starbucks and Conservation International to develop the Coffee And Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices standard to ensure that Starbucks is sourcing sustainably grown and processed coffee. Starbucks defines sustainability as an economically viable model that addresses the social and environmental needs of all the participants in the supply chain from farmer to consumer. The standard promotes transparency, profitability, and responsible coffee-growing and coffee-processing practices while improving the livelihoods of coffee farmers and workers on and off farms through WASH and conserving natural habitat for communities.

On International Women's Day on March 8, 2018, The Starbucks Foundation announced a new goal to empower 250,000 women and girls in origin communities by 2025. With a deeper focus on women and families, Starbucks will also be able to accelerate its broader goal to improve the lives of at least one million coffee farmers and workers by 2025. To reach that goal, The Starbucks Foundation is supporting programs around women's leadership, access to finance, and healthy homes. These projects aim to break down barriers to education, promote clean water and sanitation (WASH), and create economic opportunities for women and girls. Since 2005, the Foundation has awarded more than \$20 million in Origin Grants to organizations working in coffee and tea sourcing communities, to support smallholder farming families with vocational training, increased access to water and health services, and greater economic opportunity in coffee and tea-growing communities.



Unilever

## Unilever

Unilever's role over the past three years in addressing COVID-19 perfectly illustrates the value in public-private collaborations to enable a rapid and effective delivery of large-scale emergency responses. In early 2020, Unilever joined forces with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to establish the Hygiene and Behavior Change Coalition (HBCC). With a goal to limit the spread of COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries in a WASH resilient manner, the coalition was able to harness its networks within the public, private and academic sectors to deliver lifesaving support.

Between March 2020 and December 2021, the program reached more than 1.2 billion people across 37 countries with COVID-19 and hygiene behavior change messages through 78 different projects delivered by 21 UN and NGO partners. Additionally, over 270,000 handwashing facilities were installed, and more than 450,000 key workers were trained on how to protect themselves and their local communities. Unilever used its decades of experience delivering mass media communications to lead the co-creation of a global mass media campaign which was made available in multiple languages to all the coalition partners. They also donated 78 million hygiene and sanitation products, freeing up funds for the NGOs and UN organizations to invest in other project activities.

The speed and scale at which products were distributed was only possible due to Unilever's established global supply chains. The uptake of life-saving hygiene habits was helped by the insight-led behavior change materials, including educational games for children, developed by hygiene and sanitation brands Lifebuoy and Domestos and translated into 23 languages for the HBCC. By partnering with NGOs on the ground, both products and materials were delivered into the hands of those who needed them most, including to refugees, vulnerable communities and rural populations. In January 2022, Unilever extended its coalition with the FCDO in response to combat Omicron and other COVID-19 variants, and to strengthen WASH system to build resilience to future pandemics.



## Xylem

Becoming a signatory of the WASH Pledge in 2019, Xylem initially analyzed how internally they were addressing WASH within their own operations, but also in the communities they operate in and value chain. Since then, WASH has been at the forefront of the company's priorities and has been embedded in the 2025 Sustainability Framework and Strategy of the company, guiding their efforts on more than one of Xylem's Signature Goals:

**WASH FOR OUR EMPLOYEES:** Ensure 100 per cent of Xylem employees have access to clean water and safe sanitation at work, at home and during natural disasters.

**WASH ACROSS OUR SUPPLY CHAIN:** Require suppliers to take the WASH Pledge for Access to Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at the workplace.

**WASH IN OUR COMMUNITIES:** Provide improved water and sanitation solutions to 20 million people at the base of the economic pyramid. Provide 15 million people with water education to improve quality of life and raise awareness.

Now committed to WASH, the company has five supply chain sustainability goals run by procurement, which are measured by how the company addresses these topics with their suppliers. The company has tied it to their supply evaluation and sourcing processes so no one company's supplier can be strategic or preferred if they haven't joined this sustainability journey in general and signed the WASH Pledge by 2025. Through this close engagement, the company evaluates and engages with partners throughout their supply chain and their supply partners to advocate for investments in WASH, and encourage them to sign the WASH Pledge and take the first step in building their own commitments to addressing water challenges.

To illustrate the impact these actions have had, their 2025 Supply Chain Sustainability Goals have been in place since January 2020, and since then more than 500 of Xylem's suppliers at company level have signed the WASH Pledge.

### Key Success Factors

- Education opportunities for suppliers
- Targets & key performance indicators as percentage of spend to drive progress
- Engagement opportunities with Xylem and partners
- One-on-one support and experience sharing

### Key Learnings

- The WASH Pledge is relevant to any industry
- Implementation of the WASH Pledge can vary in process
- Governance and communication are crucial to avoid double work
- Xylem's best partners will take pride in joining such an initiative

Xylem also has a Watermark Community Grant program where any of their suppliers and stakeholders can apply for a grant up to \$10,000 to run a project with a local NGO that they are volunteering with on a water-related project. All they need to show is that they meet the criteria for volunteering. It must be aligned with Xylem's mission, and meet criteria for volunteer time, number of people involved, or number of people impacted through education or WASH access.

---

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON WASH IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

WaterAid, Diageo, The CEO Water Mandate, Alliance for Water Stewardship, WASH4Work. (2019). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Three Essential Ingredients to Resilient Agricultural Supply Chains. [https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Agri\\_Supply\\_Chains\\_Booklet.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Agri_Supply_Chains_Booklet.pdf)

WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Gap Inc. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_GapIncCS\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_GapIncCS_ENG.pdf)

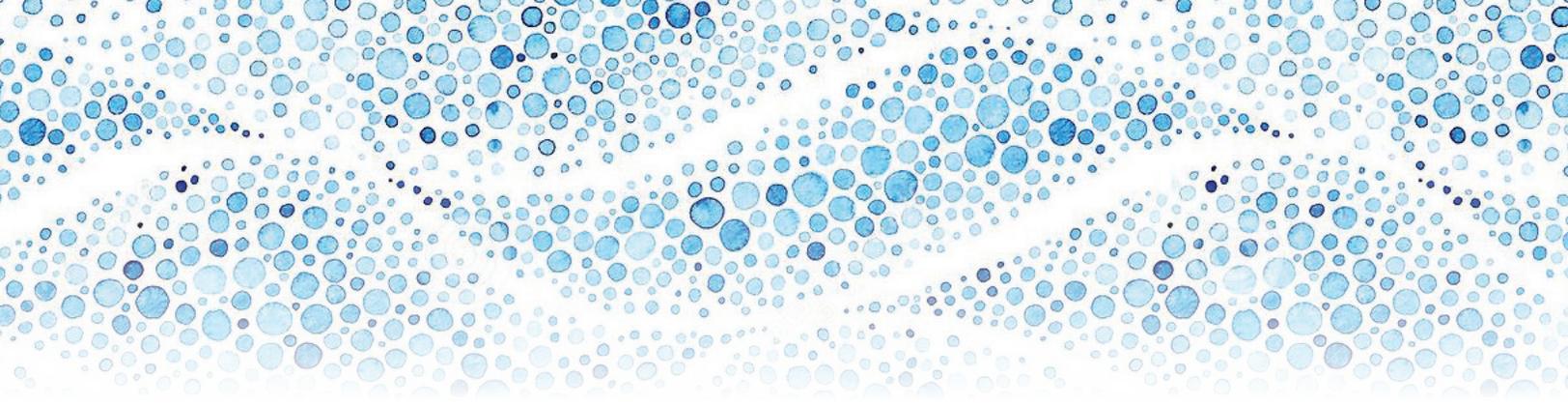
WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Diageo. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_DiageoCS\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_DiageoCS_ENG.pdf)

WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Nestlé. [https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Corporate\\_action\\_on\\_WASH\\_Nestlé\\_English.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Corporate_action_on_WASH_Nestlé_English.pdf)

WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate engagement on water supply, sanitation and hygiene: Driving progress on Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) through supply-chains and voluntary standards. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_WashReport\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_WashReport_ENG.pdf)

WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, WBCSD. (2016). Scaling Corporate Action on Access to WASH in Supply Chains – White Paper. <https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Scaling-Corporate-Action-on-WASH-in-Supply-Chains.pdf>

WaterAid. (2021). Delivering a resilient supply chain: WASH self-assessment tools. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/delivering-a-resilient-supply-chain-wash-self-assessment-tools>



# Conclusions & Call to Action 2023

## DEMONSTRATING BUSINESS ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURING COLLECTIVE PROGRESS ON WASH IN THE WORKPLACE

“Globally, at least a quadrupling of current rates of progress on WASH is needed to meet the SDG targets. In fragile contexts and the least developed countries, progress needs to be made even faster.” (JMP 2022)

### ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE 2022 WASH4WORK PROGRAM

21  
NGOs

33  
COMPANIES

Businesses have a unique opportunity to change the game and close the gap on WASH access through the broad reach and influence of their workforces and supply chains. Yet business achievements on WASH access are currently not accounted for in the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program on SDG 6. Measuring collective business progress on WASH in the workplace through a standardized reporting method can demonstrate business contributions to closing the 4x acceleration gap.

#### Opportunities for WASH4Work to facilitate the tracking of collective progress on WASH in the workplace:

- Create a baseline understanding of the current size of the gap for WASH access and climate resilient WASH at country level via existing global and local data sets.
- Overlay geographies of WASH4Work members’ operations and supply chains to identify where businesses are contributing to closing the WASH access gap.
- Assess member WASH targets by country to identify hot spots for collective action.
- Monitor collective business progress on WASH access (of WASH4Work members) against country-level baselines via standardized WASH benefits accounting method.
- Monitor collective business progress on climate resilient WASH (of WASH4Work and Water Resilience Coalition members) via net positive water impact (NPWI) measurement tool.
- Report on collective business contributions to progress on WASH access to SDG 6 joint monitoring program under a new sub-section “Status of WASH in the Workplace” (aligning with current sub-sections: Status of WASH in schools and status of WASH in healthcare facilities).

**Practical actions for business:**

- Integrate climate-resilient WASH considerations into WASH programs and investments via WASH4Work Business Framework on Climate Resilient WASH guidance.
- Integrate WASH access leading practice requirements into supplier contracts and codes of conduct.
- Align WASH access measurement and reporting with the Standardized WASH Benefits Accounting Method.
- Share annual progress reports with WASH4Work utilizing the Standardized WASH Benefits Accounting Method to enable monitoring of collective business contributions to SDG 6 joint monitoring program under new sub-section “Status of WASH in the Workplace”.

## WASH4WORK PARTNER PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD



*\*This map represents all the WASH4Work Partner projects entered into the Water Action Hub. Of the 95+ locations, approximately 60 represent corporate-sponsored projects typically in North and South America, Eastern Europe, South Africa and Southeast Asia. The remaining 30+ locations represent projects from international NGOs.*

## Appendix

# AWS WASH Guidance 2022

## Alliance For Water Stewardship Guidance On Special Subject: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

**The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) has introduced new guidance in 2022 for corporate WASH actions and implementation associated with the AWS Standard 2.0.**

The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard) is a globally applicable framework for major water users to understand their water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently for sustainable water management within a catchment context. The Standard is intended to drive social, environmental and economic benefits by engaging water-users in understanding and addressing shared catchment water challenges as well as site water risks and opportunities.

### ABOUT THE AWS GUIDANCE ON WASH

The purpose of this guidance is to provide information and insights on how best to fulfil the requirements of the Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) Outcome of the AWS Standard V2.0. It reflects the requirements of the AWS Standard V2.0, and supplements the General Guidance to offer advice on how to achieve criteria and indicators in a way that is consistent with good practice on WASH. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the AWS Standard V2.0 and General Guidance.

**The guidance includes three sub-sections:**

SECTION 1: GATHERING AND UNDERSTANDING WASH DATA

SECTION 2: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING WASH ACTIONS

SECTION 3: EVALUATING AND DISCLOSING WASH ACTIONS

Access the AWS Guidance on WASH at: <https://a4ws.org/download/guidance-on-special-subject-wash/>.

## REFERENCES

- Reig, P., W. Larson, S. Vionnet, and J.B. Bayart. (2019). “Volumetric Water Benefit Accounting (VWBA): A Method for Implementing and Valuing Water Stewardship Activities.” <https://www.wri.org/research/volumetric-water-benefit-accounting-vwba-method-implementing-and-valuing-water-stewardship>.
- UNICEF and Global Water Partnership (GWP). (2017). WASH Climate Resilient Development. Strategic Framework. [https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/unicef-gwp/gwp\\_unicef\\_strategic\\_framework\\_web\\_artwork.pdf](https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/unicef-gwp/gwp_unicef_strategic_framework_web_artwork.pdf)
- UNICEF. (2020). UNICEF Guidance note. How UNICEF regional and country offices can shift to climate resilient WASH programming. <https://www.unicef.org/media/109006/file/UNICEF-guidance-note-climate-shift.pdf>
- Water.org. (2020). Increasing resiliency in the face of climate change. How WSS systems and financing can adapt to meet the challenge. [https://water.org/documents/248/Increasing\\_Resiliency\\_in\\_the\\_face\\_of\\_climate\\_change.pdf](https://water.org/documents/248/Increasing_Resiliency_in_the_face_of_climate_change.pdf)
- WaterAid, Diageo, The CEO Water Mandate, Alliance for Water Stewardship, WASH4Work. (2019). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Three Essential Ingredients to Resilient Agricultural Supply Chains. [https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Agri\\_Supply\\_Chains\\_Booklet.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Agri_Supply_Chains_Booklet.pdf)
- WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Gap Inc. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_GapIncCS\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_GapIncCS_ENG.pdf)
- WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Diageo. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_DiageoCS\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_DiageoCS_ENG.pdf)
- WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate Action on WASH in Supply Chains Case Study: Nestlé. [https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Corporate\\_action\\_on\\_WASH\\_Nestle\\_English.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Corporate_action_on_WASH_Nestle_English.pdf)
- WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, Pacific Institute, WBCSD, Water Witness International. (2017). Corporate engagement on water supply, sanitation and hygiene: Driving progress on Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) through supply-chains and voluntary standards. [https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17\\_PD9776\\_WA\\_WashReport\\_ENG.pdf](https://ceowatermandate.org/files/17_PD9776_WA_WashReport_ENG.pdf)
- WaterAid, The CEO Water Mandate, WBCSD. (2016). Scaling Corporate Action on Access to WASH in Supply Chains – White Paper. <https://ceowatermandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Scaling-Corporate-Action-on-WASH-in-Supply-Chains.pdf>
- WaterAid. (2018). Strengthening the business case for water, sanitation and hygiene: How to measure value for your business. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/strengthening-the-business-case-for-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-how-to-measure-value>.

- WaterAid, WASH4Work, Ekaterra, Unilever. (2022). Boosting business: why investing in water, sanitation and hygiene pays off. Tea estate in Kenya. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoof256/files/boosting-business-why-investing-in-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-in-kenyas-tea-estates-pays-off.pdf>
- WaterAid. (2021). Delivering a resilient supply chain: WASH self-assessment tools. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/delivering-a-resilient-supply-chain-wash-self-assessment-tools>
- WaterAid. (2021). Programme guidance for climate resilient WASH. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoof256/files/programme-guidance-for-climate-resilient-water-sanitation-and-hygiene.pdf>
- WaterAid. (2022). Integrating gender equality into water, sanitation and hygiene projects: Guidance for companies. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/integrating-gender-equality-into-community-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-projects>
- WHO, JMP, UNICEF. (2021). Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2020: Five years into the SDGs. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240030848>

# WASH 4WORK

---

More information about the WASH4Work initiative is available at [www.wash4work.org](http://www.wash4work.org).  
Contact the WASH4Work Secretariat directly at [secretariat@wash4work.org](mailto:secretariat@wash4work.org).