



**IRC**

IRC Global and Regional Programme  
5-Year Strategic Plan 2020-2024  
(narrative)

# Destination 2030

Supporting water sanitation  
and hygiene services for life

At IRC, we believe that turning on a working tap should not be a surprise or cause for celebration. We believe in a world where water, sanitation and hygiene services are fundamental utilities that everyone is able to take for granted. For good.

We face a complex challenge. Every year, thousands of projects within and beyond the WASH sector fail – the result of short-term targets and interventions, at the cost of long-term service solutions.

This leaves around a third of the world's poorest people without access to the most basic of human rights, and leads directly to economic, social and health problems on a global scale. IRC exists to continually challenge and shape the established practices of the WASH sector.

Through collaboration and the active application of our expertise, we work with governments, service providers and international organisations to deliver systems and services that are truly built to last.

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**About the cover image:** Joana Agyeman sells lunch to students of the Kenyasi I Anglican School in Asutifi North, where with the support of partners, over 90% of Asutifi North now have access to water services.

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**Cite this publication as follows:** Butterworth, J., Jaffrey, M., Nansi, J., and Shiva, R., 2021. IRC Change Hub Strategic Plan 2021-25. The Hague: IRC.

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## Foreword

IRC's Change Hub seeks to influence regionally and globally in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 6. It brings together our capacities in research and learning, as well as communications and influencing, and our regional units focused on Africa and Asia. Global and regional activities are typically undertaken jointly in collaboration with one or more focus countries, so this plan has been developed with consultation across the organisation.

This is the first medium-term plan to be implemented under our new Destination 2030 strategy, and we look forward to implementing many of the activities identified here in collaboration with Water for People. This partnership will enable us to increase the scope of programming in Latin America and in the Spanish language.

For the Change Hub,

**Marc Jaffrey** (Director, Communications and Influencing),

**John Butterworth** (Director, Research & Learning),

**Juste Nansi** (Director, Africa Regional) &

**Ruchika Shiva** (Lead, Asia Regional)

# Introduction

## Destination 2030

This 5-year strategic plan sets out how, with partners and allies, we aim to develop and use our influence to transform regional and global support to achieve universal safe water and sanitation services envisaged by Sustainable Development Goal 6 and as set out in our Destination 2030 vision.

We will champion the case for water, sanitation, and hygiene as a win-win for climate, health, and the economy and a means to accelerate national development.

We will challenge the status quo, influence leaders, and build new alliances to support people and partners to change the behaviours, relationships, and power dynamics that perpetuate inequity.

We will influence and help bring about transformational change in how services are provided for over two billion people who still lack safely managed water and sanitation across the globe through the promotion of social justice and the wider opportunities this brings to national development.

We will work with global and regional entities to promote strategies that successfully use the case for water, sanitation and hygiene with counterparts in related sectors like health, and at higher levels of decision making, for example, at Head of State and Cabinet level.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

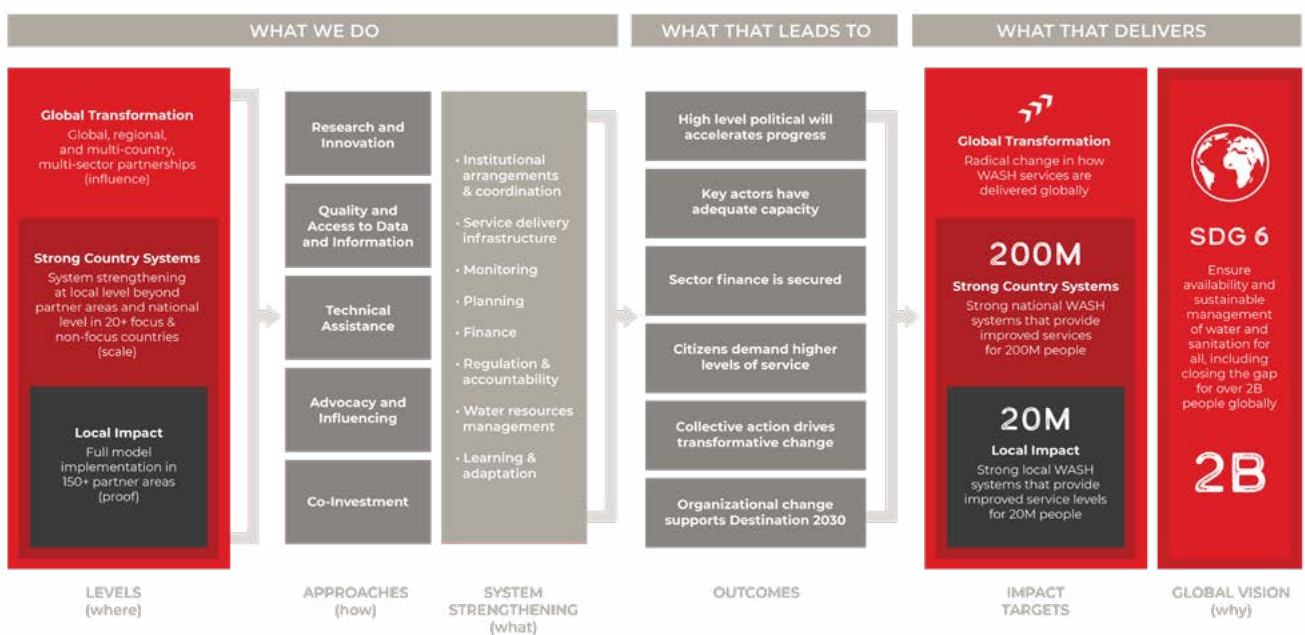


Figure 1. D30 theory of change

**Photo:** Tsegaye Yeshiwas, IRC Ethiopia and Jane Nabunnya Mulumba, Country Director of IRC Uganda meet at the All Systems Go Africa symposium.



As a widely recognised think tank we will provide evidence, tools and approaches needed to drive change and enable countries and their partners to strengthen the national systems that deliver water, sanitation and hygiene services at scale.

This plan guides our Global and African Regional Programmes. Regionally we have a main focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, but we will also incubate and integrate regional programming in South Asia and Latin America with our Destination 2030 partner, Water For People, under new regional influencing strategies. Envisaged joint activities with Water For People are set out in a complementary D30 Global and Regional Influence Plan.

### **The challenge**

We have less than 10 years to ensure that everyone in the world has access to lasting and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and thus meet Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6). Over two billion people remain unserved, and the standard and sustainability of existing services is inadequate. We are even losing momentum with the COVID-19 pandemic, and are facing major threats like climate change, armed conflict and racial inequality. We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.

We are making progress, but not fast enough. Our mission is to influence systems that reach over two billion people who do not have quality lasting water, sanitation, and hygiene services and we need political leadership to work with us so we can achieve this and move more families out of poverty, improve women’s safety and societal status, reduce child mortality,

get more children – especially girls – in school, and increase job opportunities and income generation. The solution lies in government-led systems with strong private sector support. Governments have the scale, financial muscle, and legitimacy to deliver water and sanitation services to everyone, forever. We envision a world where governments, businesses, and civil society have the skills, funding, and people to provide these services. Water For People and IRC are working to strengthen these systems.

### Emerging trends and key changes 2017-2021

As of 2020, two billion people lack safely managed water services (771 million people lack even basic water access) while 3.6 billion lack safely managed sanitation (1.7 billion lack even basic sanitation and hygiene access). Forty percent of health care facilities do not have basic hand hygiene facilities. Women and girls collect water in 80% of households, profoundly impacting their rights, education, and safety. In a fast-changing world – population growth, climate change, ecosystem fragility, and geopolitical tensions – we have only eight years to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The challenge is immense and highly complex. Much has already been done but despite progress, investment, growing expertise and collaboration at all levels, much of the world remains badly off track.

The water, sanitation, and hygiene sector suffer from weak systems and a lack of both high-level political will and accountability between actors at global, regional, and national levels. The result is policy and institutional fragmentation at all levels which hinders performance which in turn discourages investment. Yet there are pockets of excellence rooted in local and national governments, and vital partnerships with international institutions, investors, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Significant progress has been made in recent decades.



Photo: One For All employees gathered at All Systems Go Africa.

Changing demographics have major implications on service provision and those at risk of being left behind. Global population growth is slowing but remains high in Africa and parts of Asia and Latin America. By 2050, 68% of the world population is projected to live in urban areas – often in slums – with Africa becoming increasingly urbanised. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis have become powerful symbols of the complexity and urgency of today’s challenges. They clearly show the world’s connectivity, inequality, and vulnerability. They demonstrate the need for interconnected global action on major issues and the potential of what we can achieve together. And they show the huge risks in failing to do so.

### What the Destination 2030 Strategy means for our programme

The central challenge for the Global, Africa and Asia Regional Programmes is to raise the status of water, sanitation and hygiene globally and regionally and champion it as a route to social justice and overall national development. This means undertaking work (alongside our systems strengthening activities) that contributes to increased financing and continuous equitable improvement around long-term systems strengthening agendas. This in turn will lead to improved service delivery. Doing this requires us to:

- **Increase our influence:** to excel at driving transformational and catalytic change at global, regional and national levels; to build allies and influence key decision-makers beyond the WASH sector to champion our purpose and contribute to a movement for national systems strengthening, social justice and economic and national development.
- **Get better as a think tank at driving change:** fewer, more impactful, and better quality outputs; being nimble in picking up current critical themes; more driven by IRC’s global, regional and national audiences and influencing targets, activity and country need; improvements in research/data and using it as part of our influencing activities to key audiences; more multi-lingual outputs.
- **To decentralise, to increase our legitimacy, impacts and efficiency:** increase regional influence, southern voice and agency leading to more authentic campaigning, think tank and influencing activities and change leadership work. To use southern perspectives, voice and agency to challenge ongoing northern perspectives.

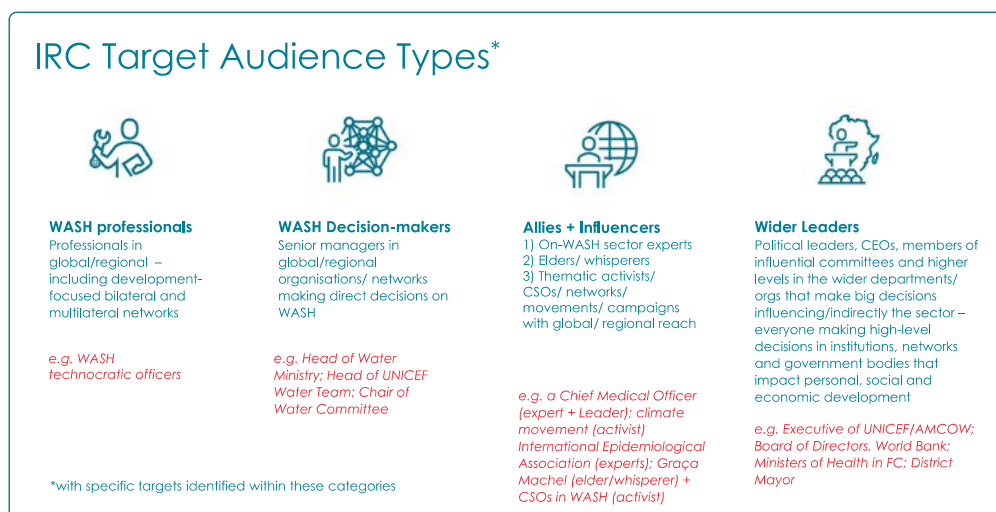


Figure 2. Reaching different audiences - IRC Target Audience Types\*



# Destination 2030 vision and strategy

## Global vision and objectives

We have committed to pursuing six main overall outcomes within our Destination 2030 strategy. These medium-term strategic objectives describe our ambition and focus for the period till 2025 under these outcomes:

### OUTCOME 1:

#### **High level political will for universal and sustainable access to water and sanitation services drives accelerated progress toward SDG 6.**

- Global, regional and national influencers (experts/activists) and wider leaders in climate, health, economic development and social justice actively champion the value of water, sanitation and hygiene, and are aware of IRC's mission and the D30 Alliance and the opportunities that come from a multi-sector systems approach to water and sanitation.
- IRC focus country directors and teams are connecting with political and power networks that drive the acceleration of the attainment of 2030 focus country objectives on finance and service delivery.
- Key regional political bodies in Africa (AMCOW and African Union) prioritise WASH and systems strengthening on their agenda with a stronger Africa Water Vision post 2025.
- The Government of the Netherlands is on track to meet the quantitative and qualitative targets of its 50-30 strategy and prioritises and takes up its leadership role for SDG 6 and systems strengthening within its foreign policy.

### OUTCOME 2:

#### **Key actors have the capacity to improve planning, service provision and regulation.**

- National WASH systems strengthened in at least 10 non-focus countries in Africa through capacity building, technical assistance, knowledge management and advocacy activities.
- 10,000 people completing WASH Systems Academy courses; and evidence of use of skills to strengthen systems. Academy content is adapted and enriched with learners in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- At least 10 countries (including their urban and rural utilities) demonstrate strengthened systems as a result of the support provided by our consultancy work/ TA, the District Master Planning Facility, the partnership for WASH systems in Africa with UNICEF and the partnership with the African Water Association for facilitating learning and knowledge management to urban and rural utilities.

## OUTCOME 3:

**Secure finance for the sector achieves SDG 6 and increases the value of public and private investments in resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene.**

- Strengthening of national WASH systems and financing is championed by major global WASH agencies and key allies from other relevant sectors, with examples of influencing and impacts related to IRC's think-tank and influencing activities.
- The African Development Bank (AfDB) as key regional financing instrument in Africa prioritises WASH investments and the WASH systems strengthening agenda to member countries with a stronger Africa Water Facility post 2025.
- IRC is a thought leader in financing WASH: in each focus country we have relationships with all relevant stakeholders (including national Public Development Banks and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)), and IRC in its hub position advises on the whole chain from developing master plans based on the needs of society to developing finance/ feasibility studies and the identification of bankable projects.

## OUTCOME 4:

**Citizens demand higher levels of service, more can pay their rates, and there are subsidies for those who cannot pay.**

- Capacity and voice are developed with civil society in our partner countries to influence systems change and hold service providers and authorities accountable for their roles in safely managed service delivery.
- Subsidy regimes are progressive and support the poorest and marginalised to realise their rights to safely managed services.

## OUTCOME 5:

**Collective action drives transformative change through stronger and more effective partnerships within and beyond the water, sanitation, and hygiene sector.**

- IRC's voice and convening power are strengthened by the influential partnership with Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and lead to further impactful global partnerships and alliances in health, climate and economic development, contribute critical evidence, and influence key national, regional and global leaders across relevant key sectors.
- Agenda for Change (A4C) members support each other in collaboration and encourage other systems actors to do the same in each country, ultimately supporting governments to lead achievements towards SDG 6.

# Organisational change and business development

## Intermediate outcome 6: changing ourselves

To change ourselves and strengthen our capacity to deliver the strategy:

### OUTCOME 6:

#### **Organisational change supports Destination 2030 - [includes improving our organisational performance, accountability, think-tank relevance and legitimacy]**

- IRC is a recognised think tank (on at least one independent list) and associated with driving systems thinking and change. Staff at all levels function as highly competent professionals with professional development support and are active in professional associations.
- The influencing team has the capacity, scale, ability and skills to undertake active strategic work in climate, systems building (based on real experience in government), health, economic development and water and sanitation in partnership with major decision-making entities.
- The communications team has capacity and skills to undertake effective marketing, corporate communications, press and PR and a range of social, corporate and fundraising campaigns.
- We have a more balanced mix of funding (more unrestricted) including raising funds from the public.
- IRC programme staff plan and report against the D30 outcomes; the assumptions in the D30 framework are clearly articulated and a learning agenda to assess them is followed.
- IRC has a strong updated brand identity and a coherent, related positioning for a shared D30 Alliance partnership sub-brand/identity.



**Photo:** Higher level delegation meet for the Country Dialogues theme at All Systems Connect symposium, highlighting country voices, sharing experiences across countries on their WASH development agendas and solutions.

**Photo:** The Honorable Abida Sidik Mia Minister of Water and Sanitation for Malawi speaking at the final day of the All Systems Connect symposium.



### Regional vision and objectives

The regional programme in Africa aims to grow and segregate from the Change Hub progressively by 2025, becoming a self-contained entity in the IRC network. This relates to the implementation of the IRC network agenda, especially the principle of subsidiarity, legitimacy and decolonising aid. This evolution will, for example, address the challenge of legitimacy for pushing transformation in regional entities such as the African Union, AMCOV, the African Development Bank or the African Water Association. The main changes entail a legal position in Africa with registration in one African country, the governance of this new entity with African individuals and organisations forming the governing bodies.

The regional programme in Asia aims to grow in the Change Hub as a small think tank rooted in Asia, but not necessarily as a self-contained entity registered in Asia. We aim to build on the foundation we have established in India and Bangladesh and to gradually grow our services beyond that base through consultancies and demand-based assignments. With India and Bangladesh being middle income countries, wherein the government is leading and playing a significant role in the WASH sector, we learned how and where civil society organisations – including IRC – can play a role, and how collaboration for influencing can be done to ensure key elements of the system like institutions, finance, and policy, are strengthened. Our main focus will be on (influencing for) WASH financing and institutional capacities.

### Our investments

To deliver, we have combined from the start of 2022 our previous Global Hub and Communications and Influencing Departments, while incubating and strengthening the capacity to deliver our Africa and Asia Regional Programme, within our Change Hub. We will work to exploit the opportunities that come from becoming a more robust networked organisation over the next five years.

### Our staff and office

Within the Change Hub, these earlier departments are now four staffing groups/ teams focused on: 1) Research and Learning (11 staff) and 2) Communications and Influencing (4 staff). We have also established a new 3) Africa Regional staffing group (5 staff) and Asia Regional staffing group (3 staff). We continue to host staff on behalf of international networks such as SWA and A4C, our 4) hosted staff group (8 staff). Associates are linked to each of these groups, providing additional flexible capacity and experience (10 associates). Interns provide further support to programmes and are a career development opportunity for professionals.

Together these staffing groups deliver two main programmes (Global and Africa Regional Programmes), provide leadership for two core organisation-wide functions: 1) our planning, monitoring, reporting and learning; 2) corporate communications and brand and deliver a series of main impact initiatives as well as implementing a wide range of projects from short-term consultancy assignments to multi-year research activities.

Our team is already virtual, working flexibly and actively across continents and practising approaches to embed core behaviours required to deliver a mature networked organisation.

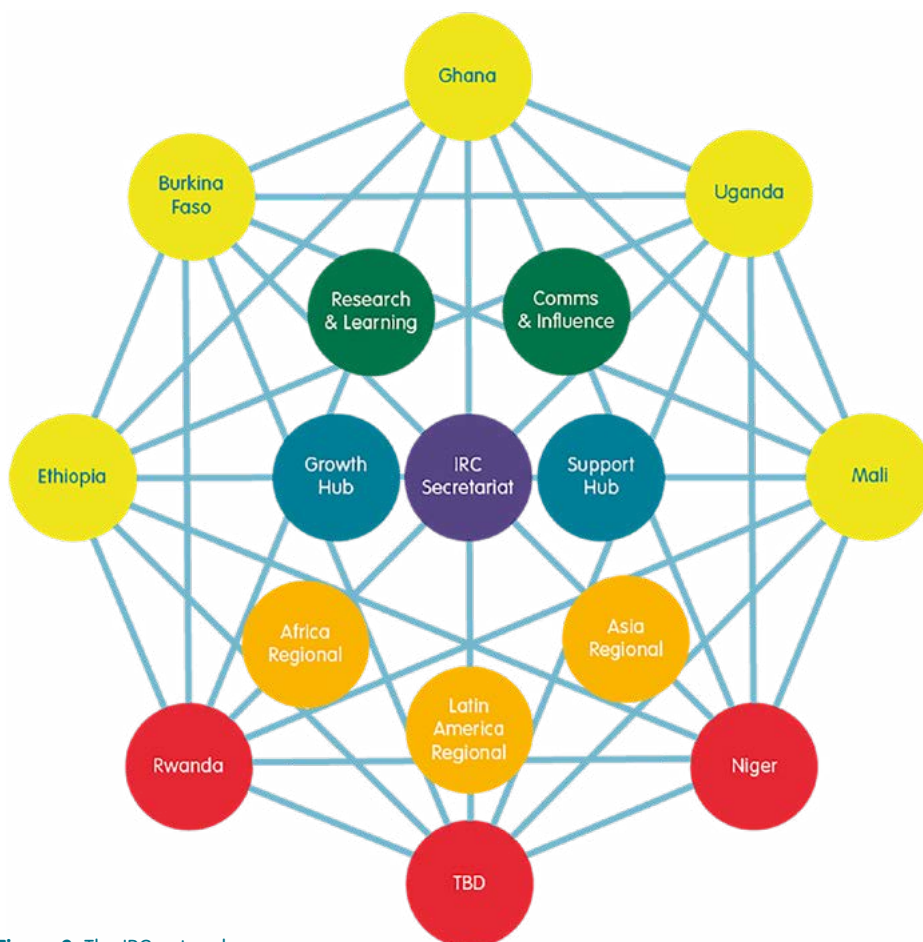


Figure 3. The IRC network

To achieve our 5-year strategy we know that we will need to significantly develop our influencing skills, experience and capacity and for our marketing and communications team to extend our brand reach, market awareness and our think-tank and change impacts.

To achieve these staffing and skills gains, the Change Hub will need to prioritise the strategic development of its business model. This will include internal staffing shifts, new programmatic grants linked to our influencing work and supporting the development of unrestricted funds to support marketing and communications needs. This work is urgent and will be immediately prioritised early in the 5-year strategy. If the goals of this work are not successful, we believe our capacity to deliver the outcomes and impacts of the strategy will be critically restricted.



ALL SYSTEMS CONNECT 2-4 MAY 2023 WORLD FORUM

DRAW UP!/DANIBAL

## Implementation of this plan

We will prioritise and organise around 13 main impact initiatives. These are:

1. **Africa Regional Influencing Programme:** influencing regional organisations in Africa.
2. **Partnerships for WASH Systems in Africa:** strengthening systems across 20 countries.
3. **High-level influencing:** influencing (national) political and financial leaders.
4. **CONNECT – climate<sup>1</sup>:** forging new partnerships in climate, developing strategic agendas around the nexus of climate and ‘water for people’ and seeking opportunities where we and allies can raise the value of WASH with wider climate champions (experts/activists), initiatives, and policy development.
5. **CONNECT – health:** forging new positioning for our WASH/health work with expert partnerships in health at global, regional and national levels and developing the nexus between health and WASH. Specifically introducing the new health thematic bridgeheads of systems, prevention and climate (impacts on health) to develop new health champions and work programmes (incorporating the ongoing work on health care facilities).
6. **CONNECT – economic development:** developing new partnerships with key experts and decision makers focused on economic development integrating WASH to wider national, regional and global economic development opportunities in order to drive finance.
7. **All Systems Connect Symposium (May 2023):** championing key 5-year strategy themes i.e., strengthening national systems for water, sanitation and hygiene services, and change through connecting WASH better with wider key development sectors.
8. **All Systems Go Africa Symposium (October 2022)**
9. **WASH Systems Academy:** developing capacity, skills and influence at scale on systems strengthening through online and blended learning.
10. **District Planning Facility:** promoting district-wide and long-term planning for universal services, connecting to and mobilising finance for water, sanitation and hygiene.
11. **Innovation and new knowledge development:** developing new themes, evidence and tools on systems for water, sanitation and hygiene services.
12. **Sector partnerships:** playing a leading or influential role in key partnerships i.e., Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), Agenda for Change (A4C), Water Finance Coalition (WFC) and a contributor to other leading partnerships in WASH.
13. **Advisory:** Delivering global/ regional and multi-country assignments that influence clients and their ability to impact on WASH systems.

This will be adjusted to integrate/ support the South Asia and Latin American regional programmes as these develop.

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<sup>1</sup> Connect initiatives (3): building partnerships, alliances and allies to influence decision-makers (WASH) and wider leaders (beyond WASH). Evolving over time and with future themes (e.g., education), and focused around an agenda for social justice and opportunity.

## Annex 1: Detailed targets

Code	Indicator Title	Indicator definition	2025 Target	Notes
<b>G.SYS.1</b>	WASH systems strengthening assignments completed	The number of assignments in WASH systems strengthening that have been completed. May be related to any aspect of WASH systems strengthening. Includes paid consultancy assignments and TA assignments outside of focus countries on WASH system strengthening (at local, national, regional, global level)	80	IRCs focus here is assignments delivered through consultancy and advisory arrangements for clients. We seek to deliver such assignments to strengthen the work of our clients. We take on such assignments selectively with an eye to our mission.
<b>G.SYS.2</b>	No of examples of WASH systems strengthening impact achieved with the contribution of alliance member TA	Number of examples of qualitative global WASH system-strengthening impact related to technical assistance activity; although defined as a number that will be a headline reported figure, the actual outcome descriptions will be the most valuable and a source for learning, communications, and decision making	10	Here we focus on the outcomes (mainly qualitative) relating to selected assignments reported under G.SYS.1. Focus on the most significant examples and outcomes.
<b>G.SYS.3</b>	No of examples of WASH systems strengthening impact achieved with the contribution of alliance member advocacy and influencing	Number of examples of WASH systems strengthening impact related to advocacy and influencing activity; although defined as a number that will be a headline reported figure, the actual outcome descriptions will be the most valuable and a source for learning, communications, and decision making	10	These assignments relate to the outcomes of other activities than assignments, related to our advocacy and influencing work.
<b>G.O2.1</b>	Think tank ranking	Number of alliance members ranked within top 50 under Environment, Health, or International Development, according to the Global Go Think Tank (or similar) report	Ranked within top 50	IRC to be one of those members
<b>G.O2.2</b>	Joint research capacity	Number of (reviewed) research and learning publications that are published jointly with more than one alliance member. Review is at minimum internal review by a named colleague. Research and learning publications contain (new) evidence or thinking or reflection i.e. not news articles or progress reports. May have multiple authors and may be led by other organisations/ authors.	None set	To also track for IRC publications without OFA partners.
<b>G.O2.3</b>	Research reach of research publications	Number of publications with annual Google scholar citations (already done for IRC since 2017, need to add WFP and other D30 partners)	1500	Between 2017 and 2020 this figure for IRC was 300-400 per year. Over 500 in 2021.
<b>G.O2.4</b>	# people completing a WASH systems academy course	Number of people who have completed at least one full WASH Systems Academy course	10,000 (with increasing % from governments in LMICs and women)	



Code	Indicator Title	Indicator definition	2025 Target	Notes
G.03.1	Number of costed national WASH finance strategies in place	This definition uses the SWA QIS 5 step assessment based on the following question: Are there costed multi-year financing strategies in place to increase funding to the sector and reach the country goals on WASH?		
G.03.2	Financial flow of transfers for WASH increase	This indicator is defined according to the context in each country. The methodology for aggregation of this data is under development and will be aligned to global standards.	An increase in WASH financial flows that is reflective of the scale of the WASH finance gap.	The indicator may be further refined in the coming years, in line with global best practices.
G.05.1	Evaluations of D30 alliance role in partnerships	Positive evaluations of D30 alliance role in key global and regional multi-stakeholder partnerships, processes and major events (did we have a substantial influence, was that positive, was it important to the development of the partnership etc). This assessment looks at the partnership role and performance at each level (local, national, global) . During the first measurement of this value, the contracted independent evaluator will set the specific criteria for assessment within this indicator.	10	To include SWA, A4C, WFC, RWSN, AMCOW etc where partnerships are further detailed through annual plans
G.05.2	Participation in global collaborations	Number of global-level collaborations, advisory boards, or networks that have influence on global, regional, or national level WASH policy and financing where alliance members hold official roles	X positive evaluations of D30 role (from SWA, A4C, AfDB, UNECA, RWSN etc.). Precise target to be set at baseline.20	

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