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Ensuring improved maintenance services through partnerships for rural water supply, Ethiopia

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unicef The UNICEF logo icon, which is a blue globe with a white silhouette of a mother holding a child.

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# Overview of rural water supplies in Ethiopia

- Over 200, 000 rural water schemes in Ethiopia: from points sources to rural pipe systems
- Reported access to rural water supply services is 59%
- Community management is the common management model with government support
- Average non-functionality is 19%, but disparity among different regions (subnational) is high, 17- 48%



# Key challenges in Rural water supplies

- Focus on new construction over sustaining services until recent years
- Lack of capacity (staffing, skills and logistics) to support maintenance and management at national and subnational levels
- Weak supply chain for spare parts and maintenance services
- Increase in number and complexity of rural water schemes
- Intermittent and uncoordinated intervention on strengthening maintenance services



# Efforts to strengthen rural maintenance services

- Issuing and endorsing policy documents: proclamation, regulations, Directives and strategic frameworks
- Pilot different maintenance arrangements including private business engagement
- Begun recruiting water extension workers at the kebele (sub-District) level
- Legalized institutional setup at community level (Water user associations, Federations, and Unions) towards professionalizing services including rural water utility setup



# Emerging partnerships on Rural water maintenance

- Learning and sharing including facilitated platforms at national and subnational levels
- Capacity building, action researches and documentation
- Joint planning, and execution of piloting maintenance arrangements
- Development of guidelines and rolling out Policy documents (proclamation, and regulations, directives)
- Financing/funding implementation of different maintenance arrangements



# Key partners at different levels

- Government
- NGOs
- Donors
- Privates businesses: spare part suppliers and maintenance service providers
- Community and community representatives: WASHCOs, Associations, Federations and Unions



# Efforts and partnerships in strengthening RWS maintenance

- **Development partners**
  - **Pilot private sector engagement: Setup, capacitate (technical, supplies and initial capital)**
  - **Implemented WASHCO legalization**
  - **Support and facilitate loan**
  - **Jointly with local government, monitor the performance of private business service providers**
  - **Strengthen WASH MIS at subnational level**
  - **Funding piloting and implementation**





## Examples of few pilots through partnerships

- **MoWE: Sustainability of WASH facilities through Micro and Small Enterprises**
  - Pilot in 47 Districts during 2017- 2021
  - Involved both maintenance enterprises and spare part supply enterprises
  - Targeted unemployed Women and Youths
  - Key partners: ministry of Water and Energy, Regional Water and Energy Bureaus, BoF, MFIs, TVETs and AfDB



# Examples of few pilots

- **SNV: restoring and sustaining functionality in Tigray (Phase 1) and Inspiring water entrepreneurship in Tigray (Phase 2)**
  - Piloted in 4+ 12 Districts
  - Private Local Service Providers -PLSP model and the CW Wahis Mai model)
  - Enhancing spare parts supply chain (setting-up spare parts revolving fund throughout the region)
  - Monitoring functionality (sensors and functionality log sheets)
  - Key partners: Water Resources Bureau of Tigray, Relief Society of Tigray (REST), District Water offices and Charity Water



# Examples of few pilots

- **IRC WASH: Sustainable WASH Learning partnerships**
  - Piloted in four districts during 2017- 2021
  - Facilitated and supported stakeholders engagement at local level
  - Supported asset management systems
  - Included training, follow up support to Water User Associations (WUAs) and Federations; and performance monitoring of WUAs
  - Key partners: Ministry of Water and Energy, Regional Water and Energy Bureaus, USAID, District WASH learning alliances



# Learnings

- Private service providers perform better in districts where they received support than where they did not; e.g. 22/34 Districts in Tigray supported under different projects
- Learning and sharing platforms smoothen communication among different actors laterally and vertically



# Conclusions and recommendations

- Availability of strong and capable (staffing, skills and logistics) intuitional arrangement is the foundation
- Operational coordination and learning platforms
- Support government-led initiatives to professionalize rural water services
- Continuous full-packaged support and coaching of community representatives and business enterprises
- Maintain right balance between community capacity building and private business engagement
- Proper documentation and sharing of practices: challenges and success
- Establish operational two ways communication (reporting and planning) between national and subnational



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