



## **Everyone Forever: Water For People's WASH system-strengthening model**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Impact Model .....	3
Theory of Change .....	3
A Systems Strengthening Approach.....	4
Pre-conditions and First Steps of the Everyone Forever Model.....	6
Key Model Components.....	7
Model Implementation.....	12
National and Global Scale.....	17
Case Studies .....	18

## Introduction

Since 2011, Water For People has implemented the Everyone Forever model in nine countries. We pivoted from working on a discrete project-by-project basis in 40+ countries to taking on the challenge of establishing sustainable services in entire districts. The Everyone Forever model is a system-strengthening approach to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), implemented at the district level with strategic influence to scale nationally. It predates but aligns with and reinforces the more recent [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 6](#) and [Sanitation and Water for All's Collaborative Behaviors](#).

Water For People's Everyone Forever model encompasses all WASH services, with water and hygiene interventions focused within specific geographic (district) boundaries and sanitation interventions facilitated within and outside of district boundaries, depending on market needs and opportunities. **Everyone** means that every community, family, school, and clinic in the districts where we work has access to safe and reliable WASH services. To ensure these services are sustainable, **Forever** means that the institutions, built on strong government partnership and co-financing from the start, are in place for services to continue without Water For People's continued direct support.

For water, three Everyone milestones must be reached. This means achieving universal coverage with an intermediate or high level of service in at least 90% of community water points, 95% of public institutions, and 95% of households. Reaching the Forever milestone means achieving an intermediate or high level of sustainability for eight indicators organized in three categories:

- **Service Authority:** The capacity of the Service Authority, or the entity responsible for ensuring the delivery of water services in a district, to manage, finance, and monitor water services in a district.
- **Service Provider:** The capacity of the Service Provider, or the entity responsible for day-to-day provision of water services, to finance, operate, and manage water services.
- **Water Resources Management:** The capacity of the responsible authorities to ensure the quality and quantity of water sources in a district over the long-term.

For sanitation, Everyone milestones include achieving a basic level of service in at least 90% of households, and a majority of sludge in the district is treated and disposed of safely. Reaching the Forever milestone means the district government adequately plans for, finances, regulates, and monitors sanitation services in the district.

We currently work in more than 35 districts and aim to reach 4 million people with reliable water services by 2021. In 2018, Water For People proved Everyone Forever is possible by achieving all Everyone and Forever milestones for water, for the first time ever, in San Pedro, Bolivia, where we are no longer actively participating or investing in water service delivery and are preparing to exit. Additionally, individual milestones have been achieved in nearly half of the districts where we work, showing steady progress toward Everyone Forever. We aim to reach the same 4 million people with basic sanitation services but not before 2021, as the global gap in sanitation services doubles that of water. Our goal for 2021 is to reach 2 million people with improved sanitation services, including populations in the districts where we work and other strategic market areas that are critical for achieving national scale.

This document outlines the main components of the Everyone Forever model, with the goal of encouraging other actors in the WASH sector to adopt a similar system-strengthening approach.

## Impact Model

The Everyone Forever model requires four forces working in concert to be successful:

- **Community:** Communities are the driving force behind the demand for reliable, quality WASH services, often through a request to the local government. They contribute financially and in-kind to water and sanitation infrastructure development and to the operation of services.
- **Government:** Governments promote and regulate services and co-finance infrastructure construction. Governments may promote market-friendly policies and help create supply chains and household demand for safely managed WASH services.
- **Market:** Market forces allow for the creation of WASH businesses, either through contracts to districts for water delivery or through businesses providing affordable sanitation products and services across the value chain. Growth in water and sanitation services is driven by market forces through increasing demand from households and the expansion of businesses to supply the services and products demanded, in a way that makes these markets work better for everyone.
- **Technical:** Technical forces allow for the use of appropriate, locally available technologies and skills to develop and manage WASH services for the long-term.

Figure 1: Water For People's Four Forces

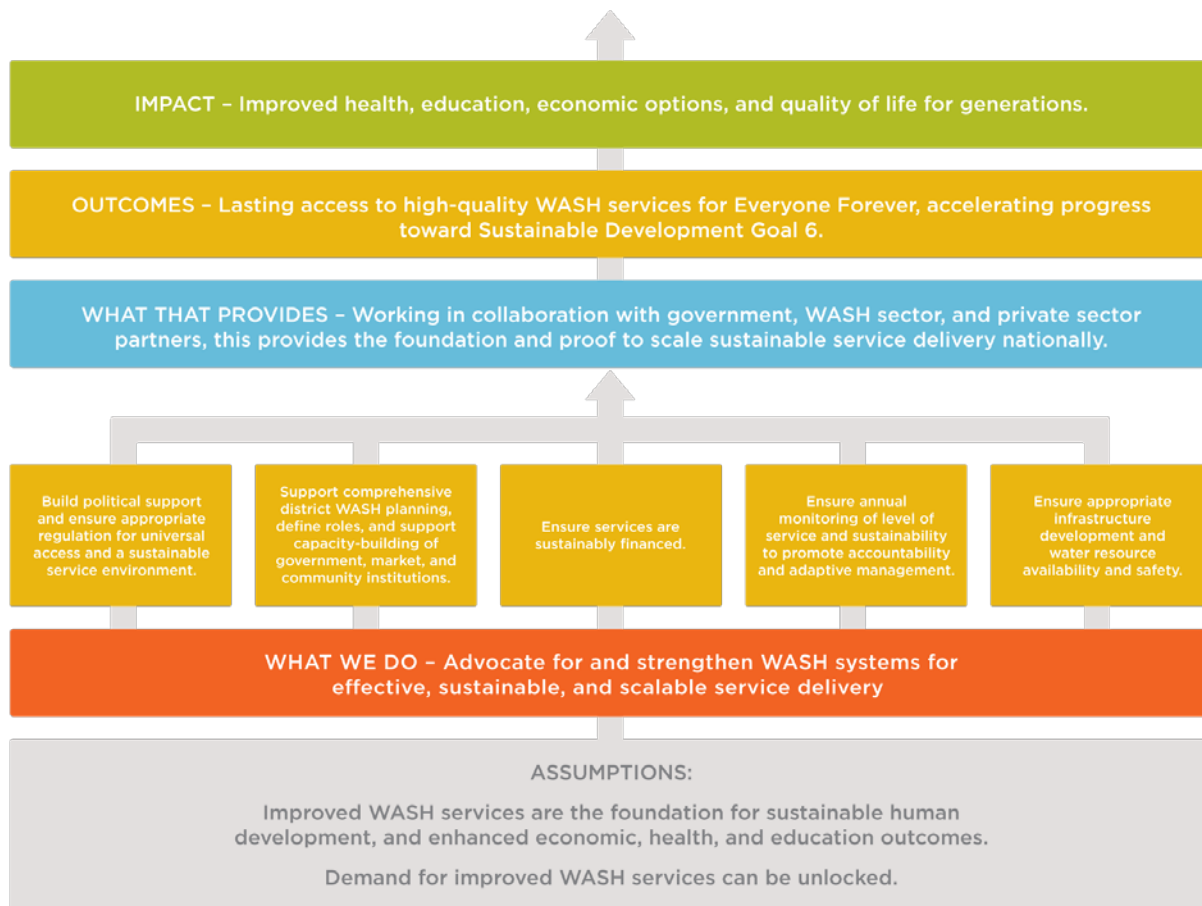


## Theory of Change

To achieve Everyone Forever goals and SDG 6, we advocate for and strengthen WASH systems for effective, sustainable, and scalable service delivery. This goes beyond infrastructure development to strengthening the entire WASH ecosystem, which includes:

- Building political support and appropriate regulation for universal access and a sustainable service environment
- Supporting comprehensive planning, defining roles, and supporting capacity-building of government, market, and community partners
- Ensuring services are sustainably financed considering full life-cycle costs
- Ensuring annual monitoring for adaptive management and accountability
- Ensuring appropriate infrastructure and water resource availability and safety

Figure 2: Water For People’s Theory of Change



These efforts, in collaboration with government, NGO, and private sector partners, provide the foundation and proof to scale sustainable service delivery nationally, leading to quality WASH services for Everyone Forever and accelerating progress toward SDG 6.

## A Systems Strengthening Approach

Like many other systems, WASH is a complex adaptive system made up of constantly interacting people, political and financial institutions, private companies, technologies, markets, and regulations. Adopting a ‘systems approach’ means going beyond infrastructure development to recognizing that strong WASH service delivery requires all of the **factors** (technology, financing, regulation, coordination, service provision, learning, accountability mechanisms) and **actors** (households, communities, public institutions, local government, national and state ministries, private companies, development agencies, politicians) to be in place and to work together effectively at all institutional levels.

Systems strengthening involves taking actions and supporting interventions to strengthen the factors, the capacity of actors, and their inter-relationships (i.e., improved access to information and the political economy of decision-making) that can improve the quality and sustainability of WASH services and ensure that all populations are served.

Agenda for Change, a collaboration of like-minded organizations who adopt common approaches to advocate for and support national and local public and private actors in

strengthening WASH systems, promotes [eight priority factors, which we identify as the building blocks for WASH systems:](#)

1. **Institutional arrangements and coordination:** The institutions related to service provision and service authority exist, are clearly defined, and have sufficient capacity. Coordination mechanism and coordinated sector action.
2. **Service delivery infrastructure:** Includes development and maintenance. Clear frameworks, capacity, and roles exist throughout the project cycle including procurement, construction, and asset management.
3. **Monitoring:** Monitoring frameworks exist and are being used to measure and report on the quality of services (service level) being delivered.
4. **Planning:** Clear frameworks exist for the development of plans and budgets at all levels as well as clarity and capacity for their development.
5. **Finance:** Clear frameworks exist for financing service delivery, including full lifecycle costs and clearly identified sources for each component.
6. **Regulation and accountability:** A clear regulatory framework exists, regulatory functions are clearly defined, regulatory capacity exists, and equity and accountability mechanisms are in place.
7. **Water resources management (WRM):** A clear framework for allocation and management of water abstraction and water quality exists and is being implemented.
8. **Learning and adaptation:** Capacity and frameworks exist to capture lessons learned and to adapt and update service delivery models and other building blocks in the face of change and lessons learned.

Figure 3: System-strengthening building blocks



As a founding member of Agenda for Change, Water For People promotes and facilitates each of these building blocks in implementation of the Everyone Forever model. Because we believe they are fundamental to achieving sustainable services across an entire district, Water For People's Theory of Change and each of the key components of our model detailed in the following two sections can be directly mapped to the eight building blocks.

Similarly, Water For People's Sustainable Services Checklist (detailed in the "Annual district-wide monitoring" section below) is used to evaluate the enabling environment for long-term WASH service provision and measures these building blocks from the perspective of service sustainability across a district.

Finally, Water For People recognizes that the WASH system does not operate in a vacuum and must consider the broader political economy and relationships with other sectors. To strengthen these eight building blocks, we partner with other ministries, including health and education, at the national level and with other partners within these sectors at all levels to develop a more complete understanding of the operating environment and achieve Everyone Forever.

## Pre-conditions and First Steps of the Everyone Forever Model

**District-level intervention:** Water For People works in a geographically defined region with the lowest level of formal government that is mandated to provide WASH services. For simplicity, we refer to this geographic region as a “district” regardless of what it is called within a country (such as a municipality or block). The district is the entry point for model implementation while simultaneously recognizing and supporting the broader national enabling environment.

**Market-based intervention:** Although the district is a key entry point for WASH services, markets are not contained within district boundaries, and our market-based sanitation initiatives operate both inside and outside the districts where the Everyone Forever model is implemented. These initiatives are tested and developed where market forces present the best opportunities to become sustainable and scale to a regional or national level.

**New district assessment:** When deliberating whether to enter a new Everyone Forever district, Water For People teams use a New District Assessment tool to evaluate strategic value, as well as logistical, political, and funding considerations. The assessment helps determine the degree of need for our support, the likelihood of effective partnership with local entities, the probability of success of the Everyone Forever model, and, ultimately, the risk and suitability of working in a new district.

**Political will & government ownership:** Government leadership at all levels is key to mobilize communities and resources to achieve universal access, as well as to ensure sustainability of services and advocate for national scale. Government leaders must be at the center of decision-making, with Water For People establishing trust and leading from behind.

**Shared vision for system strengthening:** Water For People supports a national WASH framework that promotes a comprehensive service environment, which can (and must) be adopted at the district level. This framework creates national support for all partners working in a district to promote the creation of service environments, not just infrastructure. Water For People hosts visioning workshops with the government, private sector, NGOs, and research institutions to review the Everyone Forever model and determine WASH needs, roles, and responsibilities of stakeholders. Success requires commitment by all actors to establish a strong service environment, regardless of political, socioeconomic, ethnic, or geographic differences in the district, which may have historically represented significant barriers to achieving universal and sustainable access.

**Baseline assessment:** Water For People facilitates baseline monitoring surveys and a needs assessment to understand existing WASH infrastructure location, condition and functionality, service levels, capacity and performance of service providers and the service authority, and water resources availability in each community in the district.

**Signed agreement:** Water For People signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the district government, with an agreement to reach Everyone Forever, clearly defined roles, and a commitment to co-finance. The MOU is ideally for a period of 5-10 years, based on the ambitious targets and the general timeline Water For People has historically observed as necessary to reach Everyone Forever. The MOU is often accompanied by an agreement from the relevant national Ministry to provide financial and technical support and may also include office space within the district government for Water For People team members or partners. MOUs are also signed with key partner authorities who engage in strategic geographies outside of Everyone Forever districts to address specific market challenges in sanitation service delivery (though usually for a shorter period of time due to the smaller scope of the partnership).

## Key Model Components

**Service authorities:** A strong and well-resourced service authority is the critical entry point and enabler to implement the Everyone Forever model, as it is absolutely critical for sustainability of services and Water For People's ability to eventually exit. The service authority is a local government entity mandated to ensure adequate WASH services in the district; they are responsible and accountable for overall WASH services, as well as support and oversight of providers. The entity can be a department within a regional or national government structure or a separate local entity. In rural areas, the service authority is typically a District WASH Office; in small towns and cities it is often a public utility or City Council. Where service authorities already exist, Water For People helps clearly define the roles and responsibilities and provides capacity-building support. Where they do not already exist, we support local governments to formally and legally create and strengthen the service authority as part of the permanent structure of the local government. Over time, service authorities must become fully functional and independent from Water For People (or other external) resources.

Water For People trains service authorities on a variety of topics including lifecycle costing and financing (capital and recurring costs and funding sources), engineering support (infrastructure design and execution), monitoring (levels of service, quality, sustainability, and water resources), planning, budgeting, and policy and regulation expertise, which ultimately positions service authorities to fully manage, maintain, and monitor access to comprehensive WASH services throughout the district, through oversight of and support to service providers.

Water For People strengthens the capacity of service authorities to support service providers, including the creation of appropriate mechanisms for oversight, ensuring accountability, and developing efficiency incentives through tariff and contractual arrangements. Water For People also facilitates local, regional, and national partnerships to ensure service authorities are equipped and supported to manage the entire service delivery environment.

**Service providers & management models:** Water service providers are legally responsible for water service delivery; managing day to day administration, operation, and maintenance of water supply systems; and maintaining sustainability over time. In most countries, service providers are defined by the national legal framework for water and sanitation. In rural areas, water service providers are often community committees, but may be small businesses contracted by district governments or the direct responsibility of local government in some contexts. In small town and cities, water service providers can be public utilities or community committees. Sanitation service providers include public entities responsible for waste collection and treatment as well as private entrepreneurs that respond to demand within and outside of district boundaries.

In close collaboration with service authorities, Water For People helps clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the service providers, provides training on a range of topics (including rate setting, tariff collection, and basic financial management), and develops accountability mechanisms to ensure high-quality water and sanitation services. Water For People works with government and private sector partners to determine and facilitate management models appropriate for each district's context. We facilitate strong service provider structures and partnerships. We facilitate associations of pit emptiers and other sanitation entrepreneurs, WASH Boards with leaders from various sectors (e.g., health and education), and Hand Pump Mechanics Associations to provide day to day repair services.

**Water service delivery infrastructure:** Water For People aims to increase service levels and facilitates the delivery of services through local service authorities and providers, building their capacity to design, build, and operate reliable water services rather than implementing the



projects directly ourselves. We make formal legal agreements with district authorities for staffing, design, construction, commissioning, and capacity-building activities. Depending on the context of each district, infrastructure projects may include construction or rehabilitation of boreholes with community hand pumps or kiosks, pumped or gravity-fed piped water systems with community or household taps, or individual household solutions such as rainwater harvesting tanks. Public institutions either tap into a community water system or have separate boreholes or rainwater catchment systems. To accommodate district budgets and co-finance arrangements, infrastructure work is usually phased to begin work while mobilizing communities and partners.

**Sanitation service delivery infrastructure:** Our approach to sanitation services is focused on moving populations up the sanitation ladder toward safely managed services in a sustainable way. It includes efforts within the geographic boundaries of the Everyone Forever districts, city- and town-wide inclusive sanitation, as well as market-based initiatives both inside and outside of Everyone Forever districts (as markets are not defined by administrative boundaries). Sanitation infrastructure in the contexts where we work includes various types of improved toilets with onsite disposal in dispersed rural communities, toilets with pit-emptying services in more densely populated areas, and toilets with septic tanks or sewer networks in small towns and cities. Beyond improved toilets, sanitation infrastructure also includes development of pit-emptying technology, sludge transfer stations, and connections to sewer networks, as well as infrastructure for fecal sludge and wastewater treatment and reuse. Infrastructure is contextualized to community needs, gaps in the market, and capacity of local actors.

**Sanitation market systems development:** Water For People pursues the development of sanitation services by rethinking and experimenting with sanitation services through market systems development, which is based on the principle that on-site sanitation at scale can only be achieved and sustained through tapping into the potential of the local private sector. Based on market opportunities, Water For People supports private sector initiatives to develop, test and refine sanitation products and services (from idea testing to market testing to scale) with the goal to scale nationally. Within Everyone Forever districts, we work with local government and private sector partners to adapt and offer these contextualized solutions that allow households to invest in their chosen sanitation solutions.

**Figure 4: The Sanitation Value Chain**



We support government and private sector partners to foster a market of sanitation products and services across the entire sanitation value chain, including:

- Market system analysis to develop an in-depth understanding of how all parts of the sanitation ecosystem interact with each other and identify the root causes of gaps in safe sanitation access. Before brainstorming solutions, we brainstorm the actual problems.

- Mobilization and marketing efforts to increase demand for safe and affordable products and services.
- Supply chain initiatives that build sustainable markets for safe and dignified toilets, affordable for people of all income levels. This work typically revolves around innovation in toilet design, decreasing production and distribution costs, and supporting growth of local businesses to reach customers in underserved markets with these products.
- Finance initiatives to break down economic barriers to sanitation. For households, this includes the creation of sanitation-specific loans through microfinance institutions and the development of local government incentives that provide public sector funds to offset the cost of toilets for households. For sanitation businesses, this involves measures to increase their access to loans and public sector investment to start, grow, and expand their businesses to underserved areas.
- Fecal sludge management initiatives to ensure that when toilet pits and septic tanks fill, the waste can be hygienically emptied and transported off-site to undergo treatment for safe disposal or, increasingly, reuse as fertilizer or energy sources for heating and cooking. These initiatives involve the growth and development of entrepreneurs for pit emptying in underserved areas, integration of technologies for pit emptying in areas that vacuum trucks cannot reach, design of centralized and decentralized waste treatment plants with sustainable management models, and the development of businesses to recycle treated fecal waste and repurpose it as fertilizer or fuel sources.

Across all activities, Water For People encourages, supports, and works with the government to regulate any health risks associated with sanitation products or services. **With private sector partners**, Water For People provides third-tier support; that is, at least two organizations are in the implementation process between Water For People and the household. For example, Water For People supports a pit-emptier association (first tier), which in turn supports pit-emptying businesses (second tier), which in turn provide services to the households.

**Hygiene & behavior change:** We work with community groups, local leaders, schools, and health clinics to implement health and hygiene behavior change education and communication campaigns to promote safe water, hygienic toilets, and handwashing. We also work with these groups on the sustainability of hygiene practices in educational establishments. Water For People works with district education and health department staff to lead WASH efforts in health care facilities and handwashing with soap initiatives in schools. We support a variety of school WASH interventions, including school hygiene clubs, menstrual hygiene management supplies and training, hygiene corners and games, and parent groups. We work with district partners to develop social art initiatives for behavior change such as murals, street plays, film shows, multi-disciplinary shows, storytelling, and community theater. We also identify and engage community leaders (such as village chiefs, religious leaders, and students) to influence behavior change. In some contexts, we also work with community groups such as Community Health Clubs to encourage uptake and dissemination of the best WASH practices within communities.

**Community engagement and feedback mechanisms:** Water For People works with District WASH Offices to facilitate sensitization meetings with communities to overview the model, gather input, and identify Everyone Forever champions. Together with government partners, we engage with communities to encourage active voice and ownership of the program. Some teams have developed community scorecards and user feedback tools to enable community members to voice concerns. These platforms can be developed over time to provide early warning of service failure and enhance service provider and authority accountability. Water For People teams conduct ongoing mapping and identification of stakeholders to address and respond to different challenges.

**Co-finance:** Commitment by government partners to long-term, joint funding throughout a program's lifecycle is critical from the onset. This includes formal agreements between Water For People, the district government, and communities to co-invest funds for capital expenditure investment in infrastructure. Water For People's percentage share varies from country to country based on need and context, but ideally is as low as possible and decreases over time. Typically, households pay for household water connections and sanitation facilities, and may also make in-kind contributions via construction materials and labor. Governments and communities then make arrangements to cover full lifecycle costs, including O&M, capital maintenance expenditure, and direct support (government appropriation of staff and costs to perform required functions). For example, users pay water tariffs (that cover the true cost of water service delivery, repairs, and a portion of eventual system replacement) and the service authority budgets for the gap in capital replacement and expansion costs.

**Full lifecycle costing:** Water For People developed a set of tools in Excel to calculate full lifecycle costs for high quality, sustainable water services. The costing tools are used together with the Asset Analysis, an inventory of water infrastructure assets and georeferenced location, age, and condition to plan, prioritize, and budget for future rehabilitation and replacement.

A tool called AtWhatCost helps define or adjust the tariff by calculating the costs to operate, maintain, and eventually replace or expand a water system. Tariffs are often approved at community meetings and through council resolutions passed by politicians, and this tool provides a realistic basis for these conversations. Water For People also promotes the installation of micro-meters to promote pay-per-use and adequate tariff collection.

The Direct Support Costs tool helps budget for district technical personnel and the time required for these personnel to provide technical assistance to communities. The Historical Investment tool, District Financial Sustainability Scorecard, and any other district-specific costing tools help district governments plan and budget for all costs necessary to maintain an adequate service delivery environment.

Although these tools are currently focused on water services, we are working to adapt them to sanitation services, particularly for fecal sludge and wastewater treatment plants. We also help develop business plans for private service providers, supporting them to understand how best to improve their operational and financial efficiency and overcome constraints to growth.

**Water Resources Management:** Water For People works with district governments to improve the quality and quantity of drinking water through source protection, treatment, and demand control, along with establishment of monitoring and planning tools that allow WRM priorities to be incorporated in WASH decision-making. Key WRM planning tools that are implemented in Everyone Forever districts include WRM inventories, flow monitoring systems, water quality testing, hydrologic and hydrogeologic studies, and district WRM plans that identify key priorities and conservations measures. Planning is aligned to broader catchment management activities happening in the region that often extend beyond a specific Everyone Forever district boundary. In addition to protecting drinking water sources upstream, WRM planning also requires attention on downstream impacts from insufficient sanitation services that contaminate shallow groundwater and surface water due to poor pit design, untreated wastewater, and illegal dumping. Depending on the district's context, priorities may include source catchment demarcation, reforestation, erosion control, wetland rehabilitation, groundwater recharge, development of water safety plans, establishment of district-level water quality labs, promotion of affordable water quality testing and treatment, wastewater treatment improvements, increased consideration of climate risks in water and sanitation infrastructure design, engaging in the implementation of broader catchment management plans, and water metering.

**Annual district-wide monitoring:** Water For People works with district partners to collect a consistent set of district-wide data annually. These data go beyond evaluating infrastructure functionality to assessing levels of service, the capacity of institutions, and service sustainability. Water For People is tool-agnostic, promotes government-led monitoring, and advocates for the development of a national WASH Management Information System to promote transparency and accountability nationwide. We work with district, regional, and national governments to support existing monitoring systems and timelines, identify opportunities for new systems or metrics, and build capacity for governments to lead all monitoring efforts for WASH level of service and sustainability. While utilization of government-led monitoring systems is the goal, the reality is that these systems do not yet exist in many of the countries where we work, so we partner with district governments to monitor according to our [Monitoring Framework](#).

For service level monitoring, we use a mobile data collection platform to conduct surveys and measure levels of service at community (water point), public institution, and household levels, as well as progress toward our Everyone milestones for water and sanitation. Enumerators are selected, hired, and trained by government partners with Water For People's support to collect survey data. We also support the development of systems to organize, clean, and use the data for various analyses. Household and community level data are aggregated and consolidated to review progress at district level. This collection and analysis of level of service data is needed for routine data-based decision making and prioritization of investments.

To monitor sustainability, our two Sustainable Services Checklists measure progress toward our Forever milestones for water and sanitation. The Sustainable Water Services Checklist includes eight indicators within three categories: service authority structure, finance, management, and monitoring; service provider structure, finance, and O&M; and WRM. These indicators measure across the system-strengthening building blocks, and include questions on equity and inclusion. The Sustainable Sanitation Services Checklist includes three service authority indicators: structure and management, finance, and monitoring. Over time, we will incorporate indicators of sustainability with local actors across the value chain. Sustainable Services Checklists are completed annually with data from two different sources: service provider surveys and interviews with district partners to inform service authority and WRM indicators. Water For People is also promoting a building block analysis to assess the strength of the WASH sector or system at the national level. In this way, the Sustainable Services Checklists and building block analysis can be used as an advocacy tool and an embedded monitoring tool.

Reaching and celebrating the Everyone and Forever milestones for water and sanitation becomes a tipping point for a given district, spurring increased motivation and investment from district, state, and national governments.

**Reflection & adaptive management:** Following the annual monitoring process, data is disseminated at various levels for decision making and action planning. Water For People works with government partners to hold annual Reflection Sessions in all Country Programs, with participation from various government, community, public institution, and private sector partners. The purpose is to engage these stakeholders to review monitoring data, gauge progress toward goals in district WASH plans, identify successes and barriers, assess our collective impact, note lessons learned, set future priorities and work plans with service authorities, and improve our plan to reach effective and sustainable service delivery, including planning for Water For People's exit. These sessions double as capacity-building exercises, helping districts and service authorities prepare to eventually take over monitoring.

Water For People also promotes learning forums and exchange visits with stakeholders at district, regional, and national levels.

**District WASH planning:** Water For People works with the local government service authority to develop a District WASH Plan that ideally includes district-level targets, financial and operational plans to help determine the cost of reaching Everyone in a district by a target date, budget allocations required to maintain a District WASH Office and dedicated staff and manage the service delivery environment, water resources mapping and management plans, opportunities for using business approaches to improve sanitation services, and District Investment Plans for covering full lifecycle costs of sustaining water and sanitation systems. Districts often start with plans focused on designs and capital expense to reach full coverage and evolve over time to more holistic plans that consider full lifecycle costing and the other system-strengthening building blocks.

This plan allows for resource mobilization to implement elements of the plan annually and helps balance service delivery with strengthening service provider and authority capacity.

**WASH policy influence:** Water For People influences and advocates at district, regional, and national levels to develop or change policies that allow for a high-quality and sustainable service delivery environment. Policies might include recognizing a district-wide, system-strengthening approach in the national water strategy, mandating each district to establish a District WASH Office, establishing WASH Boards, discouraging shallow wells as an unsustainable technology, prohibiting illegal dumping of sludge, promoting pay-as-you-fetch models, and requiring a certain budget allocation from all departments for natural resources activities.

## Model Implementation

The Everyone Forever model components are implemented in phases, achieving key milestones in each phase before moving to the next. Our Road to Everyone Forever serves as the implementation roadmap for water, sanitation, and hygiene services within Everyone Forever districts. Achieving all milestones along this road is our proof that Everyone Forever is possible at a district level. This proof at the district level is the key for national- and global-level replication and scale because we believe the district is the scalable unit. We have confidence that the district is the appropriate scalable unit for water but have learned we cannot make this assumption for sanitation because market-based initiatives, which are so critical for sanitation, rarely align to district boundaries. We must consider other scalable units for sanitation and apply additional criteria for proof. Therefore, we apply a complementary phased framework for proving sanitation initiatives are scalable, which is also presented in this section. We apply this framework in and outside of Everyone Forever districts.

### *Road to Everyone Forever for Water and Sanitation in Everyone Forever Districts*

Figure 5 and the corresponding detail below describes the roadmap for implementing sustainable WASH services within Everyone Forever districts. The Everyone and Forever milestones for water and sanitation on the roadmap reflect the necessary progress for moving from one phase to the next and exiting a district.

**Figure 5: Water For People’s Road to Everyone Forever for WASH Services in Everyone Forever Districts**



### Phase 1: Building Everyone Forever

During this phase, Water For People works with district government partners to lay a foundation for a sustainable service ecosystem to achieve Everyone Forever. This includes the baseline assessment to prioritize initial needs; establishing the service authority, service provider, and all institutional arrangements; developing and executing the District WASH Plan and WRM Plan; designing, building, and rehabilitating water infrastructure; capacity-building for the service authority, service provider, water committees, communities, sanitation entrepreneurs, schools, and health centers; conducting financial assessments (using the Asset Analysis, AtWhatCost, Historical Investment, Direct Support Costs, and District Financial Sustainability Scorecard tools) to ensure sustainable tariffs and financing; and conducting annual level of service and sustainability monitoring to measure progress and strategically plan to reach Everyone Forever. It is important to note that we do not focus first on infrastructure and level of service and then sustainability (as a linear process); rather, elements of Everyone and Forever are implemented simultaneously to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable service environment.

*Before moving to the Forever Focus phase, all three Everyone milestones for water must be reached. This means achieving an intermediate (yellow) or high (green) level of service in at least 90% of communities, 95% of public institutions, and 95% of households, as verified in the annual monitoring processes. Additionally, the Everyone milestone for sanitation in public institutions - achieving an intermediate (yellow) or high (green) level of service in at least 95% of public institutions - must be reached.*

### Phase 2: Forever Focus

Having achieved all three Everyone milestones for water, Water For People’s focus in this phase is to achieve sanitation milestones (as these typically require more time and less infrastructure investment) and continue strengthening the already-established actors and factors of service delivery and to equip service authorities to take ownership of the full WASH system. With less focus on infrastructure and decreased direct investment, Water For People has more

capacity to focus on institutional strengthening and advocacy, continued capacity building, and annual monitoring and reflection. The goal is for service authorities have full responsibility to manage assets, conduct annual monitoring, lead investment planning, facilitate WRM planning, set sustainable tariffs, train service providers to keep water and sanitation systems running, develop a user feedback system to respond to issues, ensure intermediate or high levels of service, and develop sustainable supply chains for spare parts and sanitation products and services. This phase culminates in achieving the Forever milestones for water and sanitation (indicating that a district has established sustainable services), as demonstrated by the Sustainable Services Checklists. This means that services are sustainable, and systems can be operated and maintained to achieve high-quality services without involvement from Water For People or any other international NGO.

*Before moving to the Transition to Exit phase, service levels must be maintained, and the Forever milestone for water must be reached. This means achieving an intermediate (yellow) or high (green) level of sustainability for each of the eight indicators on the annual Sustainable Water Services Checklist: service authority structure, finance, management, and monitoring; service provider structure, finance, and O&M; water resources management.*

*Additionally, the remaining two Everyone milestones for sanitation must be reached, along with the two Forever milestones for sanitation. This means at least basic (orange) level of service in at least 90% of households and sludge produced from 75% of families in the district is safely managed, as verified in the annual monitoring processes. For the Forever milestones, districts must achieve an intermediate (yellow) or high (green) level of sustainability for each of the three indicators on the Sustainable Sanitation Services Checklist: service authority structure and management, finance, and monitoring. They must also meet indicators for an increasing trend in demand, use, and availability of high-quality bathroom components, as assessed in annual monitoring surveys.*

*Finally, by the time a district reaches all Everyone milestones, we must confirm that even the hardest to reach populations have access to high-quality WASH services by conducting an Equity and Inclusion Validation. Districts must verify that any remaining households that lack access to WASH services a) are not from the most vulnerable or excluded population groups, OR b) it is the result of their own choice. We must confirm that households in the remaining 5% (for water) with an inadequate level of water service (red) or no improved water system (black) do not represent the most excluded or vulnerable population groups, or that they have chosen not to connect to an available improved water system. And that households in the remaining 10% (for sanitation) with an inadequate level of sanitation service (red) or no improved sanitation service (black) do not represent the most excluded or vulnerable population groups, or that they have chosen not to access improved sanitation services.*

### **Phase 3: Transition to Exit**

During this phase, Water For People takes a hands-off approach, serving in a consultative role, with no direct investment. This phase is estimated to last three to five years, but the duration depends on whether service levels and sustainability are maintained. We are available to districts in an advisory capacity and offer monitoring support and review. We use this phase to provide short-term support to districts after achieving Everyone and Forever milestones in preparation for successful exit. This allows for monitoring “shocks to the system” (political or administration changes, natural disasters, socio-political crises) to ensure systems are resilient and institutions can re-build without intervention. We review monitoring data for levels of service and sustainability indicators to ensure Water For People can fully exit a district without a negative impact on service delivery.

Before fully exiting a district, levels of service and sustainability must be maintained, and a set of exit criteria established in collaboration with district partners (e.g., user satisfaction metrics) must be reached.

#### Phase 4: Exit

At this point, the district has achieved the exit criteria and Water For People leaves the district, and no remaining investment or support is planned. The handover to district partners is complete, with the service authority fully funding, managing, and monitoring the WASH service environment. It is the moment when we are confident services will be sustained over the long term with adequate infrastructure, institutions, and financing. The district WASH office does not depend on Water For People.

#### Framework for Proving a Sanitation Initiative is Scalable

Figure 6 presents the framework that is applied to our market-based sanitation work, *in addition* to the water and sanitation work we implement in Everyone Forever districts. Water For People evaluates the gaps that exist in the sanitation value chain, where the market is not adequately serving a population with safe services, and identifies opportunities to develop and strengthen delivery models for products and services. Sometimes, this means developing core services where there are none, such as facilitating the emergence and growth of pit emptying businesses to service households that have no service. As market systems develop, this more often means strengthening and improving the efficiency of core services, such as supporting an association of pit emptying businesses for the overall growth and sustainability of the services in that market.

**Figure 6: Water For People’s Framework for Proving Scalability of Market-Based Initiatives**



#### Stage 1: Idea Testing

Systems that provide sanitation services can be very thin, highly fragmented, and inefficient, but they do exist, and this is the foundation on which better quality services must grow. Water For People creates and develops potential solutions to improve these systems from an understanding of household consumers, existing technologies and practices, government attitudes, and the wider market system. Successful initiatives respond to what consumers will want, use, maintain, and pay for, are appropriate to the local context, and add value to the way the households manage their sanitation facilities.



Water For People uses the principles of human-centered design to create or re-design products and services that are specifically designed for the poor. While this is often a high-risk/high-reward process, idea testing is designed to encourage experimentation without worrying about failure. The key is to fail fast and carry the lessons forward.

At this stage, teams decide whether to abandon the development process and document the lessons learned to ensure others do not waste their time and efforts on the failed idea. The ideas with the highest potential and technical feasibility will be moved on to the market testing stage to test the idea's sustainability within the actual market or government system. Stage 1 results in a prototype or delivery model with the potential to scale in the market testing stage. At this point, Water For People remains firmly in control of the process and maintains strategic and intellectual control.

### **Stage 2: Market Testing**

In the market testing stage, Water For People tests whether a sufficient number of consumers will like and value the sanitation product or service, if service providers are willing to risk their own time and money to make it work, and if it can be made into a commercially sustained process. This stage is characterized by Water For People having a direct relationship with one or two first movers to gain a better understanding of the systemic conditions and economic constraints. By working at a level more distant from the customer and not engaging in direct implementation, our interventions are better designed for the context and more likely to sustainably scale in later phases of the program.

For businesses, we carefully select a first-mover entrepreneur to pursue the opportunity and support them in marketing their services and finding customers. Then, the entrepreneur tries to earn sufficient income from sales to consumers and with as little interference from Water For People as possible, as our role shifts to one of monitoring performance and identifying further areas of refinement and iteration. Our goal is to never form a part of the supply chain, as our active involvement as a visible partner creates dependency and makes our eventual exit nearly impossible.

For processes more centered about community mobilization, we build relationships with the partner institution(s) responsible for implementing sanitation services or programs. We influence the partner's capacities and incentives in such a way to tailor solutions to sanitation systems that will be institutionalized in the system after Water For People's exit. Advocacy efforts are often a focus in these interventions, encouraging similar players to replicate the process that has already proven successful in Stage 1.

It takes some time before entrepreneurs, customers, and government officials are sufficiently confident to expand the initiative and enter it into the scaling process. Some initiatives will not prove to be viable, and this is part of a valuable learning process.

### **Stage 3: Scale Testing**

In this stage, Water For People facilitates five scaling strategies, summarized as:

- Achieve scale through big actors
- Work with first movers to create a demonstration effect
- Actively support second movers
- Create or strengthen supporting functions
- Strengthen and reform rules and regulations

While the approach to scaling is country and context specific, most of the strategies are based on the principle of crowding in: new entrepreneurs independently decide to start their own

sanitation businesses and meet what they consider to be a growing customer demand. New government institutions realize the success of the intervention developed and decide to adopt it. All actors are adapting the intervention that Water For People initially supported more heavily, because ownership and control lies with them. This is often accompanied by a more intensive evaluation on inclusion of vulnerable groups and exploration of suitable mechanisms to reach those groups.

During this stage, Water For People shifts from having a direct relationship with individual implementers to supporting the industry as whole. This may include influencing the policy and regulatory environment, marketing, and developing financing channels between entrepreneurs and commercial lenders. The aim is to develop a competitive environment where there is incentive and capacity to improve and expand service delivery.

#### Stage 4: Scale

During this stage, Water For People has met the scaling criteria and continues to support the monitoring process to understand whether the process is actually scaling (the number of customers is increasing) and whether Water For People has a role with furthering market penetration or expanding to new markets. The process of proving scalability including these four stages can take four to seven years.

Water For People assists these scalable sanitation initiatives to both *scale up* (increase market penetration or sub-populations reached) and *scale out* (replicate the approach in new markets and locations). When Water For People can no longer provide value to scaling the impact of an initiative, or when other partners are better suited to drive the process, we can consider exit.

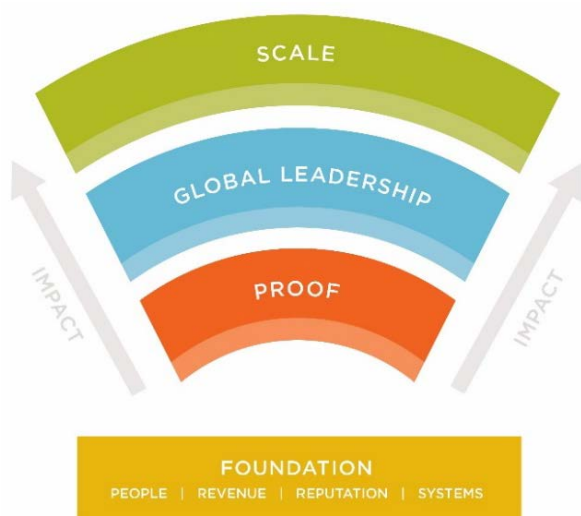
#### National and Global Scale

Our work does not stop once we prove our model at the local level. Proof at the local level is the starting point and foundation for reaching scale at a national and global level as shown in Figure 7.

#### Global Leadership

We share lessons learned and proof that the Everyone Forever model is working widely with sector partners with the aim of replication and scale by district, sub-national, and national governments and private sector players. We use data and experience to document learnings and systematize our overall approach. We share content on various platforms including numerous sector conferences. We also collaborate with other like-minded organizations to broaden our reach as we promote the Everyone Forever model and system-strengthening approaches and as we challenge ourselves and the sector to continually reflect and evolve. Some example collaborations at the global level include Agenda for Change and Millennium Water Alliance. Additionally, we are involved in numerous national platforms and collaborations in each of the nine countries where we work.

Figure 7: Water For People's Impact Model



## Scale

Our goal is that system-strengthening approaches are taken up in additional districts, markets, and countries where Water For People does not work, driven by advocacy of current partners and local demand by other (often neighboring) districts, markets, and countries. We look for ways to expand our reach and impact beyond the local district and market areas where we work. We offer consultancy services, we support replication efforts in other districts or market areas, and we work directly with governments at the sub-national and national levels. Examples of our work that build from success at the local level to reach a sub-national or national level include:

- Bolivia - Working with the Department of Cochabamba to support multiple municipalities with a package of support to establish district WASH offices.
- Peru – Providing technical advice to regional governments as they strengthen municipal authorities to plan and manage effective services.
- Uganda - Supporting sub-national technical advisory units with the responsibility for developing district WASH team capacity.
- Malawi – Strengthening a collaboration of NGO partners working to develop a consistent approach to district planning and serve as a model for Malawi.
- Nicaragua – Motivating and supporting microfinance institutions in proving sanitation loans in municipalities and departments across Nicaragua.

At the national level, we also work directly with governments to strengthen the WASH system, focusing on long-term, holistic approaches to support sustainable service delivery and strengthen local institutions and capacity to deliver. Our goal is to ensure that government provides leadership as service authority and that we develop a strong network of public, civil society, and private actors, capable of providing effective service delivery.

We work with the relevant national ministries to develop national WASH system-strengthening frameworks (using an analysis of the building blocks which underpin the system), regulatory policy, and investment plans which will enable the country to achieve SDG 6 by 2030. Through collaboration with organizations in Agenda for Change and other sector partners, we are supporting the adoption of system-strengthening activities in an additional 23 countries. We participate in coalitions to promote a system-strengthening approach at the national level and provide technical assistance to build capacity of professionals at national and regional levels to adopt our tools and methodologies for collective impact.

## Case Studies

Water For People country teams implement the Everyone Forever model in each of the 35+ districts where we work. While the key components are consistent, the Everyone Forever model is modified and contextualized for each district. Below are case studies of four Everyone Forever districts, capturing how the model was implemented over time within each context:

- [Kamwenge, Uganda](#)
- [San Pedro, Bolivia](#)
- [Rulindo, Rwanda](#)
- [San Rafael del Norte, Nicaragua](#)