

USAID Transform WASH

Eight Years in Review



Learning Note, June 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Transform WASH approaches and activities.....	7
2.1. Supply chain management.....	7
2.2. Demand creation.....	10
2.3. Capacity building.....	11
2.4. Knowledge management.....	12
3. Achievements.....	13
3.1. Supply chain management.....	13
3.2. Demand creation.....	17
3.3. Capacity building.....	18
3.4. Knowledge management.....	20
4. Key lessons learned.....	22
4.1. Supply chain management.....	22
4.2. Demand creation.....	22
4.3. Capacity building	23
4.4. Knowledge management.....	23
Resource library.....	24

USAID Transform WASH aims to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) outcomes in Ethiopia by increasing market access to and sustained use of a broader spectrum of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation.

Transform WASH achieves this by transforming the market for low-cost high quality WASH products and services: stimulating demand at the community level, strengthening supply chains, and improving the enabling environment for a vibrant private market.

USAID Transform WASH is a USAID-funded activity implemented by PSI in collaboration with SNV, Plan International and IRC WASH. The consortium is working closely with government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Water and Energy, the National WASH Coordination Office/One WASH National Program, the Ministry of Labor and Skills, and regional and sub-regional governments.

© 2024, USAID Transform WASH

Permission is hereby granted for sharing and adaptation of this material, in whole or in part, for non-commercial use, educational, scientific or development-related purposes, provided that the appropriate and full citation is given.

This summary learning note is about USAID Transform WASH's eight-year exploration, and the important lessons acquired during program implementation.

Authors:

Monte Achenbach, Chief of Party USAID Transform WASH, PSI Ethiopia

Michael Negash, Chief of Party USAID Transform WASH (from mid-2023), PSI Ethiopia

Lars Osterwalder, IRC WASH

Co-authors:

Daniel Tesfaye, PSI Ethiopia

Abenet Girma, PSI Ethiopia

Reviewers:

Abebe Tadesse, SNV Ethiopia

Editors:

Fana Abay, PSI Ethiopia

Sterenn Philippe, IRC WASH

Tsegaye Yeshiwas, IRC WASH

Design and layout:

Feven Kefale, PSI Ethiopia

Cite this publication as follows: USAID Transform WASH, 2024. Eight Years in Review. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

EDI	Entrepreneurship Development Institute
ETB	Ethiopian Birr (56 ETB/USD in early 2024)
FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
HEW	Health extension worker
ISI	Institutional strengthening index
JMP	WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme
JSS	Joint Supportive Supervision
Kebele	Smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia (typically 1,000 to 2,000 HHs)
KWT	Kebele WASH teams
MBS	Market-based sanitation
MFI	Microfinance institution
MoLS	Ministry of Labour and Skills
MSP	Multi Stakeholder Platform
OWNP	One WASH national program
SBCC	Social and behavior change communication
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SMTWG	Sanitation marketing technical working groups
TSEDU	Total Sanitation for Ending Open Defecation and Urination
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
T/WASH	USAID Transform WASH
TSEDU	Total Sanitation to End open Defecation and Urination
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WASHCo	WASH committees
WDAL	Women development army leader
Woreda	District of Ethiopia (typically around 20,000 to 30,000 households)
WRP	Whitten & Roy Partnership
WTT	WASH technical teams
WWT	Woreda WASH teams
VSLA	Village saving and loan associations



1. INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, huge progress has been made in reducing open defecation over the past two decades. As a result, most households are now using traditional, unimproved pit latrines constructed from wood and mud (Figure 1). These cannot be classified as “improved” as they tend to be neither durable nor easy to clean and, therefore, are not considered to provide households with a basic sanitation service (improved and not shared) as per the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) service ladder definitions.

USAID Transform WASH (T/WASH), funded by USAID and led by PSI along with consortium partners SNV, IRC, and Plan International, was an eight-year initiative spanning from 2017 to 2024. Its primary goal was to pioneer and refine market-based models to increase the demand for and supply of quality, affordable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) products and services in Ethiopia, with an emphasis on sanitation. By strengthening the market-based sanitation (MBS) approach, T/WASH aimed to increase access to basic sanitation services and pave the way to achieve universal coverage.

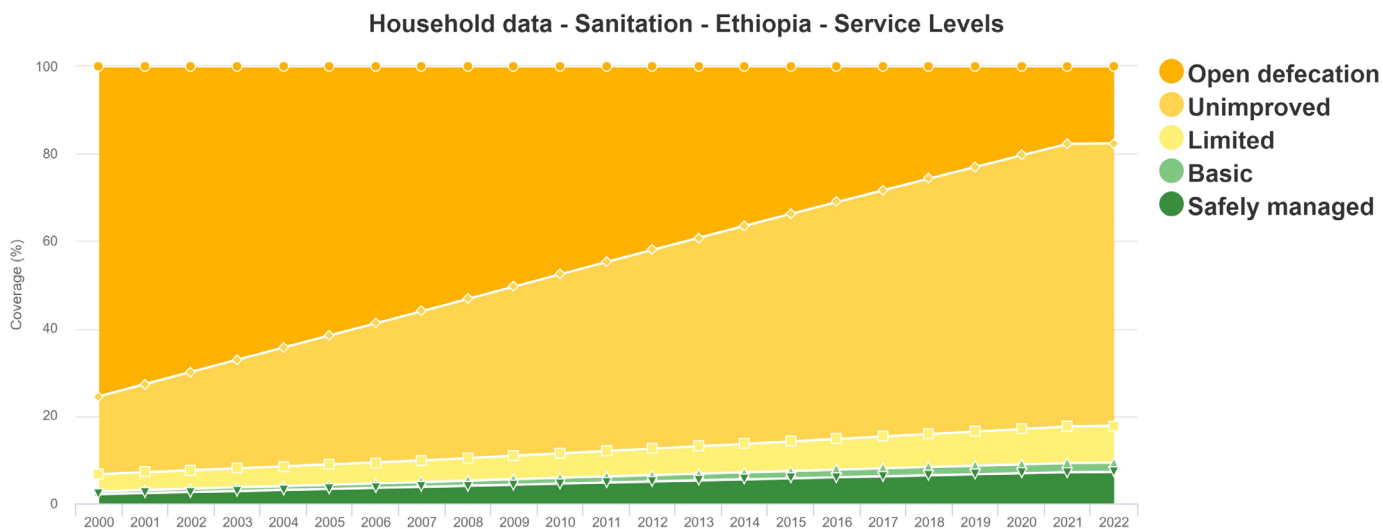


Figure 1: Sanitation service levels in Ethiopia, household data 2000 to 2022 (JMP,2022)

In 2017, when the T/WASH activity was kicked off, the Government of Ethiopia had already been rolling out sanitation marketing. With the support of T/WASH, MBS was established around 2019/2020. This initiative received significant support from the Federal Ministry of Health (MOH), UNICEF, and other development partners. The FMOH had published a national sanitation marketing guideline ([link](#)) in 2013 and established a national multi-stakeholder platform (MSP)¹ in collaboration with the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program. At that time, only a few businesses offered affordable sanitation products and services, and the range of those offerings was very limited. Before 2017, the focus of MBS interventions in Ethiopia was on providing training and tools to unemployed youth to manufacture concrete slabs at centralized locations.

T/WASH implementation began in 2017 across nine woredas in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). Over subsequent years, T/WASH progressively expanded into additional woredas in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambella. By the end of 2020, Transform WASH was operational in 41 woredas. In 2021, an extra 22 woredas from the Growth through Nutrition (GtN) project were integrated into T/WASH, bringing the total to 63 woredas (Figure 2), representing over five percent of all woredas in Ethiopia.

Starting in 2022, T/WASH began phasing out direct support in selected intervention woredas. In 2024, a total of 30 woredas outreached a “graduation certificate” marking the successful conclusion of their T/WASH support.

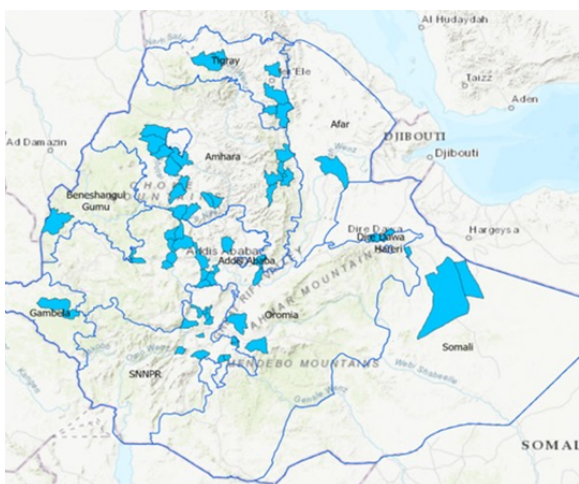


Figure 2: Map of 63 Transform WASH woredas

In total, USAID approved US\$47.5 million for the implementation of T/WASH activities. These activities were led by four organizations:

- Population Services International (PSI) was the prime partner in the consortium and oversaw partner coordination and led demand and supply interventions across all the ten T/WASH implementation woredas.
- SNV led capacity building for the sub-national government (on average nine full-time positions from 2017 to 2024).
- IRC WASH led the initiative's learning agenda and knowledge management (on average three full-time positions from 2017 to 2024).
- Plan International led the demand creation at the community level through the existing government structure, utilizing Health Extension Workers (HEWs) and the Health Development Army. This collaboration effectively engaged local communities and promoted the adoption of improved sanitation practices.

This synthesis report summarizes the implementation approaches used by T/WASH, the main achievements, and the key lessons learned. The report also includes links to a wealth of resources, such as national guidelines, learning notes, success stories, and training manuals.



¹ The MSPs are learning alliances led by the FMOH to coordinate market-based sanitation activities in the country.



2. TRANSFORM WASH APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Conduct market landscaping and supply chain mapping. As an initial step in all intervention woredas, formative research was conducted to understand the availability of sanitation products and services and to pinpoint the opportunities and gaps within the supply chains. Experienced or new enterprises interested in offering sanitation products and services were selected in collaboration with local authorities (selection of business partners).

Support product diversification. Before 2017, Sanitation marketing programs focused on concrete slabs as the product of choice for expanding household access to improved sanitation. T/WASH supported the development of new products and installation services locally and the introduction of new products imported to Ethiopia. A total of 40 different products and services were introduced and sold by T/WASH business partners (Table 1).

Support product development. Based on user-centered design approaches, T/WASH tested and developed innovative WASH products and services. Product development also included the facilitation of two design competitions.

Facilitate distribution of products in private sector. T/WASH engaged with existing businesses at national, regional and woreda level to establish a resilient project-independent supply chain for new and existing WASH products. International manufacturers were encouraged and supported to prioritize the Ethiopian market, with a particular emphasis on local production.

Table 1: List of 40 T/WASH products and services²

Sanitation (32)	Toilet user interface (20):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete slabs: with lid or SATO pan, circular or rectangular or mini, bamboo or iron-reinforced (9) Plastic products: SATO pan, SATO stool, SATO flex, plastic slab small and medium, including installation services such as "SATO skirting" and "SATO retrofitting" (11)
	Toilet sub-structure (4):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete rings, incl. installation on single and twin pit (3) Other sub-structures (1)
Hygiene (8)	Toilet super-structure (6):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full toilet solutions (4) Construction with HCB blocks or other materials (2)
	Other sanitation-related products (2):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilet cleaning brush (1) Lid for covering drophole (1)
Hygiene (8)	Handwashing (3):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faucet-fitted facility (1) Happy Tap (1) No-touch facility (1)
	Household water treatment (4):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household water filters (2) Chlorination products (2)
Hygiene (8)	Menstrual hygiene (1):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reusable sanitary pads (1) 	

²Factsheets for all products/services are available in Products and Services - Innovations and Sales Performance ([link](#)).

Develop standard product and service business models. T/WASH tested and developed four business models as shown in Figure 3. It is important to note that T/WASH's business partners made their own decisions on how to run their business and did not all operate the same way. Therefore, there was no clear-cut boundary between the four business models.

Provide training to business partners. A team of approximately 30 business advisors and business facilitators (employed by T/WASH) provided support activities to 528 business partners across 63 woredas. This support included training, coaching, help with business development, linking to finance and networking opportunities, providing marketing materials, aiding with standardization (like bills of quantity), assisting with business legalization, and managing data.

Develop technical and vocational education and training (TVET) curricula. Basic and advanced short-term curricula for TVET institutions on manufacturing sanitation products and latrine construction were developed in close collaboration with government

partners. The curricula were endorsed by the Ministry of Labor and Skills ([link](#)).

Establish incubation centers. Transform WASH established 17 incubation centers at woreda and zonal levels, which were designed as centers for WASH product innovation and learning. Some woreda WASH team (WWT) provided space and built sheds for the incubation centers.

Support business financing. T/WASH provided revolving funds to Omo Microfinance (operating in former SNNPR), Menkorer SACCO (operating in Amhara) and Siinqee Bank (operating in Oromia) to test business financing and ensured that both businesses and consumers could access loans for their WASH businesses and WASH needs ,respectively.

Engage female business owners. T/WASH challenged norms and created opportunities by engaging and supporting women in WASH business. T/WASH worked towards increasing the number of women business owners.

	Advanced Manufacturers	Basic Manufacturers	Mason/Installers	Retailers
Description	Mainly involves existing and well-established business partners	Mainly involves small-scale manufacturing with informal masons	Mainly involves small-scale manufacturing with informal local masons	Mainly involves existing and well-established business partners
Products and services	Mainly involves concrete slabs and full toilet options	Mainly involves concrete slabs and simple installations	Mainly involves installation of SATO and plastering	Mainly involves plastic sanitation products
Scale	Mainly operate at woreda-level	Mainly operate at kebele-level	Mainly operate at kebele-level	Mainly operate at woreda-level
Capacity and resources	High level of technical skills, space and equipment	Medium level of technical skills, space and equipment	Low level of technical skills, space and equipment	n/a
Marketing strategy	Focus on walk-in customers and construction contracts	Focus on door-to-door promotion and walk-in	Focus on door-to-door promotion with sales pitch	Focus on walk-in customers and business-to-business sales
Income	Potential income of around 15,000 Birr/month + income from other activities	Potential income of around 3,000 Birr/month + income from other activities	Potential income of around 4,500 Birr/month + income from other activities	Potential income of around 10,000 Birr/month + income from other products

Figure 3: Comparison of four business models introduced by Transform WASH in Ethiopia. To learn more, read the learning note about Transform WASH Business Models ([link](#)).

Formation of WASH business associations. T/WASH established WASH business associations at both the national and the Oromia and Amhara regional levels. This effort included the development of legal documents for their operation, organizational manuals, and other essential policy documents. Furthermore, T/WASH built partnerships with funding partners and provided support during conferences attended by partners, sector actors, key government officials, and other relevant organizations.

T/WASH introduced annual WASH business summits at national and regional levels, bringing together investors, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers. These summits foster collaboration, networking, and the exchange of industry

insights. Discussions cover trends, challenges, and innovations in the WASH sector, with workshops and presentations by experts and government officials.

By institutionalizing these gatherings, T/WASH promotes ongoing dialogue and cooperation among private stakeholders, the government and development partners. The summits align efforts across the WASH supply chain, facilitating partnerships with funding organizations and enabling knowledge sharing among diverse participants. This regular convening advances access to quality water, sanitation, and hygiene services, positively impacting community health and well-being.



2.2. DEMAND CREATION

Facilitate social behavior change communication campaign. Through the T/WASH-developed social and behavior change communication (SBCC) strategy, the team reached communities and created demand for WASH products through the government health system: health extension workers (HEWs) and women development army leaders (WDALs).

Support door-to-door sales by local masons. More than 300 local masons were trained in low-cost toilet upgrading options and a problem-led sales approach (DQ Selling®). The mason received ongoing coaching from T/WASH's business facilitators and also from PHCU government staff, including HEWs (see Success story 1).

Provide marketing capacity building. The T/WASH team built the marketing and sales capacity of business partners through training and coaching. T/WASH also developed branded promotional materials, such as posters and sales catalogs, to spark demand through various business-led marketing activities.

Implement above-the-line promotional campaigns. T/WASH supported the development and airing of TV and radio ads to create an initial boost for demand. Increased awareness and demand by end users was intended to demonstrate the market potential to business partners.

Construct model latrines at health facilities. A total of 20 model latrines were constructed at health posts to showcase quality WASH products and services.

Support consumer financing. T/WASH introduced various consumer financing mechanisms. By the end of 2019, nearly 300 village saving and loan associations (VSLA) were established across four regions.³ T/WASH also collaborated with Vision Fund and TeleBirr to offer sanitation loans. Furthermore, T/WASH piloted targeted sanitation subsidies in two woredas to reach the poorest and most vulnerable clients.

Success story 1: DQ Selling®

T/WASH developed low-cost toilet upgrading options such as "SATO skirting" and "SATO retrofitting", and trained local masons to provide these services. From 2020 onwards, T/WASH collaborated with the sales consulting firm Whitten & Roy Partnership (WRP) to train the local masons on a new sales management approach (DQ Selling®) to optimize door-to-door sales.

DQ refers to decision intelligence (based on IQ for intelligence quotient), as the approach aims to enhance the customer's ability to make well-informed decisions for themselves, even if that means rejecting the proposed solution by the sales agents. It is grounded in meaningful, in-depth, and quality sales conversations that utilize attentive listening, probing, and paraphrasing as key instruments.

Door-to-door sales by local masons showed significant scaling potential. Through the T/WASH network, more than 360,000 households were reached at their doorstep, with over 110,000 agreeing to invest in upgrading their toilet facilities.

To learn more, read the learning note [Door-to-Door Sales of Toilet Installation Service \(link\)](#) or read the [blog post lead with problems, end with a sale \(link\)](#)



³To learn more, read the learning note about sanitation financing options for enterprises and households ([link](#)).

2.3. CAPACITY BUILDING

Support One WASH National Programme (OWNP).

T/WASH has been working closely with the national and regional WASH coordination offices to improve WASH, and specifically MBS activities within sub-national programs.

Provide training of trainers on business development support.

Comprehensive capacity building, including entrepreneurial and marketing skills training, was provided to the Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS) sub-structures, such as TVET institutions and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI). Now, TVET institutions and EDI can provide training to sanitation businesses without direct support from T/WASH.

Provide training and coaching at local level.

Woreda WASH teams (WWTs), WASH technical teams (WTTs), sanitation marketing technical working groups (SMTWGs), and kebele WASH teams (KWTs) received training and coaching in various essential skills: planning, budgeting, monitoring, financial management, contract administration, leadership management and governance, water scheme management and operation for woreda and regional experts and cascading training provided to WASHCOs leadership management and governance and MBS. The national MBS training manual ([link](#)) was used to extend these courses to 300 woredas. Additionally, regional and zonal teams underwent similar training sessions.

Facilitate joint supportive supervision (JSS) and consultative meetings.

JSS served as a collaborative platform for representatives from health, education, water, women and youth, finance, job creation, and TVETs. Together, they identified challenges in program implementation, offering technical advice and guidance. After a JSS session, consultative meetings were convened to monitor the performance of activities against

the plan and to ensure follow-up on action points.

Develop an institutional strengthening index (ISI).

To enhance institutional capacity related to WASH (and MBS) programming, T/WASH implemented the ISI. This self-assessment tool was introduced to woredas to monitor their progress. T/WASH published guidelines to provide instructions on using the ISI ([link](#)).

Facilitate preparation of WASH strategic and annual sanitation plans.

T/WASH supported officials in intervention woredas to set a vision, mission, and strategic objectives related to sanitation. Based on the strategic plans, annual operation plans were developed.

Facilitate exposure visits.

T/WASH organized experience-sharing visits for key stakeholders to the best-performing woredas. These visits boosted engagement, commitment, and the adoption of best practices in WASH initiatives.

Organize dialogue forums.

T/WASH organized regional-level forums to address challenges with higher-level officials from health, water, administration, job creation, TVETs, and MFIs. These discussions triggered collaboration, coordination, and problem-solving, ensuring comprehensive solutions to WASH issues.

Provide training on gender in WASH.

T/WASH delivered gender training in the WASH sector to the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) staff, raising awareness on gender issues. These trainings fostered inclusivity and sensitivity, ensuring WASH programs address the diverse needs of all genders effectively.

Manage sub-grants for GoE.

T/WASH channeled financial support for the implementation of OWNP activities in Amhara, Oromia, Afar and Somali regions.



2.4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Facilitate learning alliances. T/WASH was the secretariat for the government-led MBS multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) at the national and regional levels. The MSPs aim to: i) bring together relevant government offices (health, job creation, micro-finance, vocational training, and OWNPs) and other stakeholders (development partners, academia, private sector) to discuss issues related to sanitation market development, identify priorities, and plan actions; ii) facilitate exchange between private WASH enterprises and the public sector; and iii) capture and share best practices and learning to bring innovations to scale and to encourage knowledge exchange among woredas and regions.

Conduct action research. Throughout the project, rapid assessments and action research studies were conducted to assess the impact of implementation approaches (see Figure 4).

Findings guided adjustments to T/WASH strategies and were shared at stakeholder meetings and national WASH events to foster informed decision-making.

Advocate for policy changes. T/WASH worked closely with the FMoH to strengthen the enabling environment in Ethiopia for MBS. The main advocacy agenda was informed by T/WASH research and experiences (see Box 2).

Communicate key messages. Knowledge products from T/WASH were shared through articles in a national printed newsletter (“Ethio-MBS newsletter”), activity newsletters (“WASHing UP”), blog posts, IRC Transform WASH landing page ([link](#)) and PSI USAID Transform WASH resource page ([link](#)). The team also engaged on Twitter and Facebook and disseminated key information through national and regional MSP Telegram groups, which were established during the Covid-19 pandemic (see Box 5).

Box 2: Influencing national policy

The T/WASH team supported the FMoH to publish the National Market-Based Sanitation Implementation Guideline in 2020 ([link](#)). This is a revision of the National Sanitation Marketing Guideline released in 2013.

Three advocacy topics were pursued jointly with the FMoH with the goal of making sanitation affordable for everyone: i) remove taxes and duties from selected sanitation products; ii) make business and consumer loans more widely available for sanitation; and iii) introduce smart and targeted sanitation subsidies for the poorest. To learn more, read the blog post about reaching 100 percent sanitation access in Ethiopia ([link](#)).

In line with the sanitation financing strategy, the FMoH developed the National Sanitation Subsidy Protocol, which launched in 2022 and revised in 2023 based on a first pilot ([link](#)).

Finally, the T/WASH team supported the FmoH to develop a set of standardized definitions for WASH ([link](#)). The service-level definitions for sanitation now align with the global definitions used by the WHO/UNICEF JMP.

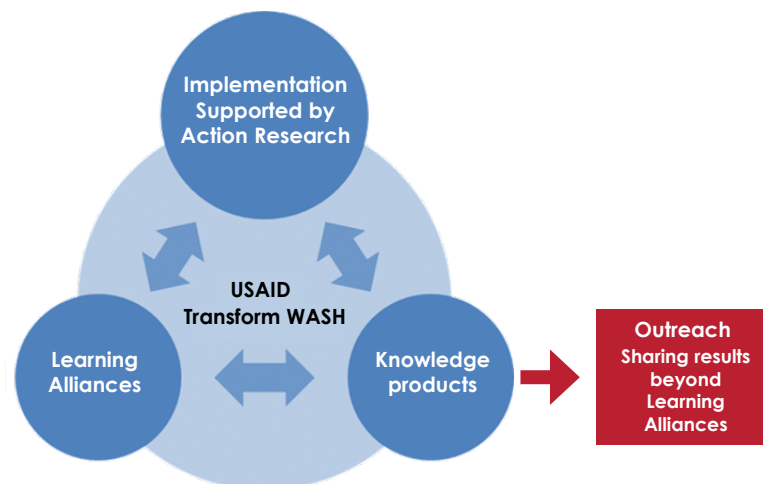


Figure 4: T/WASH Knowledge management approach



3. ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

A total of 40 different product and service options were promoted by T/WASH. Among those, 20 were newly introduced with support from T/WASH. A range of local innovations proved to be particularly successful: SATO skirting and SATO retrofitting which are simple latrine upgrades (see Success story 2). Furthermore, through two design competitions, T/WASH supported local entrepreneurs interested in designing innovative products. To learn more, read the blog post about innovating for no touch handwashing ([link](#)).

T/WASH supported testing and prototyping of new products and services to help business leaders understand market gaps and product potential. The team encouraged and aided companies to start local manufacturing in Ethiopia. A notable success was Silafrica's launch of manufacturing AIM plastic slabs in Addis Ababa (see Success story 3).

Transform WASH supported over 500 businesses in selling sanitation and hygiene products and providing installation services. By early 2024, nearly 70 percent of these businesses reported being operational.

Success story 2: Installation services

Initially households were observed to buy SATO pans directly from retailers or sales agents and try to install them on their own without proper instructions or know-how. In partnership with local business partners, T/WASH came up with solutions to offer low-cost installation options. Among the most successful offerings were "SATO retrofitting" which refers to the installation of a SATO pan on an existing concrete slab and "SATO skirting" which refers to the installation of a SATO pan on an existing solid wooden/dirt platform (Figure 5). Both offerings include installation services provided by a trained local mason.



Figure 5: SATO skirting on wooden platform

To learn more, read the blog post how poor installation created new businesses opportunities ([link](#)).

Success story 3: Local production

T/WASH conducted market tests and identified sufficient demand for Silafrica's products. Silafrica were satisfied by the findings and developed an initial production plan. In June 2020, the slab molds arrived from Nairobi to Addis Ababa, and Silafrica began readying their newly built production facility to manufacture the first batch of 5,000-10,000 units.

To learn more, read the blog post what it takes to build a sanitation market ([link](#)).

T/WASH built sustainable WASH supply chains by leveraging existing businesses. Unlike traditional approaches centered in Addis Ababa, new distribution channels were established through regional distributors, reaching retailers at the woreda level. These retail outlets, situated in market centers and smaller towns, provide convenient access to WASH products and services for local businesses and households. Rather than emphasizing the government's startup-focused job creation strategy, T/WASH prioritized engaging established, experienced business leaders, later expanding to include entry-level masons as business partners. To learn more, read approaches to sanitation business development support at district level ([link](#)).

Initially, the plan was to work with one business partner in each T/WASH woreda. However, to achieve greater reach and scale, since a single partner often lacks the resources to serve an entire woreda, T/WASH ultimately partnered with 528 businesses across 63 woredas (Table 2). Most of the businesses operate at the grassroots level. Notably, a growing portion of these business partners were female, indicating progress in shifting norms and overcoming barriers, though more work remains (see Box 3 and Success story 4).



Table 2: Number of T/WASH business partners

Manufacturer (basic or advanced)	108
Mason/Installer	318
Retailer and distributor	102
Grand Total	528

T/WASH also provided capital for revolving funds to three MFIs (Omo Microfinance, Menkorer SACCO, and Sinqee Bank). By the end of 2024, the three MFIs provided a total of 45 loans to business partners with an average loan size of 30,000 ETB.

Box 3: Role of Gender in MBS

In 2021, 33 women-led business partners (17 percent of all T/WASH partners) were offering sanitation products and services in this highly male-dominated sector. As this was lower than the 25 percent target, T/WASH continued to provide support to the existing women-led business partners and to attract new ones. T/WASH provided training on entrepreneurship, managing gender challenges in business, and awarded incentives.

To learn more, read the learning note women as business leaders ([link](#)).

Success story 4: Meet successful business partners of Transform WASH

Yeshi's hands are strong enough to mix cement and sand with a shovel then construct a toilet slab fitted with a SATO pan. She also runs a shop, and when clients show up, she drops what she's doing to sell products before returning to her slab construction work. When a household comes to Yeshi with a question, she visits them to give advice on how to improve their toilet. She is an entrepreneur and a strong advocate for better sanitation in her neighbourhood.

To learn more, read the blog post Meet Yeshi ([link](#)). Also have a look at the blog posts about Safiya and Ephrem ([link](#)), Bayissa ([link](#)), and Gelaye ([link](#)).

More than 200,000 products were sold by T/WASH business partners. After T/WASH start-up activities, business partners started selling products in mid-2017. By the end of 2023, a total of 226,552 products had been sold (Figure 6). Initially, retailers, who T/WASH engaged with at an early stage, sold the most supported products directly to households. After the introduction of the DQ Selling® approach in 2020, sales by mason/installers using door-to-door promotion techniques became the most important way of selling and installing sanitation products.

Out of the total 40 T/WASH products and services, 12 contributed to 95 percent of the total sales while the remaining 28 collectively only accounted for 5 percent (Figure 7). Plastic sanitation products such as plastic pans and plastic slabs made up the majority of sales (174,033 or 76 percent) followed by concrete slabs (17,649 or 8 percent). Amongst the plastic products, SATO pans were the most popular with 150,560 sales (including SATO pans used for installation services and built into concrete slabs), followed by small plastic slabs with 26,610 sales.

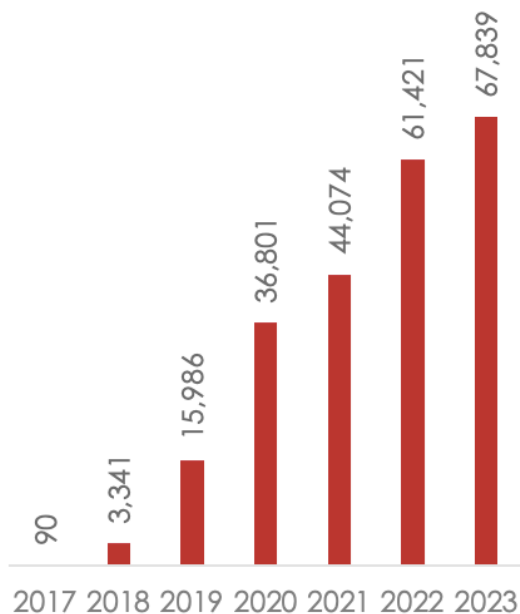


Figure 6: Annual sales from 2017 to 2023

More than one million people were reached by sales activities supported by T/WASH. On average, in each woreda, 3,381 products/services were sold (i.e. reaching about 10 to 20 percent of the households within the woredas supported by T/WASH). Assuming an average household size, more than one million people benefited from the products and services.

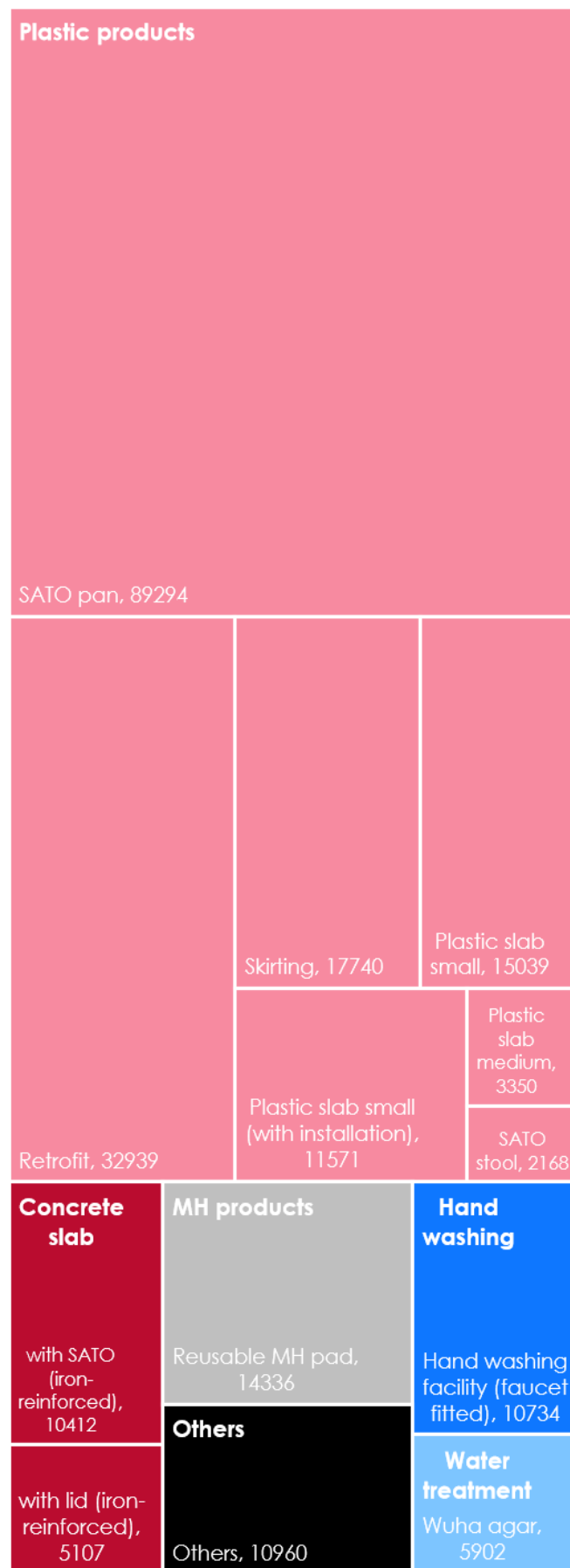


Figure 7: Sales data by product categories

T/WASH also had an indirect impact beyond the intervention woredas. For instance, T/WASH partnered with FMoH and TVET institutions to cascade training outside of intervention woredas. A total of 1,022 businesses in 45 woredas and towns have been reached to build technical skills related to slab manufacturing, toilet upgrades, and various installation services, among other capacities. Towards the end of the T/WASH activity, national and regional distributors and manufacturers were actively encouraged to sell products to non-T/WASH areas.

In a survey in selected intervention woredas, households were asked about the type of sanitation facilities that they had used in the past (while living on the current plot). The results showed that there was a relatively slow increase in improved sanitation from 2014 to 2020, followed by

a clear acceleration in the last three years when T/WASH implementation activities reached full scale (Figure 8). From 2020 to 2023, there was an annual increase of about 3 percentage points (with an increase from 7 to 16 percent for at least basic sanitation services).

However, the acceleration mainly happened for the richest/rich households, while progress for the poorest/poor remained stagnant. These results suggest that the market-based promotion of improved sanitation products and services contributed to accelerating progress but did not successfully reach the poorer households.

To learn more, read the learning note about reaching universal access with market-based sanitation ([link](#)).

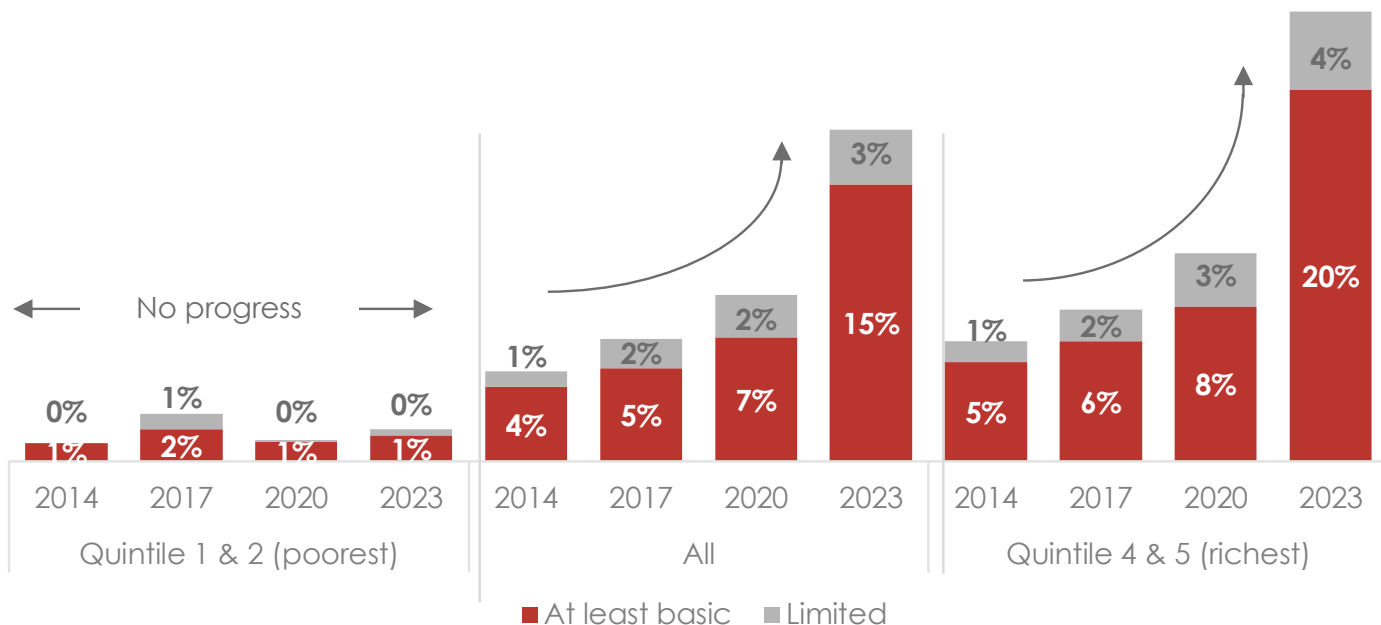


Figure 8: Sanitation service levels in the three T/WASH woredas over the past 10 years



3.2. DEMAND CREATION

T/WASH strengthened the health sector to create demand for the sales of sanitation products. The development of the T/WASH SBCC strategy supported the implementation of a demand creation approach that included more standardized household counseling visits, engagement of WDALs to support household visits, and the use of updated communication materials by HEWs.

To support the GoE in implementing the SBCC strategy, T/WASH trained a total of 1230 HEWs and 3075 WDALs on MBS between 2017 and 2022. Overall, more than one million households are estimated to have been reached through this channel. However, likely not more than 25 percent of the installations (about 50,000) can be attributed to the HEWs/WDALs demand creation activities. This relatively low “conversion rate” indicates that awareness creation by HEWs and WDALs alone is not sufficient to activate demand.

Nevertheless, the involvement of the HEWs and WDALs created an enabling environment for private sector actors to operate in the intervention woredas. Strengthened linkages between HEWs/WDALs, local masons, sales agents, and other relevant business partners supported market-oriented demand creation and promotion.

T/WASH also provided training MBS, operation and maintenance, and continuous follow-up to WASH committees (WASHCOs). WASHCOs are established in many project villages to manage water schemes and expanded their role to include sanitation after the training. As a result, WASHCOs now actively participate in MBS implementation by promoting sanitation products and services, purchasing and installing sanitation products, and serving as community models for using basic sanitation products.

T/WASH strengthened the capacity of the private sector to create demand for the sales of sanitation products. T/WASH business partners received training and coaching on sales and marketing techniques, provided directly by T/WASH staff or through TVET institutions. Private sector actors played an important role in convincing households to invest in their sanitation facility.

Most importantly, T/WASH introduced door-to-door installation services using the DQ Selling® and sales management approach. More than 300 local masons were trained on these approaches. Since then, mason/installers visited more than 360,000 households (an estimated one third of the total population in the intervention areas), of which more than 115,000 decided to invest in an upgrade (average conversion rate of 29 percent).

The introduction of the DQ approach was a key achievement of T/WASH (see Success story 1). The percentage of sales through mason/installers steadily increased and became the predominant sales type among T/WASH business partners. The conversion rate remained continuously around 25 to 30% (i.e. on average every third to fourth household approached by a mason/installer agrees to invest in a latrine upgrade).

T/WASH tested different household financing options to increase the ability of households to invest in latrine upgrades. T/WASH explored various options to increase affordability of WASH products with the goal to increase demand. For example, T/WASH advocated for tax exemptions for sanitation products, supported the establishment of VSLA, collaborated with Vision Fund and TeleBirr to establish a sanitation loan facility and piloted sanitation subsidies. To learn more, read the blog post about reaching 100 percent sanitation access in Ethiopia ([link](#)).



3.3. CAPACITY BUILDING

T/WASH created an enabling environment for WASH market growth within the relevant Ministries by strengthening capacity at all administrative levels. Capacity-building initiatives for the GoE were tailored to their needs, including training, coaching, and technical support. These approaches enhanced the functioning of woreda WASH teams (WWTs), WASH technical teams (WTTs), sanitation marketing technical working groups (SMTWGs), and kebele WASH teams (KWTs). As a result of the improved enabling environment for WASH market growth, some woredas provided land and sheds for sanitation-related businesses, some allocated budgets for MBS support activities, and some supported businesses in accessing loans from MFIs.

The number of woredas scoring at least 75 percent in the institutional strengthening index (ISI) increased from 9 percent to 90 percent, demonstrating significant improvements in capacity at the woreda level within the 41 intervention woredas where ISI scores were tracked. Despite these gains, T/WASH recognized the need for sustained capacity development and, in 2023, supported the development of the National WASH Sector Capacity Development Guideline ([link](#)). This guideline aims to inform future actions and ensure the availability of the right skills and capacities within government offices.

T/WASH also developed training materials that can continue to be used beyond the T/WASH activity (Box 4). These resources are designed to ensure the ongoing development of skills and knowledge within the WASH sector.

T/WASH institutionalized and promoted MBS within government structures to ensure sustainability and scaling up. T/WASH strengthened capacity and provided technical support for national, regional, and woreda-level offices to integrate MBS into strategic and annual sanitation and WASH action plans.

Box 4: Training manuals

T/WASH developed manuals to support MBS beyond its intervention timeframe. List of key training manuals:

- 1) National market-based sanitation training manual ([link](#))
- 2) Social and behavior change communication – participants' manual ([link](#))
- 3) Contract management training manual ([link](#))
- 4) Financial management training manual ([link](#))
- 5) Procurement management training manual ([link](#))
- 6) Training of Trainers manual on planning, budgeting, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting for government WASH actors ([link](#))
- 7) WASH customized entrepreneurship and business skill training manual (to be requested from EDI)
- 8) WASH customized business development services coaching guideline (to be requested from EDI)

To encourage government offices to adopt MBS, T/WASH, among others, organized visits of 81 non-T/WASH clustered woreda representatives to T/WASH intervention woredas. These visits showcased the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring MBS activities. Through direct observations and discussions with existing business owners, visitors gained a comprehensive understanding of what MBS entails and how certain challenges could be addressed and resolved.

T/WASH also collaborated with the FMOH to integrate MBS and the DQ Selling@ approach into a revised version of the HEW refresher training manual. The intention was for HEWs to provide training and support to local masons to conduct door-to-door sales in non-T/WASH woredas in the future.



Finally, T/WASH supported government partners in 41 woredas to mainstream gender activities and targets in their WASH strategic plans. For example:

- The enforcement of designated facilities for boys and girls for new toilet constructions;
- The requirement that 50 percent of WASHCO members are women;
- The requirement that 25 percent of newly selected sanitation businesses are women-owned; and
- The establishment of sex-disaggregated targets for hygiene and sanitation messaging.

T/WASH co-developed standardized training materials to enhance knowledge and skills related to MBS. In Ethiopia, MBS-training courses have formally been adopted in the TVET curriculum, and EDI is offering WASH-customized courses on business development services, entrepreneurship, and sales skills. A free introductory online course to MBS was developed with almost 200 certificates of completion issued in early 2024 (see Success story 5).

Success story 5: Training opportunities on market-based sanitation

The MoLS, in collaboration with the MoH and T/WASH, developed standardized teaching, training, and learning materials. Two training courses (one basic 5-day course and one advanced 15-day course) with a standardized curriculum are now offered at selected TVET institutions. These modules aim to ensure uniform skill levels and improve the overall quality of sanitation products and services across Ethiopia.

For more information, have a look at the course materials ([link](#)).

The Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) integrated WASH- customized entrepreneurship and business skills training and coaching services to their offering.

For more information, please reach out to the EDI team in Addis Ababa ([link](#)).

An introductory online course on MBS was developed with the support of T/WASH and is available on the WASH Systems Academy. The course is free and takes about 16 hours to complete.

For more information, visit the WASH Systems Academy ([link](#)).



3.4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

T/WASH strengthened and facilitated MSPs by including more than 750 WASH professionals. MSPs have become important platforms for developing a common understanding of the MBS approach, coordinating MBS activities, and introducing new sanitation products. MSPs have been established at the national level and in almost all regions.⁴ For each MSP, a Telegram group was established (Box 5). In early 2024, a revised ToR for the national MSP was endorsed by the FMoH.

T/WASH conducted more than 20 action research assessments and rapid assessments to inform implementation activities. A range of action research studies and rapid assessments were conducted based on needs identified in discussions within the T/WASH consortium and during the MSP meetings. Key findings of the research were documented and disseminated internally and externally at MSP meetings and other relevant events. The studies resulted in important changes in T/WASH implementation approaches and plans, such as the development of clear, actionable business models for private sector partners. A selection of twelve learning notes is listed in Box 6.

Finally, T/WASH laid the foundation for further growth of the market for sanitation products and services in Ethiopia. Findings from the research and inputs from the MSPs were used to inform the FMoH to develop an advocacy strategy and policy briefs on sanitation financing (Box 2). The advocacy topics were discussed in high-level meetings between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Water and Energy, and the Ministry of Finance to ensure an enabling environment for businesses offering sanitation products and services.

Box 5: MSP Telegram groups

Transform WASH had discussed the use of social media for MSP members to interact with each other online and improve social accountability in implementing MBS. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the T/WASH team initiated regional MSP groups in Telegram, a messaging app which is widely used in Ethiopia. For more details, read the blog post about connecting market-based sanitation stakeholders in the age of Covid ([link](#)).

The groups were found to be very valuable even after travel and meeting restrictions had been lifted and T/WASH continued to promote the groups. All stakeholders with an interest in MBS can easily coordinate activities, access all the regions' members through Telegram and can share relevant information, such as guidelines, plans, presentations, pictures, and videos. By May 2024, more than 750 individuals had joined the MSP Telegram groups.

The national sanitation subsidy protocol was endorsed and an updated version published in February 2023 (see Success story 6). Along with tax exemption for sanitation products and availability of sanitation loans, sanitation subsidies have been included in the Total Sanitation to End open Defecation and Urination (TSEDU) program strategy. The TSEDU program, launched in 2024, is expected to bring attention to sanitation from the highest level of government. The T/WASH resources are available to inform the implementation of this campaign.



⁴Except for Addis Ababa. For the South, MSPs are in place for the former SNNPR and Sidama. SNNPR MSP has not yet been split into Central, South, and South-West Ethiopia.

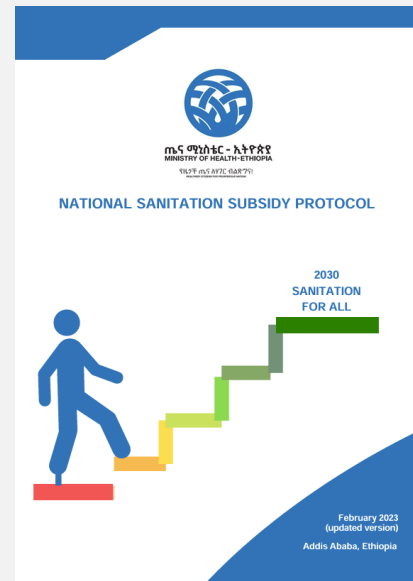
Box 6: Selection of learning notes

- 1) Ethiopia's business environment and how it influences WASH market development ([link](#))
- 2) Should sanitation be taxed? ([link](#))
- 3) An assessment of sanitation financing options for enterprises and households ([link](#))
- 4) An assessment of demand creation of sanitation products and services ([link](#))
- 5) Assessment of field performance and acceptance of the SATO pan in Ethiopia ([link](#))
- 6) Women as business leaders ([link](#))
- 7) USAID Transform WASH business models ([link](#))
- 8) Piloting smart and targeted sanitation subsidies ([link](#))
- 9) Approaches to sanitation business development support at district level ([link](#))
- 10) Reaching universal access with market-based sanitation ([link](#))
- 11) USAID Transform WASH products and services – innovations and sales performance ([link](#))
- 12) Door-to-door sales of toilet installation services – lessons from Ethiopia ([link](#))

Success story 6: National sanitation subsidy protocol endorsed

The Government of Ethiopia recognizes that the poorest and most vulnerable households are unlikely to be able to pay for the construction of an improved toilet. Targeted subsidies for these households are allowed; however, it must be ensured that the implementation is “smart” and does not distort the market for sanitation products and services.

For more information, download the protocol ([link](#)).





4. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

4.1. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Plastic products are an attractive add-on to make improved pit latrines more desirable at a relatively small additional cost. From the very beginning, T/WASH focused on the introduction of plastic products. While a plastic toilet pan does not upgrade a dry pit latrine to “improved” status, it helps keep away flies and keep the toilet clean. These products add value and motivate households to upgrade their toilet.

Low-cost upgrade options that complement the installation of concrete slabs are needed to reach households with lower purchasing power. T/WASH started by providing floor solutions (cement slabs), and later diversified to include a range of business models with products/services that better meet the consumer needs and demand. Among these, “SATO skirting” and “SATO retrofitting” are attractive low-cost options to upgrade traditional latrines to improved status and improve consumer experiences.

Door-to-door promotion and installation services are more promising than selling sanitation products at a fixed location. Door-to-door promotion using a problem-led sales approach (DQ Selling®) proved that businesses can most effectively increase demand for their products and services through training and coaching. The DQ sales approach can result in a 25 to 30 percent conversion rate of households upgrading to improved sanitation. This door-to-door toilet upgrade service delivery model helps to reach more households and minimizes the households' burden of improving their own toilets.

Working with existing businesses, such as distributors, retailers, and manufacturers, strengthened the WASH supply chain. T/WASH's established supply chains demonstrated sustainability and resilience. Regional distributors consistently procured WASH products, while some retailers expanded into wholesaling to nearby retailers. Partnering with experienced business operators, rather than startup groups, ensured operational continuity and sustained availability of sanitation products and services. Later, integrating local masons enabled a flexible, door-to-door marketing approach with affordable, desirable options for toilet upgrades.

Private sector involvement could go beyond providing products and installation services for improved pit latrines. While improved pit latrines that are never emptied count as safely managed sanitation, future sanitation programming should also consider products and services that are demonstrably climate-smart, and include pit emptying and treatment where required.

4.2. DEMAND CREATION

Institutionalizing MBS into government structures and securing the buy-in of local government leadership are important starting points. Involving HEWs to improve WASH demand creation showed the benefits of institutionalizing MBS into local government structures, such as woreda and kebele WASH teams. Furthermore, woredas with strong government leadership showed impressive results in terms of product sales.

Private sector actors are more effective in activating demand than HEWs, WDALs, and kebele WASH teams. Overall, HEWs and WDALs reached more than one million households, resulting in around 50,000 installations (conversion rate of less than 5 percent), while the door-to-door sales by local masons achieved conversion rates of 25 to 30 percent. Thus, demand creation activities by the Health Extension Program are important to prepare the ground for the private sector. However, to convince a household to invest in upgrading their toilet, door-to-door visits coupled with effective sales conversations by local masons are more effective.

To make improved toilets affordable for everyone, refined area-wide approaches are needed. This includes providing access to capital for household investments, but also smart and targeted subsidies.

To reach universal coverage in a district, vibrant local businesses are needed, supported by strong government leadership in promoting a clean and healthy environment. In addition, consumer finance has to be available (e.g., VSLAs, MFIs providing sanitation loans for consumers and local businesses). Finally, smart subsidies will be required to reach the poorest and most vulnerable.

4.3. CAPACITY BUILDING

Close collaboration with GoE structures helped to integrate MBS into key government strategies.

Strengthening capacity of government counterparts at all administrative levels was found to be essential to ensure implementation approaches are relevant and to reach a common understanding among key stakeholder. This close collaboration resulted in the establishment of a strong foundation for the application of MBS in Ethiopia and helped reach a bigger scale. For example, MBS trainings were cascaded to 300 GoE transformation woredas using the government's SDG funds.

Capacity building activities need to be standardized and made widely and easily accessible. Beyond T/WASH, trainings on MBS will remain available: EDI offers training and coaching on WASH-specific business development, TVET institutions offer technical trainings on the manufacturing and marketing of sanitation and hygiene products, and the WASH System Academy offers free online introductory courses on MBS.

4.4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Learning alliances dedicated to MBS were effective in strengthening awareness of MBS. Moving forward, the scope should expand to include area-wide sanitation and more efforts are needed to fully engage all core government offices. MSPs proved to be suitable platforms for T/WASH to reach and involve stakeholders at sub-national level. In the future, the OWNPs need to lead the MSPs and broaden the scope to a MBS-based and area-wide sanitation platform. Close coordination with the TSEDU program and urban sanitation activities led by the Ministry of Water and Energy are essential. More efforts will be needed to increase the involvement of the other key stakeholders (e.g., job creation, micro-finance, TVET institutions) by showcasing how the MBS and area-wide sanitation approaches benefit these offices to reach their targets.

Action research is important to inform adjustments to implementation approaches and to inform an evidence-based advocacy agenda.

Research and knowledge management have been key components of T/WASH. Establishing a focal point in the project management team could create even more cross-consortium synergies while improving and speeding up project learning. Action research should be targeted toward piloting of new ideas and in-depth reviews to inform policy changes.



RESOURCE LIBRARY

National guidelines, manuals, standards, and protocols

National Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sector Capacity Development Guideline. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Water and Energy, and OWP. June 2023. [Link](#)

National Sanitation Subsidy Protocol (updated version). Addis Ababa: Ministry of Health Ethiopia. February 2023. [Link](#)

National Standard Definitions for Sanitation, Hygiene, and Water. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Health Ethiopia. August 2021. [Link](#)

National Market Based Sanitation Training Manual. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Health Ethiopia. December 2020. [Link](#)

National Market-Based Sanitation Implementation Guideline. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Health Ethiopia. November 2020. [Link](#)

Transform WASH manuals, training, and coaching documents

WASH customized business development services coaching guideline Addis Ababa: Entrepreneurship Development Institute. May 2024. Can be requested from EDI.

WASH customized entrepreneurship and business skill training manual. Addis Ababa: Entrepreneurship Development Institute. May 2024. Can be requested from EDI.

USAID Transform WASH - Institutional Strengthening Index Guideline. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. 2023. [Link](#)

Training of Trainers manual on planning, budgeting, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting for government WASH actors Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. 2018. [Link](#)

Contract management training manual. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. 2018. [Link](#)

Financial management training manual. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. 2018. [Link](#)

Procurement management training manual. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. 2018. [Link](#)

Transform WASH learning notes

Door-to-Door Sales of Toilet Installation Services – Lessons from Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. May 2024. [Link](#)

USAID Transform WASH Products and Services – Innovations and Sales Performance. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. May 2024. [Link](#)



Reaching Universal Access with Market-Based Sanitation. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. January 2024. [Link](#)

Approaches to Sanitation Business Development Support at District Level. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. January 2024. [Link](#)

Piloting Smart and Targeted Sanitation Subsidies. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. April 2023. [Link](#)

USAID Transform WASH Business Models. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2022. [Link](#)

Ethiopia's Business Environment and How It Influences WASH Market Development (updated version). Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. December 2021. [Link](#)

Women as Business Leaders. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2020. [Link](#)

An Assessment of Sanitation Financing Options for Enterprises and Households. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2020. [Link](#)

An Assessment of Demand Creation of Sanitation Products and Services. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2019. [Link](#)

Should Sanitation be Taxed? Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2019. [Link](#)

Assessment of Field Performance and Acceptance of the SATO Pan in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH. September 2018. [Link](#)

TRANSFORM WASH BLOG POSTS AND ONLINE RESOURCES

1. Market-based sanitation: 21 short videos. 2023. [Link](#)
2. Supporting microentrepreneurs through WASH capacity building. June 2023. [Link](#)
3. Market-based sanitation's win-win. June 2023. [Link](#)
4. Mother 'SATO'. March 2023. [Link](#)
5. Meet Yeshi - A Success Story from USAID Transform WASH. February 2023. [Link](#)
6. Lead with problems, end with a sale. September 2022. [Link](#)
7. Join the course 'Market-Based Sanitation: The basics'. June 2022. [Link](#)
8. Reaching 100 percent sanitation access in Ethiopia – Can it be done? January 2022. [Link](#)
9. Connecting market-based sanitation stakeholders in the age of Covid. November 2021. [Link](#)
10. Innovating for no-touch hand washing: Ethiopian industrial designers reach for scale. May 2021. [Link](#)
11. What it takes to build a sanitation market: USAID Transform WASH and the plastic toilet slab in Ethiopia. October 2020. [Link](#)
12. How poor installation created new businesses opportunities. June 2019. [Link](#)
13. IRC USAID Transform WASH landing page. April 2017. [Link](#)
14. PSI USAID Transform WASH resource page. [Link](#)

