

The logo for IRC (International Rescue Committee) is displayed in large, white, sans-serif letters. The letters are slightly overlapping, with 'I' at the top left, 'R' in the middle, and 'C' at the bottom right.

June 2019

Monitoring Report 2018

As submitted by IRC to the Directorate-General for International Cooperation of The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Supporting water sanitation
and hygiene services for life

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Its content is derived from monitoring and learning reports submitted by all staff from IRC offices in The Netherlands, United States, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India and Uganda.

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Abbreviations

A4C	Agenda for Change
CAO	Collective Labour Agreement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWSA	Community Water and Sanitation Agency
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation
DWSPs	District Water and Sanitation Plans
HEWASA	Health through Water and Sanitation
HPMA	Hand Pump Mechanics Association
HR	Human Resources
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
JMP	Joint WHO/UNICEF Monitoring Programme
LCCA	Life-Cycle Cost Approach
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MUS	Multiple Use water Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRDI	Natural Resource Defence Initiative
NSA	National Sanitation Authority
O&M	Operations and Management
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OWNP	One WASH National Program
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
PTSP	Para Todos, Por Siempre (Everyone, Forever)
QIS	Qualitative Information System
RWSN	Rural Water Supply Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (Ethiopia)
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
SWSSB	Subcounty Water Supply and Sanitation Board
ToC	Theory of Change
UWASNET	Uganda Water and Sanitation Network
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
WSUP	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
WWW	World Water Week
YEP	Young Expert Programme

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Executive summary

Two-thousand and eighteen was the second year of IRC's ambitious 2017-2030 strategy and Theory of Change, both of which map out our intended contribution to achieving the water related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 6). At the heart of this ambitious new programme is a commitment to supporting partner districts in our focus countries to achieve universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene services. Success at district level will act as the necessary proof of concept for adoption and replication of lessons learned at national and global level.

IRC's Theory of Change is based on the understanding that providing universal and sustainable access to WASH services requires strong national and local WASH systems. It is equally based on the understanding that building strong WASH systems requires collective action by all involved in those systems. IRC's priority actions and its change hub role are designed to support partnerships that, through effective collective action, build national and local WASH systems. As well as supporting partnerships through our work as a change hub, we also contribute directly to systems strengthening where we have specific technical competencies. These include national monitoring system development, life-cycle costing or asset management.

To measure progress against its Theory of Change, IRC developed an ambitious new results framework and monitoring system. In 2018, the baselines for the framework were largely completed and inform this report. Training across the IRC team on the new – and challenging – framework also took place.

The results framework aims to assess progress along IRC's entire Theory of Change. It uses a mix of quantitative and semi-quantitative methods to measure: the level of WASH service provided; the strength of WASH systems; and the behaviour of stakeholders within a system. The monitoring system was developed to clearly identify IRC's contribution to systems change: locally, nationally and globally. The results framework is almost ready, and an online public facing reporting tool is in the final stages of testing and will go live in the first semester of 2019.

The first full year of the monitoring framework's usage found areas of weakness, particularly around the collection of stories of change that were intended to complement the more formal data collected. Drawing on our experience (in our Watershed: empowering citizens project) with outcome harvesting to acquire rich stories of change, we will incorporate outcome harvesting into the monitoring framework in 2019. We will also strengthen process documentation more generally.



Launch event of the Asutifi North WASH district master plan in Ghana, March 2018.

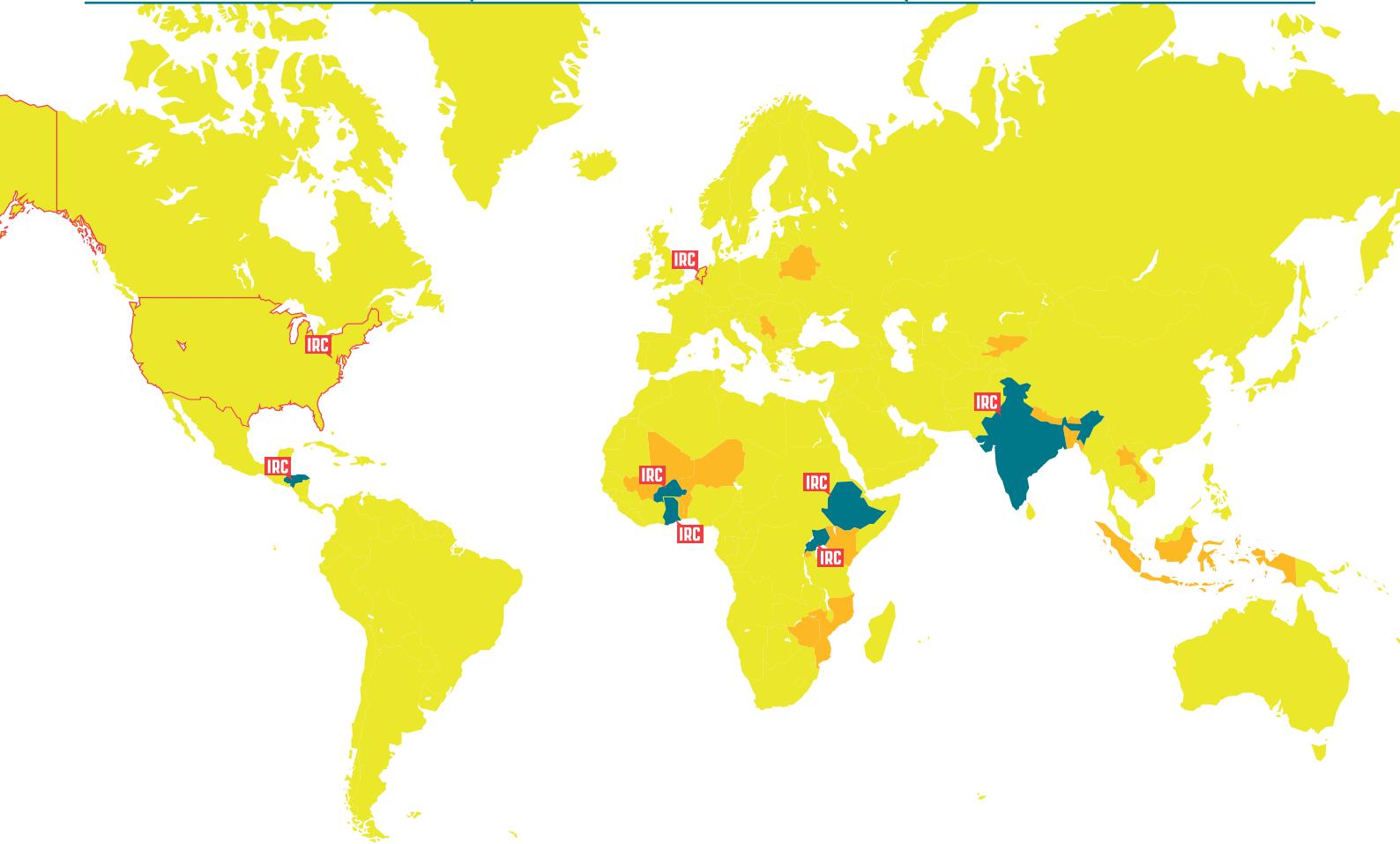
Results and learnings

Most importantly, both globally and in focus countries, we continue to find openness to the concept of systems strengthening. In 2018, this led to the development of strong, district based partnerships, in all countries, with district master plans for universal access by 2030 completed and launched in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Uganda and close to being launched in Ethiopia.

The master plans are important documents in themselves, typically the first of their kind to have even been developed in the country. They are not perfect and often prepared with insufficient financial analysis (this is a focus for 2019). However, more important than the documents are the processes that lead to their development. These involved large-scale mobilisation of all key actors across the districts; were led by local government; and involved external support agencies – with IRC playing the role of a coordinating hub. As such, the processes are objectively verifiable indicators of two key outcomes of our Theory of Change: the development of strong partnerships and growth in political leadership. The challenge in 2019 and beyond will be to build on these processes and turn the master plans into living documents.

1. IRC at a glance

WHO'S INVOLVED?	WHAT DID WE PRODUCE?	HOW MANY PEOPLE DID WE REACH?
<p>6 focus country programmes and 1 international programme</p> <p>9 partner districts and 15 Para Todos Por Siempre (PTPS) partner municipalities</p> <p>8 offices including 6 in focus countries</p> <p>89 active programmes and projects</p> <p>31 staff in the Netherlands 43 country staff</p> <p>20+ associates 16 interns</p> <p>421 IRC Consult advisory days over 14 IRC Consult assignments in 10 countries</p> <p>€ 11 million invested from 32 donors and with 49 clients</p>	<p>4 Theories of Change developed for our district partnerships</p> <p>4 district WASH master plans supported</p> <p>93 capacity-building events worldwide co-organised by IRC</p> <p>25 working groups and learning platforms supported in our focus countries</p> <p>76 resources of which 38 research outputs and 5 co-published books</p> <p>12 WASH Talk podcasts 11 Amplify newsletters and 44 videos</p> <p>126 news items and 93 blogs published on our website</p>	<p>2,187,157 people in the partner districts we work with directly</p> <p>2,480 people attending capacity-building events worldwide co-organised by IRC</p> <p>38,020 unique downloads from our website</p> <p>18,257 returning visitors to our website</p> <p>22,037 social media engagements</p> <p>333 Google Scholar citations</p> <p>14 references to our work by global media</p>



Locations

6 focus countries

The largest part of our work happens in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India and Uganda.

12 additional countries

Through numerous consultancy assignments and partnerships, we also worked in Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda.

8 offices around the world

We have IRC offices in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India and Uganda, and additional offices in the Netherlands (HQ) and the United States.

2. Introduction



Figure 1: Change logic of IRC's Theory of Change

The overall change logic of IRC's Theory of Change (ToC) at country level is guided by the vision of 'WASH services for everyone', the SDG 6 target for 2030. This is the ToC's highest level of outcome. The services require and will be delivered through 'strong national and local WASH systems' (intermediate level outcome), which require in turn that 'actors are aligned with systems approaches' (lowest level of outcome). In our framework we regard 'improved health, education and livelihoods' as the impact that WASH services provide to everyone.

The second year that IRC's work was guided by our new strategy and Theory of Change within the context of our vision for 2030 [IRC strategic framework 2017-30] was 2018. The detailed Theory of Change (see [Annex 1](#)) shows how IRC will achieve its mission by working at district, national and global level over the next 12 years.

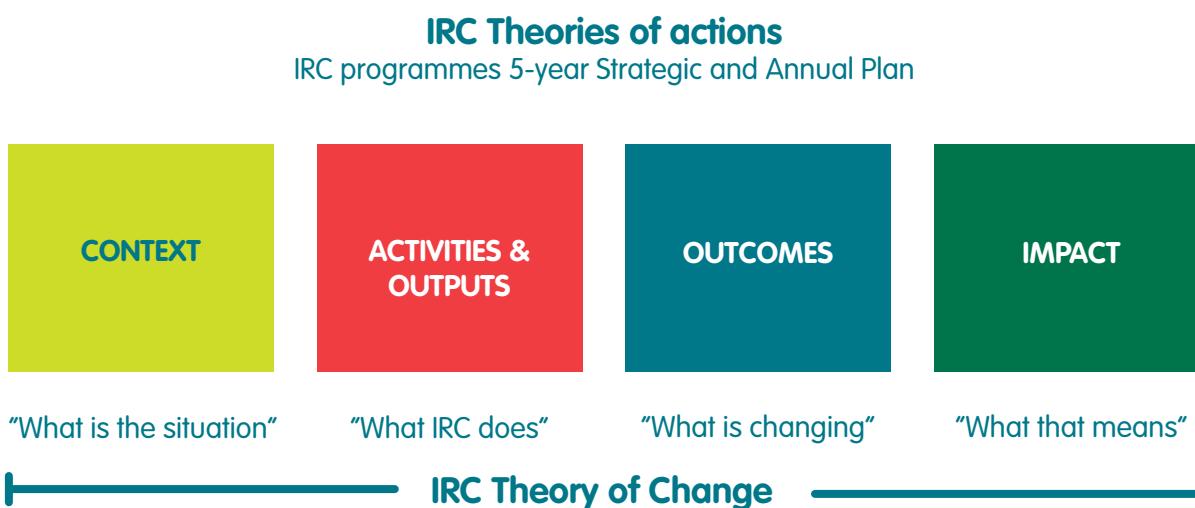


Figure 2: Elements of IRC's Theory of Change and theories of action

Figure 2 shows the elements that make up IRC's Theory of Change and theories of action. The theories of action are present at programme level (country and international) and are shaped by their individual strategies and annual plans. Figure 3 illustrates a WASH sector Theory of Change in IRC's perspective of systems thinking. Articulating IRC's contribution to changes in WASH sector systems has implications for its programming. At the same time, IRC's Theory of Change helps visualise how IRC believes the WASH sector should change to deliver sustainable WASH services for all and how IRC's programmes can contribute to achieving this.



Figure 3: WASH sector Theory of Change

At high level, the logic that underpins IRC's Theory of Change is set out in figure 4. This logic revolves around the understanding that building strong WASH systems requires collective action by all the key actors within the system. As such, building, supporting and being a hub for strong, government-led, partnerships dedicated to change is at the heart of the Theory of Change. The Theory of Change calls for WASH sector stakeholders to identify, agree, support and enable each other's change and the strengthening of roles if strong national WASH systems that deliver sustainable services to all are to be developed. This determines the three groups of outcomes that are monitored by IRC's results framework in which we assume that WASH services for everyone will affect health, livelihood and development (= impact) in many ways. Health, livelihood and development are therefore not included in IRC's results framework.



Figure 4: Logic of IRC's Theory of Change

An important shift in emphasis between previous and current strategies is the explicit identification of partner districts in IRC's focus countries, where IRC is committed to supporting broad-based partnerships led by local government to deliver universal basic access to water, sanitation and hygiene. These partner districts also function as laboratories of IRC WASH system approaches. The country summaries in chapter 4 reflect on developments in these partner districts.

IRC's Theory of Change identifies five principal WASH outcomes for our partner districts, five outcomes for the national WASH sector in our focus countries and three outcomes for the global level (see [Annex 1](#)).

During 2018, most of the baselines of the programmes were finalised using an innovative results framework with which to measure progress towards the SDG 6 targets. However, there are still some critical areas that will need more attention: monitoring service levels at the district level; monitoring the financial gaps at the district level that hinder achieving SDG 6; and monitoring changes in inequalities in access to services.

At the country and district level, IRC's activities can be divided into five main groups which, together, both drive and support systems strengthening. These are: advocating for political commitment and leadership; being a hub for partnerships for change; carrying out action research on service delivery models; building capacity of government and other partners; and, sharing information and knowledge. In addition, at district level, IRC actively supports the implementation of a systems strengthening roadmap developed with other Agenda for Change partners in its International Programme. The International Programme focuses on advocating and building partnerships for a systems approach for improving WASH services.

This report presents an overview of IRC's programmes in 2018. Section 3 briefly explains how we are measuring WASH systems change and progress in IRC programmes. Section 4 then summarises and reflects on the outcome level achievements of the programmes in 2018, followed by section 5 that gives an overview of the programmes' key outputs and activities. Section 5.2 focuses specifically on the contribution of DGIS funding of IRC programmes. Section 6 gives an overview of the inputs that make IRC's programmes possible.

This annual analytical progress review of IRC is also available in IATI, where the financial flows of the DGIS programme funds are reported.

3. Measuring WASH sector change and IRC programme progress

IRC's Theory of Change describes IRC's vision and guides its actions on the roadmap to achieving the SDG 6 targets and WASH systems that provide sustainable WASH services for everyone. It maps out both the outcomes that we think are most critical for the sector to deliver WASH services, and IRC's proposed contribution to those outcomes. IRC's results framework is, therefore, designed to measure both the development of the WASH system at district and national level, and IRC's contribution to this development. Given the understanding that sector strengthening requires collective action by multiple WASH actors, and IRC's desire to play a role in supporting the partnerships that will deliver this collective action, much of IRC's impact will be in the form of contributing to shared outcomes.

Two-thousand and eighteen was the second year of the new strategy and Theory of Change, and the first year for which we are collecting our experiences of working with the results framework. The results framework for IRC programmes in our focus countries measures the following at outcome level: (1) four behaviour change outcomes; (2) the strength of the WASH system, using nine building blocks; and, (3) the WASH service levels (partner district and national level). The International Programme uses eight indicators to measure progress towards three global outcomes.

A summary of the scores is presented in [Annex 2](#).

The outcomes of the country programmes are divided into three groups. The International Programme only monitors outcomes related to 'alignment with systems approaches'.

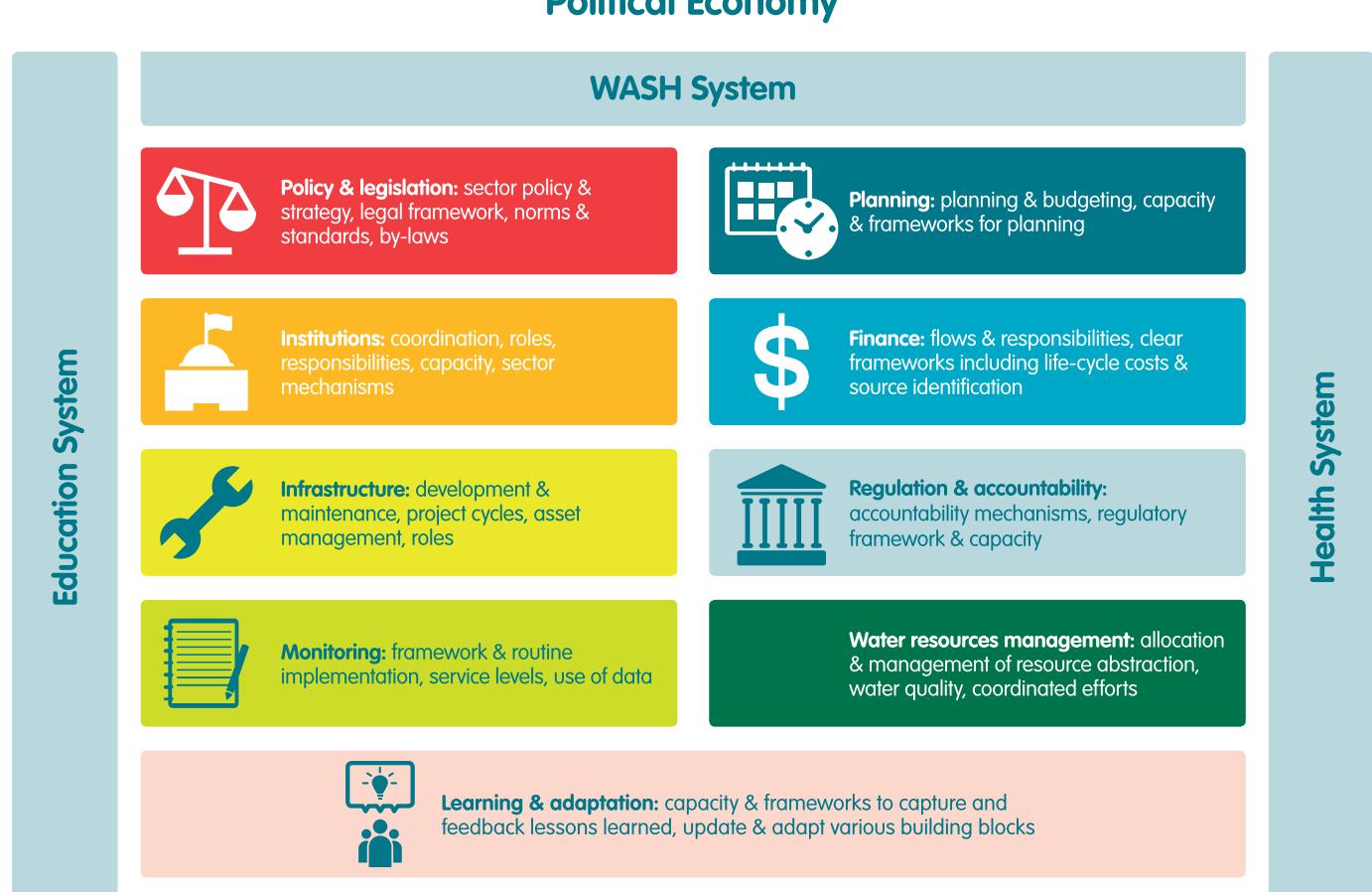


Figure 5: Context of a WASH system within the broader political economy. WASH systems overlap and interact with education and health systems.

1. Monitoring actors' alignment with systems approaches: measuring behaviour change.

Crucial in achieving the Theory of Change outcomes is that the actors are willing and able to perform the required activities in all WASH system building blocks. For both the district and the national levels, IRC's Theory of Change identifies four key behaviour change outcomes achieved by adopting WASH systems approaches. Together, these contribute to the fifth outcome of building strong systems needed to deliver services (see next section). The four behaviour change outcomes are: strong political and financial commitment; strong partnerships for change; strong Service Delivery Models; and, strong capacity of the key actors.

IRC contributes associated groups of related activities to each of these outcomes. A crucial set of activities and one in which IRC believes it has a unique set of skills relates to being a hub for sector change. It sees a hub as an organisation that supports others in change focused partnerships.

The four outcomes are measured using QIS ladders and are scored separately for each WASH sub-sector at the national level. For the partner or district level, the scoring is done for the WASH sector as a whole because at this level it is mostly the same group of actors that are collaboratively responsible for the different WASH sub-sectors.

2. Monitoring the strength of national and district WASH systems: measuring the WASH system building blocks defined by IRC as the foundation of a functional WASH system.

The fifth outcome of the IRC Theory of Change is the overall strength of the WASH system. The building blocks are a way of breaking down the complexity of the entire WASH systems into more manageable chunks that make intuitive sense to sector practitioners. The WASH actors have to interact with each other and work together to become a strong building block or element of the WASH system. IRC defined the building blocks based on its experience with local and national WASH systems.

For the water and sanitation WASH sub-sectors, each building block is evaluated and scored separately at the district and national levels. The WASH hygiene and extra-household settings sub-sectors only use five building blocks instead of all nine.

For the water and sanitation building blocks, four to six 'scoring statements' have been defined for each building block. The WASH sub-sectors 'hygiene' and 'extra-household settings' use only one assessment statement for each building block.

3. WASH services monitoring: our highest outcome level that measures the quality of services delivered.

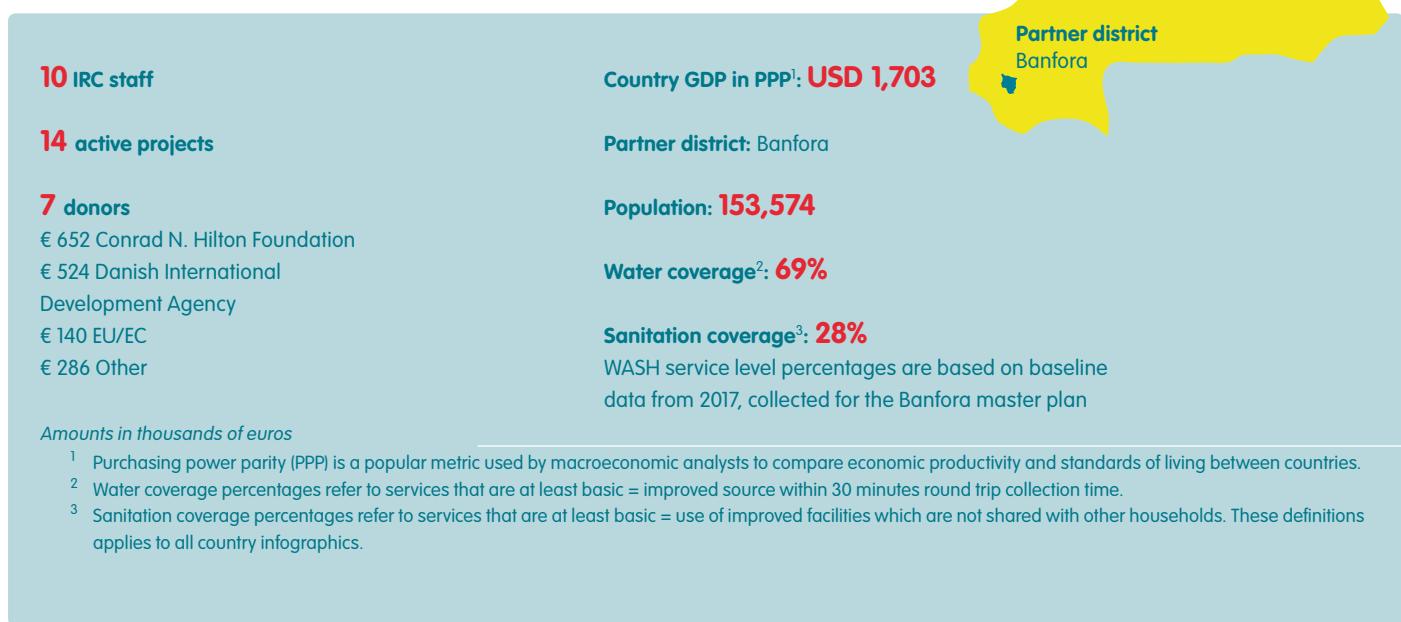
For monitoring WASH service delivery, the IRC programme strives to follow the SDG 6 indicators using JMP's more detailed definitions and ladders. Ideally, national and local actors through country-led monitoring do the data collection and monitoring of the quality of service delivery. But in practice, country monitoring systems do not, as yet, collect data using JMP indicators, and rarely even use their own. At the national level, the available national surveys are translated by the JMP. In our partner districts, the same translation methodology cannot be used because often the only data available is facility-based data and rather than household-level data. In 2018, IRC in collaboration with the local authorities, made a start with translating locally available data into values for the JMP indicators. In the coming year, we will also start analysing the financial gaps in the partners' districts and developing financial strategies for achieving the district master plans.

4. Progress against outcomes in 2018

Two-thousand and eighteen was the second year of IRC's new strategic framework 2017-30. During the year, the country programmes mainly focused on strengthening the work in the partner districts, in particular on developing the district master plans with partners. The section below describes, by programme, the combination of developments in the sector and the highlights of some of IRC's contributions to changes in the key outcome areas of its Theory of Change. The International Programme gives the 2018 highlights in four key areas: systems thinking, WASH finance, the role of civil society and IRC's contribution to networks and partnerships.

4.1 Burkina Faso

IRC Burkina Faso at a glance



General

The main challenge is the deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso as well as in neighbouring Niger and Mali in 2018. Unfortunately, there was both a surge in the number of terrorist attacks as well as an increase in the geographical spread where these attacks occurred. As a direct consequence, government budget allocations to the WASH sector decreased (-58% of WASH Ministry budget) as funds were diverted to manage the security situation. IRC Burkina Faso is developing a security plan to prevent and mitigate the security risks for its staff and associates wherever possible.

IRC partner district

The partner district in Burkina Faso is Banfora district in the south-west of the country. During 2018, IRC, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (CNHF) grantees and the Banfora district authorities jointly developed a WASH district master plan to attain universal and sustainable access to WASH services by 2030 (E16.48). A Municipal Committee for Water and Sanitation (including a learning alliance platform) was established in Banfora district to drive the change required to achieve the joint vision for the district.

The master plans started to be implemented in June 2018, initially with funding from the CNHF (E18.75). A wide range of technical assistance activities were carried out related to systems strengthening, capacity building, and support for fundraising and partnerships to support the implementation of the master plan. A wide range of external parties were contacted and the municipality has so far been successful in formalising partnerships with nine local, national and international organisations. Systems strengthening activities, including capacity building of key actors, also took place.

These included: the training of district authorities and municipal technicians in the management of public water services; the development of a communal monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the performance of public drinking water and sanitation services; and the implementation of the municipal master plan.

In addition to Banfora district, IRC also supported the municipalities of Bérégadougou and Niangoloko to develop WASH strategic master plans to achieve the water and sanitation related SDGs by 2030 (E16.48). Furthermore, outside Burkina Faso, master plans were also developed in Torodi and Makalondi in Niger and in Tioribougou, Nossombougou and Oulodo in Mali (E17.29).

National level

At a water and sanitation awards ceremony held on 2 February 2018, IRC was offered the PNE-BF special prize for its commitment to and actions undertaken in the context of good governance for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. The ceremony was a side event at the National Forum for Water and Sanitation, before an audience of national and international actors.

As part of the Danida financed Human Rights Based Approach to WASH project (E17.21), a joint annual work plan was developed by the Faseau consortium of CSOs and media. The aim of the work plan is to operationalise the partnership around advocacy to improve sector performance, responsiveness and accountability. As part of the same project, 795 sector actors were trained on the human rights based approach for WASH.

The 'Fasotoilettes' national sanitation campaign is a crowdfunding campaign where middle-class citizens are mobilised to support their parents living in rural areas construct toilets. The campaign was kick-started through advertisements in the national mainstream media and mobilisation events at national and subnational level and is gaining traction (E17.28). Even if the national targets have not yet been fully met, more than 11,000 toilets were pledged during 2018. IRC and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation were instrumental in taking the campaign to Banfora on Friday 21 December 2018, where 1,500 toilets are expected to be constructed by December 2019.

The partnership formed between IRC, WHO and UNICEF to influence high level decision makers to improve sector effectiveness, inter-sectoral coordination and overall sector financing is continuing despite the difficult security situation. In November 2018, IRC was invited to address the members of Parliament and senior government representatives on the challenges Burkina Faso is facing in achieving SDG 6. As part of the sector learning partnership with UNICEF (E18.03), a two-day national level symposium was organised in September 2018 which was attended by 170 sector professionals. The symposium revealed a great number of challenges to achieving SDG 6.2 that need to be addressed. The participants recognised the need for a clear vision and phased strategy up to 2030 as it is not realistic to do everything at the same time.

Other activities

IRC continued supporting six non-focus districts in Burkina as part of an EU funded project (E17.16). The project focuses on strengthening municipal technical units and local decision making bodies.

Reflections on 2018 achievements

In Banfora, the collective adoption of the strategic master plan demonstrates that the stakeholders share the same vision and that they are committed to using the master plan as a relevant framework for mobilising and strengthening the partnership initiated to attain universal access to water and sanitation for everyone by 2030.

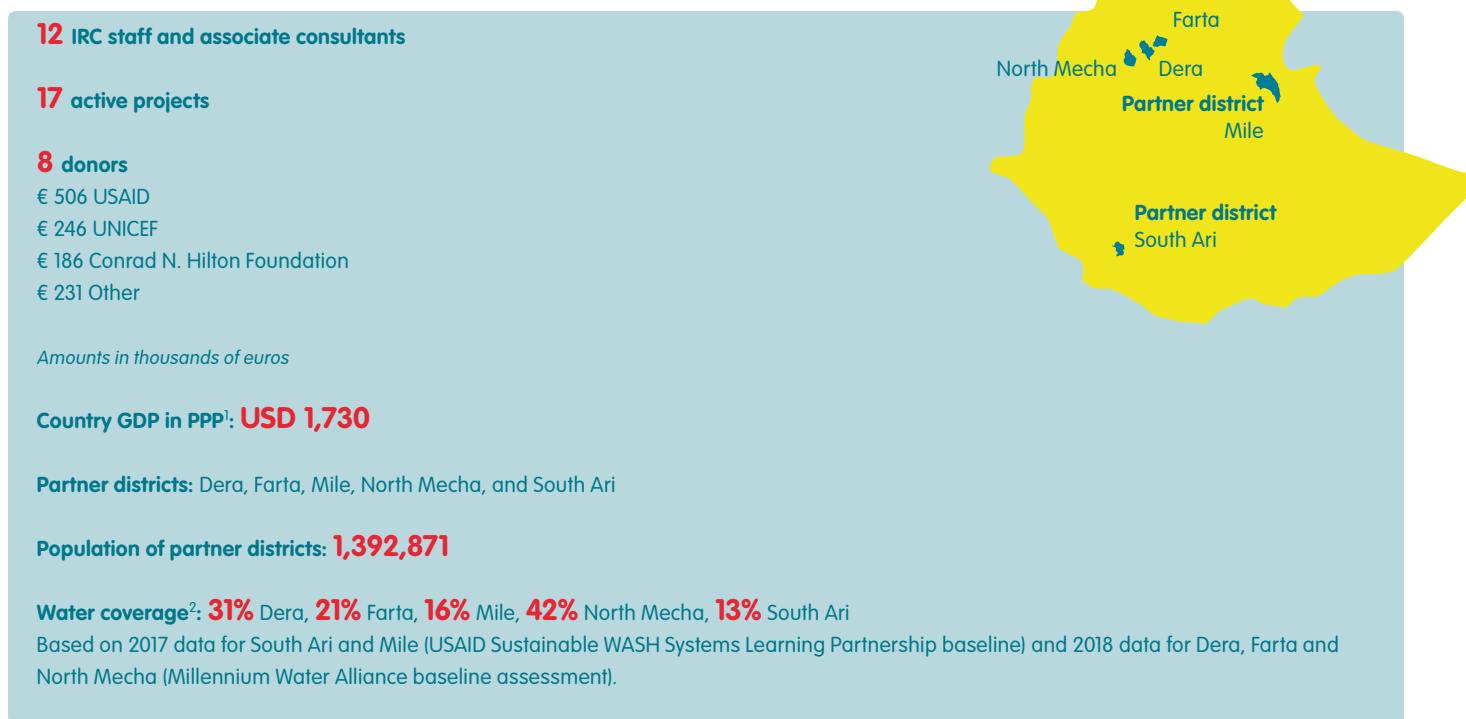
The work carried out as part of the national level partnership with UNICEF and WHO has helped increase awareness among national executive stakeholders such as members of parliament and senior government officials of the sector's financing gap and the consequences this could have on achieving SDG 6. It is expected that this heightened awareness will translate into higher levels of political and financial commitment in the coming years.

The Faseau consortium of CSOs and national media organisations is instrumental in creating a distinct role for civil society in promoting human rights and lobbying for adequate and sustainable WASH services. The training of strategic stakeholders on human rights to water and sanitation helps to build a strong civil society.

The challenges primarily relate to the deteriorating security situation which draws away government attention and resources; the complex inter-agency relations surrounding the work in Banfora; and, some capacity gaps within the team.

4.2 Ethiopia

IRC Ethiopia at a glance



General

2018 was year of change in Ethiopia, with widespread changes in the political environment that are anticipated to support development. A state of emergency was lifted and followed by restructuring of the government and shifts in policies with respect to civil society engagement and private sector development that are likely to have major impacts on IRC's work. In 2019, the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) will restructure to include a new Water Development Commission (WDC), and new directorates related to infrastructure management and monitoring. The Ministry of Health also upgraded the Hygiene and Environmental Health in 2018 to a full directorate providing the potential for WASH to receive more attention from government. To support growth and new activities IRC also decided and applied in 2018 to change its form of registration in Ethiopia and establish as a foreign NGO under the auspices of IRC.

Partner and other districts

In 2018, strengthening our partnerships at district level was a continued focus. In Mile (Afar) and South Ari (SNNPR) – where we work closely with the USAID Lowland WASH Activity - this included supporting further development of coordination through a learning alliance platform and action research activities seeking to find solutions to maintenance and monitoring challenges, both supported by the Sustainable WASH System (SWS) learning partnership. The partnership in our two focus districts (South Ari and Mile) is maturing and improving with partners meeting quarterly as a learning alliance platform. Local government WASH sector offices and other actors are well represented in the learning alliance meetings, working jointly on innovations and are replicating activities (such as training activities). Together with the Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) and funding from the Conrad N Hilton Foundation, new long-term partnerships established (and funded) with three districts in Amhara region (Dera, Farta and North Mecha). Baselines were established in all these woredas using IRC monitoring tools and additional tools such as network analysis have been deployed to allow our impacts to be tracked and assessed.

Regional and national

At regional and national levels, IRC has also strengthened its partnerships and networks. This includes building on support to the Ministry of Health and its Sanitation Marketing Multi-Stakeholder Platform to which IRC provides the secretariat (on behalf

of the USAID Transform WASH project) to also extend learning platforms on sanitation marketing to four regions for sanitation marketing. IRC also plays a vital role in multi-stakeholder partnerships at regional level in Afar and Somali, focusing on the improvement of asset management to sustain water services and using strengthening of monitoring systems as an entry point.

IRC has been influential in national debates and processes during 2018, as a participant and convener. IRC participated in activities related to the uptake of the rural water utilities model promoted by MoWIE, UNICEF and other technical working group partners. Work on strengthening of maintenance models through SWS – seeking to address one of the national priorities of low functionality rates – included organising a national learning visit in Tigray to review innovations by SNV and other partners. First steps have been taken through meetings and a seminar towards promoting collaboration between the systems strengthening initiatives of different NGOs and projects that cover 15 woredas. This is expected to evolve towards a community of practice related to the Agenda for Change.

IRC has been instrumental in showing how effective government-led monitoring systems can be built at woreda and regional levels, critical with this being one of the weakest building blocks of the WASH system. This has supported the introduction of sensor technologies for real-time monitoring (in Afar) and in Somali is supporting UNICEF and development partners to transition from emergency to development focused interventions. The main challenge is to institutionalise the use of these systems by local government, but progress is promising.

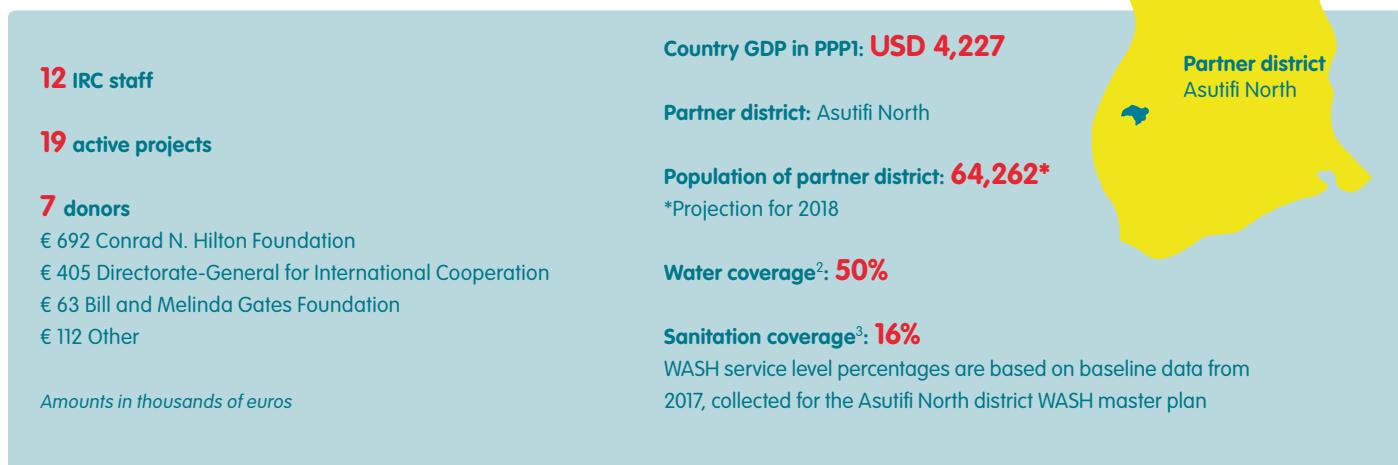
IRC was active in 2018 in several research partnerships. Research on water security with Cranfield University, Oxfam and FSA was also completed in Afar (under the Water-security and the Emotional Response of Pastoralists project funded by ESRC and DFID) and shared through a national seminar. This is expected to strengthen monitoring of vulnerable communities in water programmes. Under the REACH programme led by Oxford University and funded by DFID, action research on reducing water quality risks through the protection of multiple use wells was initiated. This seeks to reduce risks associated with Self-supply, an important service delivery model in many parts of the country. For UNICEF, an important programme of sustainability checks across UNICEF's rural portfolio was initiated (in addition to ONEWASH Plus activities in small towns) and is expected to support strengthening of UNICEF's programme.

To extend our influence in capacity building a new partnership was developed with the Ethiopia Water Technology Institute and a programme of collaborative activities planned for 2019.

Other highlights in 2018 were the hosting of the SWS annual meeting in Ethiopia and support to Splash (funded by the Conrad N Hilton Foundation) in building its partnerships and documenting the it's WASH in Schools model to reach all schools in Addis Ababa. A book on self-supply was also initiated (to be completed in 2019) to promote consideration of an important but neglected service delivery model. IRC with partners also supported MoWIE in preparation for the National WASH Inventory (NWI-2), started at the end of 2018, and which will provide critical data nationwide for strengthening water services.

4.3 Ghana

IRC Ghana at a glance



General

A number of major changes in the political economy could possibly influence the IRC Ghana country programme in the coming years. One of these is the Government of Ghana's decision to exit the IMF's Extended Credit Facility programme. Another is its announced intention to build a 'Ghana Beyond Aid' and the subsequent shift of many development partners from supporting social programmes towards advancing economic growth and trade. These may have implications for the WASH sectors. They may also potentially limit IRC Ghana's opportunity to obtain donor funding. The Government's proposal to create six new regions and the elections that are expected to follow this change could mean that our partner district may have to readjust to a new regional administration and a new District Assembly.

IRC partner district

The partner district in Ghana is Asutifi North district in the Ahafo Region. The district WASH master plan was finalised in March 2018 and the Asutifi North Ahonidie Mpontuo (ANAM) – a unique partnership to achieve WASH for everyone in the district by 2030 – established. The Asutifi North District Assembly approved the WASH master plan which was subsequently incorporated into the 2018-2021 medium-term development plan and the 2018 annual plan and budget.

An MOU was signed between the Asutifi North District Assembly and the Hilton Grantees (IRC, Safe Water Network, World Vision, Netcentric Campaigns, Aquaya Institute and Centre for Disease Control) to formalise the partnership arrangement to initiate implementation of the master plan in the district (E18.74). Furthermore, a district MEL framework was developed through a broad stakeholder consultative process to provide a structured means of measuring sector performance and providing accountability to the district stakeholders (E18.74).

A mapping exercise of NGOs/CSOs supporting WASH services in the district was undertaken (E18.74) together with Netcentric Campaigns and the Global Alliance for Development Foundation (GADeF). The exercise unearthed current areas of operations, current capacity and resource gaps, and identified ways in which they could support the district-led WASH initiative. The exercise is part of a broader set of activities necessary to establish a district hub to support the implementation of the master plan. The district hub office established by IRC will support communications, knowledge management and learning and provide leadership and support to the district-led WASH coverage initiative.

In July 2018, IRC in collaboration with the Asutifi North District Assembly set up the District Learning Alliance Platform (AN-DLLAP). The learning platform is being hosted by the Asutifi North District Assembly, with the IRC district hub office serving as its secretariat. The AN-DLLAP meets regularly to agree on learning topics, identify facilitators for learning meetings and follow up on key decisions. Given the broad recognition of the need for strengthening the district capacity, this activity was prioritised for 2019.

WASH accountability tools were applied in the district. The application of the WASH accountability tools (social inclusion and financial tracking) and the documentation of the lessons learnt are being used to inform CSO engagement and learning cycles.

National level

Although IRC Ghana focuses primarily on district level work, the continued engagement at the national level allows IRC Ghana to influence sector dialogue and direction at the national level as well as support national WASH systems strengthening initiatives.

Under the Watershed project (E16.04), the national level finance study was initiated and will be completed in January 2019. The intention is to understand the nature and sources of financing, and allocations for WASH against set targets. The study will make recommendations and identify advocacy messages for engagement with national and district government authorities. An SDG indicator budget was published by the Ministry of Finance and is expected to guide implementation of the SDGs in the coming years.

IRC, the World Bank and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) are jointly organising a study on the institutional, policy and legal assessment of MSWR. An initial concept note and a TOR for the study were completed and the study is expected to commence in 2019.

Seven WASH Reflection papers were developed under the umbrella of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (E18.16). The reflection papers will be published in early 2019 together with the publication of two editions of the WASH Digest. The documentation and sharing of best practices serve as advocacy and decision support tools.

In July 2018 the Sanitation Challenge for Ghana Learning and Practice Convening was held for the 17 selected Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and private sector partners participating in the initiative. The IRC facilitated learning exchanges between the Government and the private sector are used to stimulate peer learning exchange and enable MMDAs to reflect on ways to enhance partnerships with non-state actors to intensify implementation of agreed strategies. In 2018, the selected MMDAs started to invest in innovative liquid waste management solutions.

Reflections on 2018 achievements

Overall, the Ghana programme is on track to achieve the set of WASH system strengthening outcomes. The Government's adoption of the SDGs and the development of a framework for their operationalisation is seen as instrumental in its endeavours to achieve the WASH and other SDGs.

With the new Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR), there is increasing clarity with regards to government leadership for the sector and the role of other sector actors. The National Development Planning Commission is providing overall leadership with regards to the SDGs and the MSWR is working with its partners to further develop the roles and mechanisms for achieving the national SDG 6 targets.

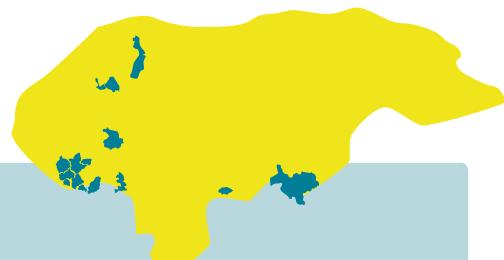
In 2018, the MSWR, with support from development partners, provided further guidance on urban and rural sanitation strategies, sanitation service delivery mechanisms, and pro-poor targeting. During 2018 some progress was made but further work is necessary to find lasting solutions to reduce risks associated with poor sanitation.

The WASH sector continues to test and refine WASH service delivery models. These include: the operational research on rural sanitation strategies to adapt a rural sanitation delivery model led by UNICEF with technical support by IRC; testing the effectiveness of a prize awarding mechanism to incentivise district leadership; prioritising sanitation led by IMC World Wide with IRC as the implementing agent; testing of public private partnerships (PPP) initiatives led by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands and RVO with IRC providing support and facilitating the annual review meetings; and CWSA leading community water reforms through piloting small town water systems utility WASH delivery with advisory support from IRC.

The challenges primarily relate to dealing with a fast moving and changing political economy; defining our role as a hub in Asutifi in the face of multiple expectations; and, dealing with the need to manage two key initiatives (Watershed and ANAM) in different parts of the country.

4.4 Honduras

IRC Honduras at a glance



1 IRC staff

5 active projects

4 donors

€ 81 Osprey Foundation

€ 59 Directorate-General for International Cooperation

€ 32 Inter-American Development Bank

Amounts in thousands of euros

Country GDP in PPP¹: USD 4,542

Para Todos Por Siempre (PTPS) partner municipalities:

Candelaria, Camasca, Chinda, Colomoncagua, Dolores, El Negrito, Erandique, Gualcinse, Jesús de Otoro, Marcala, Piraera, San Antonia de Cortés, San Andrés, San Matias, Trojes

Population of partner municipalities:

284,750

Water coverage in partner municipalities²: ranging from **44%** to **94%**

Sanitation coverage in partner municipalities³: ranging from **46%** to **94%**

Numbers come from 2013 census data and are interpreted against JMP definitions: INE, 2013. Censo de Población y Vivienda 2013. Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Looking back: Partnership, political prioritisations and the building blocks of the WASH system

In 2018, IRC played a leading role in strengthening the Para Todos Por Siempre (PTPS) partnership. It: 1) facilitated the elaboration of its Theory of Change and corresponding strategic framework; 2) led the second round of PTPS progress monitoring; and 3) initiated a number of improvements in the internal functioning of the PTPS secretariat. These have resulted in greater clarity among key members on how we seek to achieve the vision and how we monitor progress. They also helped clarify the role of different types of members in system change. Some fundamental challenges still persist in PTPS, in particular members struggle to follow the roadmap approach fully and continuously in the municipalities where they are supposed to facilitate that process.

During 2018, the low level of political prioritisation of WASH by the national Government that PTPS members had been clamouring for, was felt more acutely by the new leadership of CONASA and the development banks. Triggered by this, PTPS put in motion a process of introspection and reflection on the state of the sector. We organised a reflection workshop on achievements of the reform at municipal level in July 2018, and prepared for one on achievements at national level in January 2019. These workshops allowed the analysis of some of the deeper systemic causes for the situation in the sector. A main reflection is that to effect changes in the municipal WASH system, changes in the broader framework for decentralisation, including fiscal, are needed. We expect these, and other, reflections to trigger a next phase in the sector reform process. These developments also reiterated the need for an advocacy strategy targeting the highest level of the executive and the ministries responsible for decentralisation, a process that was started in 2018 by PTPS partners.

IRC partner districts

The changes in the WASH system at national level are largely informed by the processes in PTPS associated municipalities. However, the resulting changes in the WASH system at municipal level are happening more slowly. Specific changes in outcomes observed include the following.

Municipal political commitment, leadership and partnerships. After the municipal elections in late 2017, PTPS members put their efforts into: reconfirming their commitment to the new municipal authorities; working towards the vision of everyone, forever; and their commitment to continued participation in PTPS. IRC supported their commitment by running reflection workshops in eight municipalities. The workshops revealed that some municipalities that originally had strong political commitment to WASH experienced set-backs. Others, that had barely any support from PTPS, had made important commitments to WASH on their own initiative. This process showed the fundamental challenge in keeping abreast of the status across the 26 PTPS municipalities, and even among the smaller group of municipalities that receive indirect support from IRC.

Financing building blocks at municipal level. The costing exercise that was carried out in some of the municipalities involved municipal authorities and technicians. The exercise triggered a few of these municipalities to claim to have increased the budget in their annual plans. But no structural assessments on the validity of these claims have been done.

Institutions, infrastructure and planning building blocks. Some changes were achieved in these building blocks in the PTPS associated building blocks. For example, some of the municipal institutions were strengthened, asset registries completed and municipal WASH plans completed. IRC contributed only indirectly to these as most of the work was done by PTPS partners.

National level

At national level, the programme focused on three specific building blocks of the WASH system.

1. Service delivery models for dispersed rural areas. We finalised the documentation for a pilot intervention model for WASH in these dispersed communities. In addition, we facilitated a dialogue with key government departments that resulting in a policy guidelines document for WASH in dispersed rural areas. These policy guidelines are now with CONASA for its formal approval.

2. Finance building block. This building block was strengthened by producing a number of draft reference values for various life-cycle costs and having a set of costing tools validated and endorsed by the relevant national government authorities. We contributed to this by carrying out an exercise to assess the costs of reaching everyone, forever in eight municipalities. Based on the outcomes, we started synthesising draft reference values for the life-cycle costs. This work is not yet finalised. We used a set of costing tools and corresponding manuals for this process. ERSPAS, the national regulator, endorsed the tool for

calculating rural tariffs. CONASA endorsed the inclusion of the other tools into the guidelines for developing strategic WASH plans, called PEMAS.

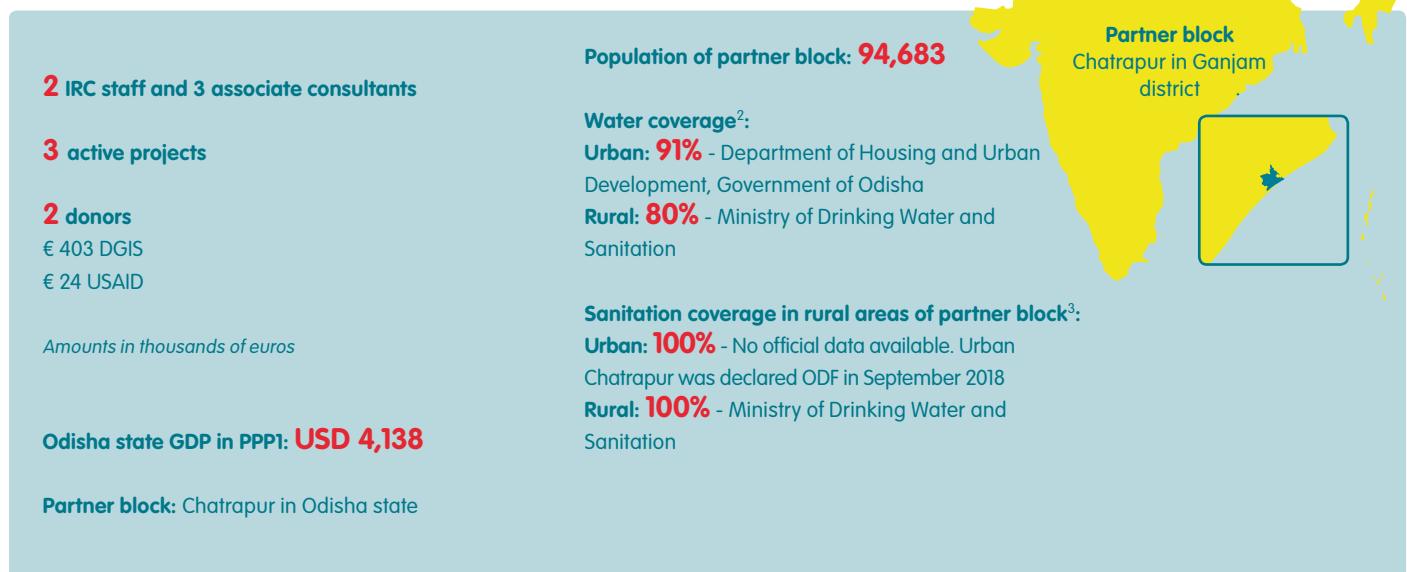
3. Planning building block. The main change in this building block is the adoption of the new guidelines for the PEMAS. IRC contributed to this through PTPS by critically reviewing the PEMAS developed in some of the PTPS municipalities, and contributing to the chapter on the financing of PEMAS.

Reflections on 2018 achievements

Unfortunately, it remains impossible to say how the changes in the WASH system at municipal level translate into changes in our overall outcome of improved access to and levels of service. The second round of monitoring of PTPS made it clear that the two main national mechanisms for system monitoring – household surveys by INE and the SIASAR monitoring – are inadequate in terms of the required level of granularity and frequency of updating. Moreover, though we have not updated the score for the monitoring building block, in our assessment there is slippage in this building block.

4.5 India

IRC India at a glance



Since 2014 there has been a significant push to clean up India's cities, towns and rural areas as part of the 'Swach Bharat (Clean India) Mission' (SBM). SBM aims to achieve an 'open-defecation free' (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Over the past few years, the entire government machinery has been working towards achieving the SBM toilet targets. Once the mission is accomplished, the expectation is that the government will focus on other pressing sanitation related aspects through what is called ODF+ and ODF++. Our ongoing work in both the rural and urban spaces is expected to provide evidence for investments beyond toilet adoption.

IRC partner district

The partner district in India is Ganjam District in the eastern state of Odisha. As Ganjam is one of the larger districts in the state with a population of over 3.5 million¹, IRC's activities are focused on its Chatrapur Block. The Watershed project is implemented in the same district. Our systems strengthening work focuses on the Institutions, Planning and Finance building blocks.

Our work during 2018 focused on four concrete outputs. Firstly, carrying out a rural and urban service level monitoring in 10 villages in Chatrapur block (E17.88). The results were shared with District, Block and Gram Panchayat officials. A separate

¹ Government of India, 2011 Census data

rapid urban sanitation assessment was carried out in Chatrapur town and shared with the Executive Officer of the larger neighbouring Urban Local Body (ULB) of Berhampur municipality who is also responsible for Chatrapur.

Secondly, budget tracking at the district level (E16.06) started with the selection of two local partners (Nidan and Gram Uthan). A partnership was established with the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), an independent non-profit organisation set up to enhance transparency and accountability in governance. A workshop was organised to familiarise Watershed and WaterAid partners from Odisha and Bihar on the government's planning and budgeting processes and key institutions responsible for water and sanitation service delivery. A second workshop was organised to train the partners in the use of the life-cycle cost analysis (LCCA) approach. As WaterAid is also involved, four districts are being covered instead of the original two. Data collection is ongoing and is expected to be completed by February 2019.

Thirdly, a 'light' assessment of capacity building initiatives and the capacity needs of key rural water and sanitation stakeholders involved in water and sanitation service delivery in Odisha (E17.88) was carried out. The assessment mapped state level training institutes and their range of existing training courses. Furthermore a start was made to map the training needs of the district level stakeholders. However, this is expected to require more work in 2019. During 2019 we will also continue our discussions with UNICEF which has shown keen interest in collaborating in this field.

Finally, in April 2018, a capacity-building workshop on advocacy was conducted in Delhi for the Watershed consortium partners, landscape partners and technical partners. After the workshop the partners were able to develop advocacy plans for their respective districts.

Ganjam, being the State Chief Minister's district, is comparatively open to trying new initiatives. However, how much we can leverage in terms of government funding depends on various factors like the ability to demonstrate results and providing support to local authorities so that they can achieve their targets for flagship programmes. To further our work in Ganjam district, we will engage more actively with the relevant state level line departments responsible for water and sanitation service delivery, especially on capacity and finance related issues.

National level

At the national level, we have consciously decided to limit our initiatives to sharing and collaborating with other like-minded organisations. We have been an active member in organising learning and sharing around sanitation through the Insights series. In 2018, five Insight platforms were organised together with the India Sanitation Coalition, SuSanA India Chapter and Taru to initiate discussions on challenges in the sanitation space.

In April 2018, a national level consultation was organised on SDG 6 in collaboration with FANSA, NIUA, WaterAid and the National Yuva Kendra. The consultation included CSO/NGO participation from across the country.

Other work

Despite our best efforts we decided to step out of the USAID IHUWASH consortium in July 2018 as the partnership did not come to maturity. We have not been actively involved in the programme since 2017, when we carried out rapid sanitation assessments in three Indian cities and organised training for senior government officials in The Hague, the Netherlands.

In February 2018, we carried out a rapid sanitation assessment in one of New Delhi's resettlement colonies at the request of a Delhi-based NGO called Cure². The assessment using the faecal waste calculator tool in practice. This tool is used for these types of rapid sanitation assessments and we were able to evaluate its suitability for use in smaller semi-urban communities.

Reflections on 2018 achievements

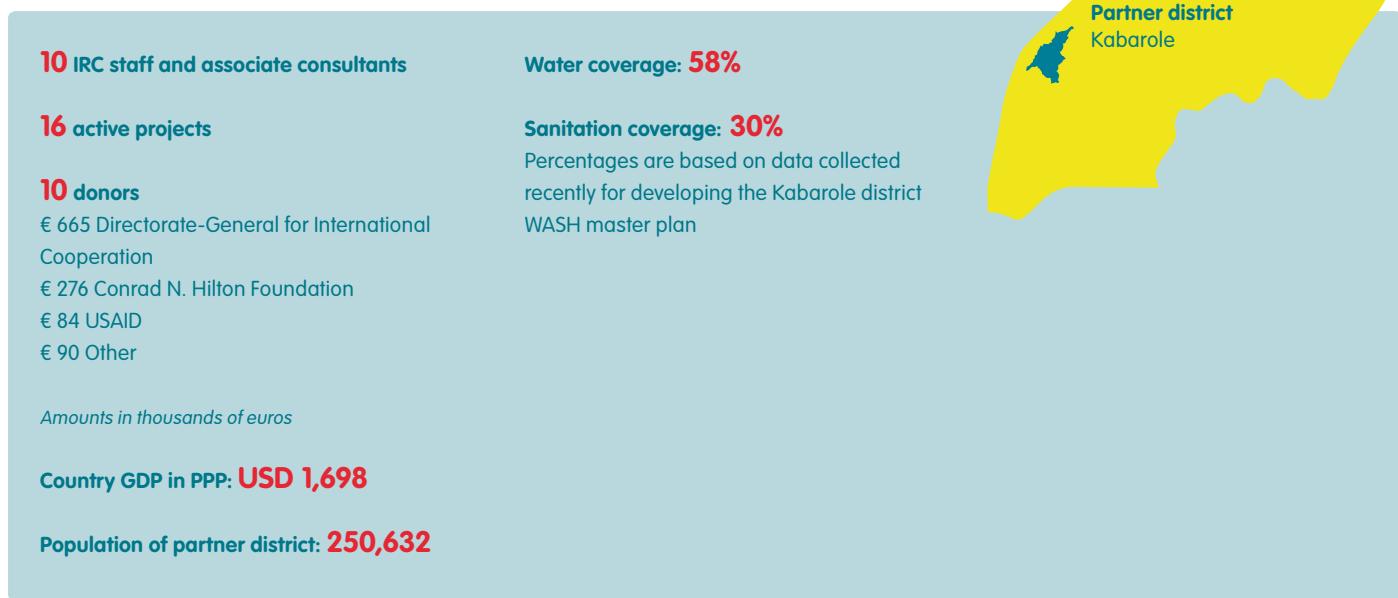
During 2018, the India programme focused on three building blocks: institutions, planning and finance. Capacity strengthening of local government (Gram Panchayats) and CSOs in the areas of planning and finance, including budget tracking, created a much better understanding of the government planning and budgeting processes. With the help of local partners and with inputs from CSOs, local government plans were developed which have been critical in accessing untied funds for a number of Gram Panchayats.

The capacity needs assessments and training provided to local government stakeholders opened the eyes of these stakeholders to look beyond construction targets and helped to change their attitude towards sustainable service delivery.

UNICEF adopted the capacity assessment methodology and carried out similar exercises in four additional districts in Odisha state. In collaboration with UNICEF and relevant departments of Odisha State, capacity building of civil society and local government officials will continue in 2019.

4.6 Uganda

IRC Uganda at a glance



Statistics from 2018 show limited improvement in access to WASH services in Uganda. The country even registered a slight decline in sanitation and hygiene performance in its official data. The Directorate of Water Resources Management maintained its focus on monitoring ground water as well as water quality, with improvement in transmission of data in real time. There is a marked reduction in E.coli contamination in water. The catchment-based approach to management of water resources continues through the Water Management Zone (WMZ) structures. This includes the Mpanga and Semiliki catchments in Rwenzori region where IRC Uganda is active.

There is a general political willingness and commitment towards environmental restoration and management. The President of Uganda remained firm on his call for the restoration of degraded wetlands. In terms of policy, the revised water Policy along with the proposed amendments to the Water Act were submitted to the Cabinet for approval. The Climate Change Bill was also drafted and submitted to cabinet for review. On gender issues and equity, women still hold positions of responsibility in the management of WASH services and water resources. The Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy (2010) was revised and re-launched. This strategy ensures the increase in the number of women holding key positions in Water Source Committees and Catchment Management Committees.

The most critical issues in the sector include inadequate financing and capacity gaps especially in newly created districts and in the Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) sector. These challenges affect the fulfilment of core functions. At the same time, Uganda's economy saw a strong growth of 6.1% in the Financial Year 2017/18. Voice and accountability, which improved between 2003 and 2008, have since declined. The policy and legal frameworks continue to improve, notably through the Public Financial Management Act (2015), although gaps in implementation in procurement and anti-corruption remain. But the crackdown on NGOs and the Opposition using the new NGO Act and the Public Order Management Act, increased.

IRC partner district

IRC has worked in Kabarole district since 2010 and has supported the district to embrace the SDGs and especially to plan the implementation of SDG 6. Kabarole district is located in Western Uganda and has a population of 325,261 with an average household size of four. The district has one County (Burahya), four Town Councils, 11 Sub-counties and 365 villages. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood and employs over 80% of the population.

In 2017-2018, IRC Uganda supported the district to develop a district WASH master plan that is expected to help the district to increase access to safely managed rural water services from 5.2% (2017) to 20.8% (2030), basic water services from 53% (2017) to 79.2% (2030) and safely managed water services in urban areas from 10% to 40%. The Master Plan also aims to increase access in the district to safely managed sanitation services in urban areas from 7% (2017) to 80% (2030), basic sanitation services in rural areas from 15.3% (2017) to 96% (2030), basic access to water services in health centres from 11% (2017) to 100% (2030) and in schools from 10% to 100% during the same period.

A monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework was developed which will enable the systematic measuring of results against the Master Plan performance indicators. These will inform future strategies for WASH interventions (E16.48C). Engagement with political and technical leaders has led to increased commitment and participation of Kabarole district authorities in the planning and budgeting process for improved WASH services.

A wide range of technical assistance activities related to systems strengthening and capacity building were carried out to support the implementation of the Master Plan. Examples of these were an asset inventory training to enhance asset inventory documentation and an asset management and water safety planning training to ensure the quantity and quality of drinking water. The asset inventory training informed the district WASH 'service delivery plans' and enabled better targeting of unserved communities. Two learning visits, focusing on issues prioritised by the learning alliance, were organised. One was on managing services for refugees and the rehabilitation of water schemes, and the other was on the functioning of sub-county water boards (E16.49C, E18.22 and E18.76). A WASH systems analysis using Organisational Network Analysis, Iterative Factor Mapping and Learning and Building Block analysis was carried out to identify gaps in WASH system strengthening initiatives (E16.49C). The analysis has greatly informed the Kabarole district WASH Master Plan. A study on WASH service levels was carried out in Kabarole and Bunyangabu districts (E16.49C) which resulted in case studies on a 'pay as you fetch' service delivery model and a 'pay as you use' utility management model for piped water systems. A study on the status of WASH in health care facilities (HCF) was conducted in 40 HCFs in Kabarole district (E18.76).

In addition to Kabarole district, an MOU was signed between IRC Uganda and the Bunyangabu district local government to achieve WASH for all (E18.76). IRC's active engagement with the political and technical leaders of the two districts resulted in stronger local commitments for WASH service delivery.

National level

Under the TrackFin project (E16.26), IRC collaborated with MWE, UWASNET and WHO to complete the testing of the TrackFin methodology. In addition to the study report, two policy briefs and a detailed brief on lessons learnt were produced.

The SDG WASH Consortium, consisting of IRC, AMREF, Simavi, AKVO and RAIN, organised training in advocacy and lobbying for the local partners. Detailed campaign strategies were developed to engage with the local government authorities in the Aswa catchment (E17.35C).

In partnership with the National Sanitation Working Group (NSWG) and with support from UNOPS/WSSCC (E18.13), IRC supported the convening of a national dialogue on SDG 6.2. Lobby and advocacy initiatives to influence budget allocations for WASH continued by working with our partners HEWASA and JESE under the Watershed programme (E16.01) and through UWASNET.

In addition to the regular advocacy activities, IRC collaborated with the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and Water for People to conduct district level capacity building sessions in WASH media coverage and advocacy (E18.76). The nationwide capacity building effort, led by MWE, culminated in the annual WASH Media awards ceremony. In partnership with Ministry of Water and Environment's Division of Operations and Maintenance (IOM), IRC facilitated the learning event for on point source management structures (WA4C).

Reflections on 2018 achievements

Overall IRC Uganda has made progress towards achieving strong national partnerships. This is evidenced in engagements and collaboration with MWE, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), WA4C partners, Watershed and UWASNET to further the national SDG 6 targets. Some of the collaborative activities included participating in the National Water Week, in WASH/IWRM thematic working groups and in the National WASH CSO-forum, and facilitating the Joint Sector Review, an annual event that assesses the progress of the WASH sector against SDG 6 and National Development Plans. IRC and the other WA4C partners engaged in advocacy for increased government financing for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) to improve the functionality of water points. It must be mentioned however, that although WASH is part of national priorities in

the second national development plan (NDPII) and Vision 2030, low budget allocations make it difficult for MWE to achieve WASH for all in within a reasonable timeframe.

Our contribution towards attaining strong national capacity was through organising a wide range of training activities, facilitating learning visits organised at district and regional level, coordinating meetings for improved WASH and IWRM systems, and taking the lead in action research.

With respect to the adoption of national service delivery models (SDM), national sector actors are aware of the need for identifying SDMs appropriate for the different contexts. Current efforts therefore concentrate on generating evidence and understanding the different contexts in Uganda in which the SDMs are to be applied.

The rather dispersed partnerships are presenting a challenge to IRC's intention to act as a hub. The Hilton partnership, for example, covers a wide geographic area that includes Kabarole and stretches to Kamwenge and 14 other districts with small towns under the Mid-western Regional Water Authority. At the national level, the withdrawal of key donors from the SWA continues to pose a funding challenge to the entire sector. The retirement of several key technical staff in the Ministry of Water and Environment between 2017-2020 will cause setbacks for IRC and call for more efforts to create new partnerships with their replacements.

4.7. New Focus Countries

The New Focus Countries Programme is a new business unit set up to expand IRC's vision and mission in other countries. The Programme is also in line with IRC's business model for growth in countries in addition to the four African focus countries and the two countries with IRC presence (India and Honduras).

A lead for new focus countries was identified and started work in late 2018. A longlist of five countries was identified: Bangladesh, Benin, Mali, Niger and Sri Lanka. This is a tentative longlist based on presence or historical linkages. Bangladesh, Mali and Niger build upon funds from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Watershed. Synergies are being explored for all new focus countries, and in particular for Benin and Sri Lanka, with IRC Consult.

In November and December 2018, a start was made to develop a strategy and growth scenarios for developing the business unit.

4.8 International

In 2018 the focus of the IRC International Programme was on advocating and building partnerships for a systems approach for improving WASH services through: (1) membership of and support to Agenda for Change; (2) continued research and advocacy for public finance for the poorest in the global WASH agenda and for sector financing plans; (3) strengthening the role of civil society worldwide under the Watershed project; and, (4) other partnerships and networks.

Agenda for Change and the systems strengthening agenda

In 2018, IRC staff led the Agenda for Change Secretariat that included the Global Coordinator, Knowledge Manager and working group leads for Advocacy and Technical Assistance. Agenda for Change partners are [applying systems approaches](#) in a number of countries. Seventeen partners are now committed to the roadmap for achieving SDG 6 in totality or in part. There have been initial conversations with more than 15 organisations interested in joining the collaboration.

Actors such as DFID and USAID, and to some extent DGIS, have explicitly called for systems strengthening in their overall strategy, and have convened meetings and webinars dedicated to learning about this topic. They, and others, have put out tenders calling for strengthening national and local systems. Therefore, the language from the SWA collaborative behaviours (Strengthen and use country systems) is particularly dominant across the sector.

Public finance for the poorest in the global WASH agenda and advocacy for sector financing plans

The recommendations made in the [Finance position paper](#) by IRC and Water.org in 2017 launched at the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Ministerial meeting at the World Bank in March 2017, were included in the [UN SDG 6 Status Report recommendations](#) to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2018. Specifically, the Status Report requests supporting the enabling environment as a prerequisite for increasing finance to the sector and recognising public financing as a means to reach the poorest. It was significant that the paper's recommendations were taken up by those providing

sector specific recommendations at the HLPF.

In 2018, the focus of IRC and Water.org was on the development of strong partnerships with global actors to invest in the enabling environment. The investments are to include multi-year sector financing plans that recognise those being left behind as a precondition for funding SDG Goal 6. Among the global actors there is also continued high demand for, appreciation of, and use of the Life Cycle Cost Approach as evidence of systemic thinking around local systems' ability to improve and sustain services.

Strengthening the role of civil society worldwide

The Watershed Consortium (IRC, Simavi, Wetlands International, Akvo and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands), is a five year programme in its third year of implementation. During 2018, several capacity strengthening sessions were held. They reached more than 1,400 people from more than 800 CSOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) across six countries (Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Bangladesh and India); and 10 global and regional CSO networks that are part of international and regional policy influencing platforms for SDG 6 (FANSA, ANEW, End Water Poverty, WSSCC, Coalition Eau, Millennium Water Alliance, FANMEX, FANCA, Global Health Council, NWP-NGO platform).

International: Global review of national accountability mechanisms for SDG 6

This review of accountability mechanisms took place between October 2017 and March 2018 and was led by CSOs in 25 countries under the umbrella of End Water Poverty, Watershed Consortium, Coalition Eau and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). The process and the results of the study aim to strengthen CSOs' capacities to advocate for improved accountability mechanisms and their involvement in decision-making and follow-up actions.

Kenya: Social inclusion and citizens' involvement in water resources management

Between 6 and 12 February 2018, KWAHO, a Kenyan NGO, facilitated people living with disabilities (PWDs) and Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAS) to attend budget hearings across Laikipia County's three sub counties. During a budget hearing in Laikipia East sub-county, the County Finance Economic and Planning Department appointed Valentine Mombafi, a person living with a disability, to membership of the Laikipia East Budget Committee. Her appointment was a significant step in inclusion in county planning processes. She has since participated in the development of the county fiscal strategy paper and in the development of county budget estimates for the 2018/2019 financial year in Laikipia East sub-county.

On 5 April 2018, through its partners IMPACT and GROOTS, KWAHO and Wetlands International facilitated a meeting of over 50 representatives of WRUAs, Community Forest Associations (CFAs), and rural women's groups in Nanyuki to prepare key resolutions for presentation at the Laikipia Water Conference and to the Governor for consideration. At the Laikipia Water Conference in Nanyuki on 17 and 18 April 2018, the Laikipia County Government recognised the role of WRUAs in water resources management in the county.

Bangladesh: CSOs influencing local government public WASH budget

Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP), Watershed's Bangladeshi partner, coached Union level local CSOs to help facilitate the pre-budget dialogue at Veduria and Dania Union Parishads where the Bhola Sadar Upazila (sub-district) Chairman and a Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) representative were present. Seventy-five community members, including representatives of marginalised groups and women, had the space for the first time to voice their demands during these budgeting platforms. The Bhola Sadar Upazila Chairman committed to increase the WASH budget at the meeting. Union Parishad public WASH budget was consequently increased by 14% in Veduria Union and 40% in Dania Union and incorporated community demands.

The Netherlands: Realistic budgets for ambitious sanitation goals

One of Watershed's priorities is to obtain sufficient budget from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to finance its 2030 WASH goals of 50 million people having improved sanitation and 30 million people having access to clean water. Up to now, the results on sanitation show that these are lagging behind and extra plans (and potential budgets) are needed to achieve the ambitious goals for 2030.

Between 21 and 29 November, Simavi, IRC and Wetlands International drafted a resolution text on sanitation with Member of Parliament (MP), Chris Stoffer. MP Corrie van Brenk ensured the adoption of SDG 6 in Parliament and requested other political parties to vote for the resolution. On 4 December 2018, the Dutch Parliament adopted a Resolution with a two-thirds majority (agreed by 10 political parties) calling on Minister Kaag of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to publish a credible and ambitious plan for achieving the sanitation goals for the period 2020 to 2030 and its associated estimated budget, and inform Parliament accordingly. Minister Kaag promised to deliver the plan in the autumn of 2019 with the Budget 2020 proposal. Information on the Resolution in Dutch <https://www.sgp.nl/actueel/iedereen-de-pot-op/9947>.

Other partnerships and networks

IRC engages in several networks and formalised partnerships globally. Its staff members chair and co-chair steering committees and working groups advocating for the systems strengthening approach and calling for accountability towards those being left behind. In addition to Agenda for Change partners, the platforms on which we have had a strong presence in 2018 include the Rural Water Supply Network, the NWP-NGO platform, Millennium Water Alliance, Sanitation and Water for All, End Water Poverty, and Water.org.

The Watershed Consortium is contributing significantly to partnership development at the global and regional levels. IRC has led and contributed to a coalition of CSO global and regional networks and has coordinated messaging and engagement in key global events such as World Water Forum, High Level Political Forum, SWA sector and finance ministers meetings, Sacosan, Africasan and Latinosan. IRC's efforts have increased cohesion within the sector specifically around social inclusion and finance.

Reflecting on the Intermediate Programme Outcomes for 2018

There has been no change in the number of official organisations joining the Agenda for Change partnership. However, partners have consolidated some of the joint work together, for instance in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda. More effort will be needed to document the process at country level as well as document the role of hubs.

Excellent progress has been made with the preparation of the All Systems Go symposium (proceedings, papers, presentations and discussions on the results of tools). The process has made a significant contribution to a greater understanding of IRC approaches across and beyond the organisation.

The advocacy strategy developed jointly with Water.org in 2017 and preparations for the closed door sessions at Stockholm Water Week and for the GIZ finance meeting has meant that in their discourse in 2018, the major bilateral agencies adopted the need for sector financing plans in the countries they have been supporting. The preparation of the finance stream of the symposium has made this issue clearer. The requests to support countries in the development of their financial strategies will start to emerge and we are not necessarily ready to support them.

In Watershed, improvements in partnerships are visible in collaboration, coordination and synergy. It has been observed that the capacities of CSO partners are contributing to a shift from hardware (focus on infrastructure) to software (service delivery with an emphasis on social inclusion, policy influencing and social accountability) in several country teams. This shift was noted because most of the country partners are mainly project implementation organisations with less experience in lobbying and advocacy.

Leaving no one behind is an area of focus for CSOs but is not directly linked to the discussions on finance except at very local level such as among Watershed CSO partners in India (Odisha), Bangladesh (Bhola) and Kenya (Kajiado county). We will need to see greater confidence among national and regional CSOs (including IRC country programmes) in talking about finance.

In 2018 we trained more than 500 water sector professionals face-to-face and about 100 people completed IRC online training courses. The WASH Academy (online training platform) is progressing as expected. This will enable the sector and all IRC staff to understand the systems strengthening approach, its tools and how IRC and partners are applying it.

IRC's online presence and outreach continues to increase with one million new users of the IRC website in 2018 and 62,000 unique downloads of our documents. The IRC social media channels had more than 12 million engagements. As a think tank, we have reached 333 citations on Google Scholar. On the downside, the IRC Website has been restructured to target a different audience and the existing tools, blogs and research documents are too difficult to find to be easily accessible.

5. Activities and outputs



Figure 6: IRC's reporting

[Annex 3](#) provides details on progress with key activities and outputs of the IRC programmes in 2018. Against their 2018 annual plans, programmes report on (1) planned activities; (2) planned outputs; and, (3) unplanned outputs and activities. The reports also state the Theory of Change outcomes that the activities and outputs have contributed to. In addition, the current results framework asks the programmes to report on a set of numeric indicators. These include: published outputs, people trained, and platforms and networks facilitated. The communication group of the International Programme also keeps track of the number of social media engagements. The numeric results are summarised in the 'IRC at a Glance' table (chapter 1).

The International Programme has a relatively high share of communication and research products compared to the country programmes. The country programmes have concentrated on continuing to strengthen their engagement with the decentralised areas where the responsibility for direct service delivery is anchored.

In the next section we highlight three areas which received much attention across the organisation.

5.1 Focus of programmatic activity in 2018

District WASH master plans

In 2018, the country programmes continued to focus on working with their partner district stakeholders, and in particular on the development of the district master plans. This is a key step in the WASH systems strengthening approach as the plans serve to set out a shared vision of what it will take for the districts to achieve universal access (as defined by themselves) by 2030 and are based on a shared analysis of current coverage, gaps and challenges. Burkina Faso has finalised the plans in three communes: Banfora, Arbinda, and Gorgadji. Ethiopia has started processes in five woredas but has not yet formalised joint SDG 6 strategies in its master plans. Ghana and Burkina celebrated the launch of master plans in Asutifi North and Banfora districts. Uganda will launch its master plans in early 2019. In Honduras the work on the national guide for the municipal WASH plans has been finalised and, except for the financial paragraph, the plans have been finalised in 9 municipalities. In India the process is still at the stage of developing partnerships with a shared vision.

The Agenda for Change partnership means that the systems approach is applied in more countries. Rwanda has adopted a national District Wide Approach that includes building comprehensive investment plans in 13 of 27 rural districts. WaterAid, Water For People, World Vision, and WASAC (Water and Sanitation Corporation Rwanda) are piloting the District Wide Approach (DWA) in six districts, which will result in a costed WASH Investment Plan for these districts and will eventually be scaled up country-wide.

Overall, the processes of the partnership strengthening and development of joint plans has been progressing steadily. At

the same time, the IRC teams and the partners realise that the financing and implementation of the plans are still enormous challenges.

Strengthening political commitment

An important pillar of IRC's Theory of Change is 'strong political and financial commitment', sometimes referred to as 'strong political leadership'. This is a relatively recent area of work for IRC as until recently we focused almost exclusively on the technical improvement of the WASH sector. The Watershed strategic partnership programme is very important in this new focus area because, through the capacity building of civil society for lobbying and advocacy, IRC has also been more directly involved in lobbying itself.

In Burkina Faso, CSOs and media are supported for accountability activities and a national programme is being implemented that supports local leaders to campaign for local sanitation. In Ghana, the IRC team is directly engaging with the Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources to mobilise political support for the programme. Also, for the first time, the Honduras team started to mobilise political support to get the intervention plan for dispersed rural settings implemented. In Uganda, IRC and partners are lobbying and working with the stakeholders of the Mpanga catchment to change water resource management policies and practices.

Through the Watershed programme, IRC has led and contributed to a coalition of CSO global and regional networks (approximately 10 groups). This ongoing work involves coordinating messaging and engagement in key global events such as the World Water Forum, the UN High Level Political Forum, SWA sector and finance ministers meetings such as Sacosan, Africasan and Latinosan. These efforts have increased cohesion within the sector specifically around social inclusion and finance. Regular interactions and work planning began in 2018 and will continue in 2019 and, in all likelihood, beyond.

Through the Watershed Netherlands Work Package and the NWP-NGO platform we are working towards achieving and increasing political and financial commitment in the Netherlands. We are targeting the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water and Members of Parliament.

Strengthening WASH system building blocks

At the global level, actors such as DFID and USAID have started to explicitly call for systems strengthening in their overall strategies and have convened dedicated meetings and webinars to learn about this topic. Tenders have been put out by these actors and others calling for strengthening national and local systems. Therefore, the language from the SWA collaborative behaviours (strengthen and use country systems) has become particularly prevalent across the sector.

The different country programmes are not working on all the building blocks at the same time. The choice of building block depends on need, opportunity and capacity. A few of the activities related to strengthening WASH system building blocks are highlighted below.

Planning. Here all the programmes report their work on the master plans, SDG 6 strategies and WASH plans. In India, an assessment was carried out on the actual services delivered in 10 villages and the urban area of Chatrapur. Knowing the actual situation on the ground is the first requirement of a solid planning process.

Institutional. Under this banner, several guiding materials have been developed and studies done. These include tools in Ethiopia for local sector assessments and a mapping of institutional overlaps in Ghana.

Financial. Increasingly, IRC programmes are looking into the financing of WASH services. Since receiving a middle-income country status, Ghana is working on a paper on the changing financing landscape. Honduras included five tools in a manual for doing costing analyses of WASH and supported 10 municipalities in doing the analysis of their financial requirements. In India, detailed analysis of financial windows for block and panchayat administrations, accompanied with analyses of the financial flows contribute to improved WASH financing. The methodology is also picked up by WaterAid to implement in other districts.

Monitoring. Elements of the IRC results framework are in use with A4C and Hilton partners. A4C members have done a comparative analysis of the various tools and methods used for 1) monitoring service delivery, 2) monitoring systems and 3) for the roadmap.

High demand, appreciation, and the use of LCCA is evidence of systemic thinking around local systems' ability to improve and sustain services.

In the different global programmes in which IRC is involved, systems strengthening (particularly on finance and capacities to plan, budget, implement, monitor and steer) elements are included in the SSH4A programme in Bhutan and Nepal and the SEHATI programme in Indonesia. The SEHATI team in Jakarta was supported to develop a replication and scaling up document which translates the applied approach for broader use by local governments across Indonesia. Another example is that in India, the faecal waste calculator (crucial for sanitation planning) was further developed during 2018 and applied in two additional urban centres.

6. Inputs

6.1. Staff and offices

An important part of IRC's strategy is having a physical presence in its focus countries. IRC is legally registered and operates country offices in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ethiopia. In India and Honduras, IRC works with consultants who are on long-term contracts. Once the project portfolio increases, the legal registration of IRC offices in these two countries will be set in motion. IRC aspires to having 10 focus countries by 2021, including legal registration and operational offices. In addition to its country presence, IRC also has offices in Washington and The Hague.

At the end of 2018, IRC employed 75 staff of which 43 were based in our country offices: Ghana (12), Burkina Faso (10), Uganda (10), Ethiopia (8), India (2) and Honduras (1). In addition to these staff members, IRC worked with some 20 associates and had 16 interns enrolled in its Internship Programme during the year.

The net turnover of staff during 2018 was six: seven staff members left IRC, while another 13 joined the organisation. For the first time since the significant downsize of staff in the Netherlands (2014) the organisation is growing again, a trend that will continue into 2019 with a planned total staff body of 85.

6.2. Organisational development

IRC's aim is to be a unified, decentralised organisation by 2021 with up to 10 country offices, district programmes, strong brand values and motivated staff working efficiently and professionally to deliver measurable results. To be successful, the enabling work environment and operating practices for dealing with financial and human resources must be fit-for-purpose and directly supportive of IRC's mission and decentralised organisational structure.

Significant measures have been taken in recent years in regard to IRC's Business Model. They have included staff reduction in the Netherlands; solidifying the organisational structure and governance; and more recently the adoption of a Collective Labour Agreement (CAO). Under the CAO, which came into force on 1 January 2017, staff agreed to give up three weeks of flexible leave and move to new salary scales, both with minimal compensation. This has allowed IRC to stabilise its fee structure at a competitive level while also creating more space for unfunded activities such as fundraising. The new CAO also allowed the revision of a number of related HR policies to emphasise further decentralisation and flexibility in working conditions. At the same time, HR policies and regulations in the IRC country offices were reviewed and are being implemented. These include an exploration on how best to ensure that every country office has a staff representation body in addition to the statutory Works Council body in the Netherlands.

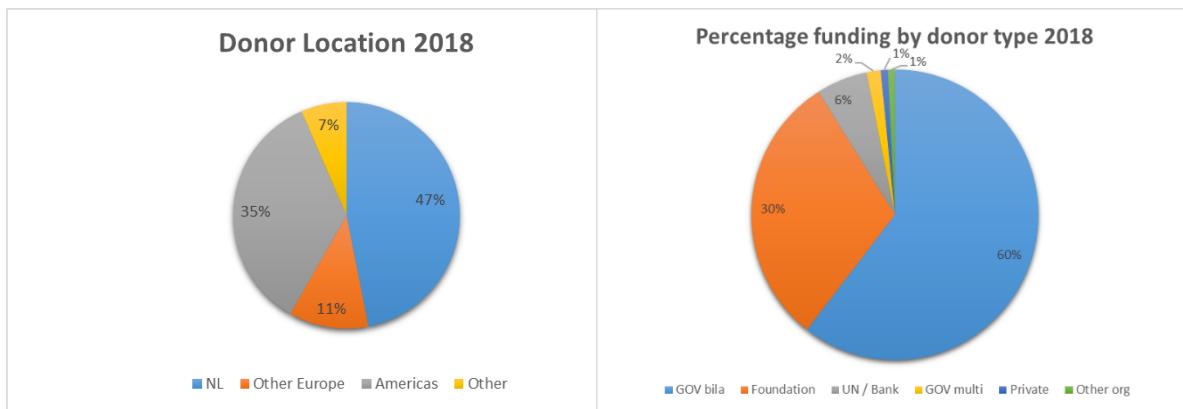
IRC's decentralisation, including district programmes, will have to be supported by systems that facilitate efficient and safe data collaboration. To bring this about, IRC hopes to further adjust its financial system and finalise the implementation of Microsoft Office 365 Teams during 2019.

6.3. Partners and funders

IRC's total gross revenue in 2018 was € 11.08 million, in line with the Annual Plan, but nearly € 0.9 million lower than 2017. DGIS remained IRC's main donor, contributing 47% (up from 44% during 2017) of total income. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was next at 23%. The portfolios of USAID funded and UNICEF funded projects are also significant (7% and 5% respectively), but as neither permits the use of full tariffs, they pose a challenge to IRC in terms of its indirect cost recovery strategy. In all, 32 donors financed the 89 active projects during 2018.

Almost half of IRC's funding originates from the Netherlands. The share of funding from the US has grown from one quarter in 2017 to one third during 2018. Most donor funding is governmental, but the share from philanthropic foundations is growing rapidly (from 18% in 2017 to 30% in 2018).

During 2018, IRC acquired € 9 million of new project work. These new acquisitions have meant that IRC has now secured 75% of its target budget of €58 million for the Strategic Plan period 2017-2021. A highlight in business development during 2018 was the awarding of US \$ 7.5 million by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for IRC's district-wide approach and the implementation of district master plans.



6.4. Expenditure and financial balance

To achieve its mission and ambitions, IRC works with partner organisations, associates and consultants. From the total gross revenue of € 11.08 million in 2018, 29% went to partner organisations and 12% to associates or consultants. An additional 16% was spent on other project costs including travel, meeting venues and equipment. In total, almost 57% of the gross revenue went to third parties.

IRC closed 2018 with a positive balance sheet of € 112,148. This reflects an encouraging gross operating result of € 181,580 against which a provision of approximately € 65,000 was made for a bad debt on a closed project in India. Half of the annual balance was allocated to the general reserves, the other half to the earmarked reserves. The latter are earmarked for unemployment benefits (IRC is own-risk bearer), investments in ICT and financial systems, major adjustments to the website, as well as necessary refurbishments to the office in The Hague.

During 2018, € 87,850 was taken from the earmarked reserves for unemployment benefits, updating the website and changes to the ICT system. IRC's total reserves on 31 December 2018 were € 1,175,561 – including € 110,319 in earmarked reserves.

IRC's liquidity had narrowed significantly over the last few years, with the amount of cash and cash equivalents decreasing by almost € 5 million during the period 2014-2016. This trend reversed during 2017 and 2018 due to early disbursements from DGIS, with the total cash and cash equivalents increasing by some € 0.9 million during 2018. IRC's liquidity remains satisfactory and IRC is able to fulfil its short and long-time financial obligations.

The table below shows the actual 2018 expenses per programme, against budget and goals, and includes the DGIS Programmatic Funding used.

Business unit/programme	Total ambition	Total budget	Total expenditure	DGIS Programmatic funding (in parenthesis as % of total expenditure)
Burkina Faso programme	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,736,587	€ 1,885,805	€ 66,529 (4%)
Ethiopia programme	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,421,729	€ 989,921	€ 78,696 (8%)
Ghana programme	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,193,606	€ 1,251,033	€ 68,138 (5%)
Honduras programme	€ 250,000	€ 167,038	€ 171,910	€ 59,169 (34%)
India programme	€ 750,000	€ 432,438	€ 405,047	€ 79,370 (20%)
Uganda programme	€ 1,250,000	€ 1,236,376	€ 1,107,438	€ 75,110 (7%)
International programme	€ 3,750,000	€ 3,827,263	€ 3,957,931	€ 445,030 (11%)
IRC Consult	€ 750,000	€ 448,875	€ 464,842	€ 52,057 (11%)
Management & Support (HQ)	€ 500,000	€ 698,373	€ 850,719	€ 161,261 (42%)
TOTAL IRC	€ 11,000,000	€ 11,162,285	€ 11,084,645	€ 1,280,945 (12%)

7. Conclusions

Two-thousand and eighteen was the second full year of IRC's new strategy. Overall it can be judged a success, albeit one with existing and emerging challenges as identified in this report.

One of the most positive outcomes was that our district level work took a major step forward with the development of locally owned district WASH master plans in Ghana, Uganda and Burkina. While important in themselves, the master plans are equally important as outputs of the underlying processes that produced them: multi-stakeholder, locally led, locally owned and with local government firmly in the lead, with IRC support as a change hub. As such they are evidence of good progress on two of the outcomes of our Theory of Change: strong partnerships (for collective action) and political buy-in. The master plans are not perfect documents, and their financial aspects in particular need strengthening (designated for 2019). But they mark an important milestone in our Theory of Change and, just as importantly, they have attracted great interest and demand for replication. We will seek to address the demand structurally in 2019.

At the global level, while the All Systems Go! Symposium took place in March 2019 – and will be reported on in next year's monitoring report – the level of interest and buy-in to a Symposium that was entirely focussed on WASH systems is strong evidence that supports our feeling that we are gaining traction with WASH systems approaches at the global level.

We continued to build a strong partnership with Water.org and increasingly the World Bank on the vexed question of sector finance. While it cannot be argued that the end is even close to being in sight, it is clear that finance is on the agenda in a way in which it has not been before. The real movement is in beginning to treat finance not as a question of how more donor or charitable funds can be attracted to the sector, but as a deeper question as to the underlying financeability of the sector in the long term.

Finally, the Watershed: empowering citizens project moved out of its initial start-up phase and began to demonstrate real results in the countries where it worked. That said, the well-received global report that it co-authored (with other leading civil society networks) highlighted the almost complete lack of formal mechanisms through which civil society can engage with or hold government to account.

Our experience and reporting shows that WASH, and particularly WASH in rural and informal settlements (and even more particularly sanitation), still struggles to get the sort of high-level political and financial support that it needs to make the required step change towards the SDGs. The sector remains fragmented and, even in our partner districts, it takes constant effort to overcome petty jealousies and mistrust between organisations and individuals and to keep focused on the collective prize.

The lack of high-level political leadership is arguably the major challenge to IRC and the sector as a whole. It will be the focus in 2019 and beyond. We will seek to expand our direct advocacy to the highest levels of political leadership whilst also building on the work of Watershed that empowers citizens and reaches out beyond the traditional and relatively weak WASH NGOs and CSOs with whom we have been working to date to bring WASH to stronger rights based campaigning organisations. To achieve this, IRC needs to improve its own ability to collect and tell compelling stories of change, including by continuing to build and strengthen its monitoring system. And to use these to effectively motivate our own teams and partners to action.

8. ANNEXES

Annexes 1, 2 and 3 can be found online at ircwash.org

Annex 1: [IRC Theory of Change Diagram \(PDF\)](#)

Annex 2: [Programme Scoring \(PDF\)](#)

Annex 3: [Outputs and Activities IRC 2018 \(EXCEL\)](#)

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make access to safe water and sanitation available for everyone, for good. The UN has set a target to achieve this by 2030 – known as ‘Sustainable Development Goal 6’ (SDG 6).

Resilient systems: the only way

We know that the only way to achieve this goal is through resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems that transform lives. We know how to build and strengthen these systems - but we need to do it now.

It will take everyone, in all parts of the system, changing the way they think and work.

Everyone, together

Each part of a country’s WASH system must work effectively: from people using pumps, to monitoring tools, to finance systems. This can only be achieved if everyone in the system knows and plays their part.

Achieving universal access calls for collective action by a broad movement of government, civil society, private sector service providers, financiers, academia and others.

Our unique position

As a change hub, we are in a unique position to unite people to drive and champion change from the ground up. We need to convince district, country and global decision makers of what it will take to achieve SDG 6.

Now is the time

We need to act now. We are halfway through but not halfway there. We need everyone to commit to massive-scale change – and as you are reading this, that also means you.