

WASH Technical Operations: Key Considerations

Scope and Application

Capacity building

No matter the emergency, all WASH interventions should be based on the results of the context analysis and needs and risk assessments (refer to Context analysis and Needs and risks assessments sections of WASH Programming page) to ensure interventions are **appropriate**. Both the context analysis and needs assessment should allow for effective community engagement - providing ownership to the host and affected communities to localize the response. IOM WASH recognizes that **appropriate** WASH technologies, strengths and resilience can already exist before an emergency. IOM WASH therefore aims to work with the affected population and host communities using a strengths-based approach to assess where IOM can enhance and provide WASH services. Capitalizing on services and supplies already available through the local private sector (e.g. spare parts or supply of hygiene items), local materials for construction and local work force can have positive economic benefits - increasing value for money of responses and contributing to long term development outcomes.

Capacity building should be paired with all WASH interventions and should be planned for and undertaken throughout the program where possible. For example, affected and host communities can be educated about options for re-using and recycling as part of solid waste management interventions, benefits of disaster risk reduction during latrine construction, or on the risks of pooled water (e.g. breeding of mosquitos) and rubbish (e.g. attracting rodents) during vector control activities. IOM implementing partners can be educated on new opportunities for improvement, introduction to new technologies or improved organizational capacity such as finances, human resources, and writing of standard operating procedures (SOPs). Capacity building allows for **sustainability** by embedding knowledge into the affected community, implementing partners, government authorities and civil society organizations, thereby increasing gains towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, this should be accompanied with the identification and prioritization of WASH staff training needs to match expertise with appropriate responses.

Placement and design of WASH facilities

Pre-crisis WASH infrastructure is usually damaged or destroyed following the onset of an emergency or, in some situation, the infrastructure could have been damaged due to improper use or maintenance prior to the crisis. Rehabilitation of existing systems is one of the most practical approaches to ensure facilities are available in the shortest timeframe.

When a new infrastructure is required, the placement of WASH facilities should have consideration for public health, marginalization, gender based violence (GBV), protection, and gender equity (refer to Marginalization, GBV and protection and Gender equity sections of Cross-cutting Themes Within WASH page), and should be placed in accordance with [SPHERE guidelines](#). All WASH infrastructure is encouraged to be mapped in order to ensure the network capitalizes on existing WASH infrastructure and so that a record is kept for future rehabilitation/extension/decommissioning.

The design of WASH facilities should include consideration for the costs required (both in the initial set up and ongoing use), how rapidly they can be set up to ensure an immediate response, the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the system (including availability of consumables and the long-term involvement of community), government and/or private sector involvement as required, population size and growth, groundwater depth, climate, and land ownership. WASH infrastructure set up should be based on technical calculations and detailed drawings prior to any complex construction, and specialist technical advice should be sought as required. For example, groundwater bore drilling and specific water treatment technologies can be complex and should not be attempted without technical expertise.

Operation and maintenance

Ensuring operation and maintenance (O&M) systems are developed for WASH facilities is required to guarantee their **sustainable** use. It reduces the potential for malfunction due to incorrect use or lack of care. It can include (but is not limited to) the correct use of hand-washing stations, flushing boreholes, desludging, refilling of consumables such as soap and/or regular cleaning of WASH facilities. Capacity building training should be delivered in the appropriate languages, and documented where appropriate so those trained have an on-going reference post-exit.

Exit strategy

IOM plans the exit strategy with the intent to formally hand over facilities and services to the relevant government, civil society organisations, private sector, or WASH management committees. Whom IOM hands over WASH services to depends on the context - including capabilities, responsibilities, funding, and resources. However, in all contexts, exit strategies should be complimented by O&M training, relevant materials (e.g. SOPs/documents/training materials), as well as governance structures and ongoing funding mechanisms where required to ensure the **sustainability** of WASH services.

Media



[Approaches to deliver IOM WASH in emergencies](#)

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Water, Sanitation and Hygiene \(WASH\)](#)
- [WASH Programming](#)
- [WASH Approaches](#)
- [Cross-Cutting Themes within WASH](#)

Contacts

IOM's Global WASH Support Team is available to support country missions in a variety of ways as outlined in the IOM Global WASH Support Team mechanisms, including surge support, remote support, and/or monitoring, evaluation and learning.

The Global WASH Support Team can be contacted for additional information or specific guidance at washsupport@iom.int.

Document last updated: Oct 2022