



Creating an Enabling Environment to achieve the WASH SDGs in Punjab Province, Pakistan

SUMMARY

Over the last five years, the government of Punjab province has taken steps to develop an enabling environment for sustainable and at-scale WASH services. This Field Note outlines the sector policy and strategies, institutional arrangements and sector coordination mechanisms implemented. The arrangements for sector monitoring as well as budgeting, financing and capacity development are presented. These reforms have supported several outcomes that contribute to accelerating access to WASH, including:

- **Institutional arrangements:** Stakeholder roles and responsibilities have been clarified including the decentralized authority at the district and local levels.
- **Sector coordination and planning:** A time-bound roadmap with human resources is in place under the guiding sectoral plan with clear targets, indicators and budgeted activities.
- **Sector policy and strategy:** Provincial water and sanitation policy-cum-strategy have been updated and further amended to respond to the SDGs. These policies set out provincial service norms for households and institutions backed by a legal framework.
- **Leaving no one behind:** Equity assessments have generated evidence, which has informed decision making and the targeting of appropriate interventions to 'leaving no one behind'.
- **Monitoring:** The province has established an effective Management Information System for monitoring and reporting. The annual district WASH planning processes (including the Joint Sector Review) further supports monitoring and coordination of activities.
- **Sector budgeting and financing:** Sector policies and strategies give direction to sector investments. In recent years, the government of Punjab had been increasing its investments in WASH and notably funding to end open defecation in the province.
- **Sector capacity development:** The Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Department (HUD&PHED), in collaboration with UNICEF conducted a WASH Capacity Assessment and developed a Strategic Roadmap for WASH Human Resource Development. Various capacity related interventions are underway for the staff in provincial and local government departments.

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets 6.1 and 6.2 call for universal and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services with a progressive reduction of inequalities. Achieving sustainable, at-scale WASH services requires an enabling environment for WASH, including policy, financing, institutions and other key functions. This note describes how the government of Punjab province has taken steps to develop such an enabling environment. It has done this by tackling policy, financing, institution coordination and other key functions simultaneously. This system-wide approach is anticipated to facilitate achievement of the SDG target of universal access to WASH for all.

The Government of Pakistan recognizes access to drinking water and sanitation services as a fundamental human right implied into the Constitution of Pakistan under Article 9 that “no person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law”. Drinking water and sanitation in Pakistan has emerged as a key political issue, especially after acceptance of drinking water and sanitation as fundamental rights by the Supreme Court of Pakistan under constitutional petition 38/2016. The Government of Pakistan derived its strategic direction from the National Vision 2025 document and approved the National Sanitation Policy 2006 and the National Drinking Water Policy 2009. Both the national sanitation and drinking water policies were developed under the Ministry of Environment. In 2011, the Ministry of Environment was devolved to the provinces, and renamed as the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) in 2012. Since 2011, the provinces lead on developing and implementing its policy frameworks while MoCC facilitates coordination and strategic directions.

Punjab is Pakistan’s most populous province with an estimated 110 million people (more than half of Pakistan’s total population). The administrative structure of the province includes: 36 districts, 145 tehsils (sub-districts,) 3,464 union councils (978

urban and 2,486 rural) and 20 cantonment boards (government of Punjab, 2016). Estimates suggest that the population of the province will be 130 million in 2030 and around 181 million in 2050.

In Punjab province, 98% of the population uses an improved source of drinking water. 44% of household members have an improved drinking water source located on the premises, free of *E. coli* and available when needed. Between 2012-2019, 3,360 villages were certified as ODF, through Pakistan’s Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS). 80% of the population are living in households who use improved sanitation facilities, which is higher in urban (92%) as compared to rural areas (72%), according to MICS 2018. 40% of households reported on-site safe disposal of human excreta, that is 50% in rural areas and 23% in urban areas. 98% of the households had a specific place for handwashing, according to MICS (2018).

99% of schools have WASH facilities. However, few meet national standards (regarding handwashing stations, gender-segregated toilets and access for children with physical impairments). Less than 2% of the overall national and provincial budget is being allocated to WASH though a gradual increase in allocation is being witnessed in recent years.

This note provides an overview of the WASH enabling environment in Punjab. UNICEF and other WASH sector partners including; Plan International, WaterAid, WSP-World Bank, WSCC, and others are supporting the government of Punjab in many of the activities described here.

Description of Intervention

Over the last five years, Punjab province has made several changes to the enabling environment. These reforms are summarised in **Table 1**.

This section focuses on key WASH sector enabling environment functions based on Sanitation and Water for All's sector building blocks, that are grouped as follows: 1) institutional arrangements; 2) sector coordination and planning; 3) sector policy and strategy; 4) leaving no one behind; 5) sector budgeting and financing; 6) monitoring and

7) sector capacity development. These topics are discussed below.

1. Institutional arrangements

Sustainable service delivery at scale requires clarity on roles and responsibilities (see **Table 2**).

At the provincial level, the two main departments that are responsible for water and sanitation are Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Department (HUD&PHED) and Local Government and Community Development

Table 1: Summary of reforms to the enabling environment in Punjab province

Year	Milestone
2011	18th Constitutional Amendment led to devolution of drinking water and sanitation to local government
2013	Pakistan commits to be Open Defecation Free Environment by 2023 and to progressively move towards sustainable environment sanitation at the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN – V)
2014	Government of Pakistan presented a Statement of Commitment at a high-level meeting of Sanitation and Water for All. Secondary analysis of MICS Punjab 2014 to map inequities in WASH sector Government of Pakistan Vision 2025 Punjab Economic Growth Strategy (2014-2018) that included WASH under Urban Development Plan and Health Development Plan- recognising integration as key element.
2015	Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for drinking water and sanitation launched 'Mapping of Inequities in Basic Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Punjab, Pakistan' Report Punjab Sector Development Plan Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (2014-2024)
2016	Pakistan becomes the first country whose National Assembly passed a unanimous Resolution adopting the SDG Agenda as its own national development agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjab WASH Sector Status Report • Planning Manual for WASH Development Projects • Punjab WASH in Schools (WinS) strategy (2016) • WASH Capacity Needs Assessment and Human Resource Development Plan Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Budget Analysis Report
2017	Punjab Water Roadmap 2017 WASH Joint Sector Review for Punjab Province
2018	Government of the Punjab adopts various policies to ensure that the entire population of Punjab has access to safe and affordable sanitation by 2025 i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjab Economic Growth Strategy 2018 • Punjab Drinking Water policy-cum-strategy 2018 • Punjab Sanitation policy-cum-strategy 2018
2019	Punjab Water Act, 2019 Punjab Growth Strategy - Accelerating Economic Growth and Social Outcomes

Department (LG&CDD). In five metropolitan cities, the city governments are responsible for operating and managing water and sanitation functions through Water and Sanitation Agencies (WASAs) and Solid Waste Management Companies. In all other urban areas, Town/Tehsil Municipal Administrations take care of water and sanitation in their respective jurisdictions. The rural water supply and sanitation programs are being planned, designed and executed by PHED and Local Governments while operation and maintenance (O&M) is the responsibility of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).

Enabling Environment (EE) functions relate to governance performance factors in the WASH sector such as institutional factors including social norms, public finance management and decentralized service delivery. The Joint Sector Review (JSR), identified the challenge of institutional arrangements. Punjab Rules of Business (2011) delegates the responsibility for provision and maintenance of WASH services to HUD&PHED, while the Punjab Local Government Act 2019 extends these responsibilities to Municipal Committees and other local councils in small and medium-sized towns and cities. A critical factor in decentralizing authority to the district and local levels has been to ensure it is accompanied by sufficient financial and technical capacity.

2. Sector coordination and planning

In 2014, the government of Punjab formulated a five-year Economic Growth Strategy (2014-2018). The Strategy underpinned five areas as growth factors: Industrial, Skill, Cities, Agriculture & Livestock and Human Capital (Education, Family Planning and Preventive Health). Water and sanitation were integrated into preventive health care and making cities an engine of growth. This also identified the need for a specific Water and Sanitation Sector Development Plan to ensure a cohesive and unified vision.

The 'Punjab Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Plan 2014-2024', developed with the support of UNICEF, and other sector partners including Plan International, WaterAid, WSP-World Bank, WSCC has been instrumental in coordinating inputs from the Planning and Development Department as well as HUD&PHED and LGCDD, along with Department of Health and Department of Education so the respective departments and stakeholders could draw necessary guidance and facilitation in resource allocation on an annual basis. The process included consultations with non-government and international development partners.

Punjab province also has various stakeholder committees involved in planning, monitoring, implementing and coordinating WASH activities at these different levels, including: Provincial WASH

Table 2: Institutional roles and responsibilities for WASH

Level	Institutional roles and responsibilities
Provincial	Two main departments responsible for WASH are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Department (HUD&PHED) • Local Government and Community Development Department (LG&CDD)
City / local governments	Water and Sanitation Agencies (WASAs) in Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, and Multan
Tehsils	Elected councils
Rural communities	Rural water supply schemes are transferred to community-based organisations (CBOs) after construction for operation and maintenance

Coordination Committee (P-WASH-CC) and District WASH Coordination Committees (D-WASH-CC) as well as Union Councils and Village WASH Committees (V-WASH-C). District WASH Committees also have a role in the formulation and implementation of the key strategic actions as outlined and suggested under the WASH Sector Development Plan. The annual district WASH planning processes support the review, monitoring and coordination of activities. Capacity development and coordination support are extended by the development partners in some of the districts. The Joint Sector Review mechanisms also bring different stakeholders together especially senior political leadership, government agencies, local civil society, academia and international partners, with a joint performance review and M&E framework at the provincial levels.

3. Sector policy / strategy

Punjab has a range of sector policies and strategies, backed by the highest level of political support, that identify sector goals and pathways for all sub-sectors (urban, rural, drinking water and sanitation) at national and sub-national levels. See **Table 3**.

4. Sector Financing

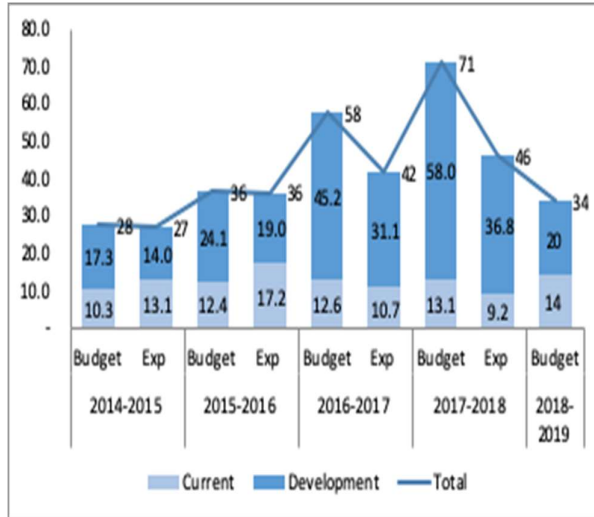
In 2014-2015, the budgetary allocation for drinking water and sanitation was PKR 28 billion (US\$ 183 million). The WASH Sector Development Plan (2014 - 2015) identified the needs of sector investments as PKR 40 billion (US\$ 260 million) annually for the next 10 years to reach 85% of the population with safely managed drinking water and 65% of the population with safely managed sanitation. Financing has also been allocated to implement key enabling environment functions such as monitoring, evaluation and learning,

Table 3: Sector policies and strategies in Punjab Province

Policy/Strategy	Year	Responsibilities
Punjab Local Government Act	2013	Provision, access, operation and maintenance of drinking water and improved sanitation services to respective councils within their jurisdictions including urban and rural areas
Draft Punjab Municipal Water Act	2014	Recognize, regulate and manage present and future municipal water in Punjab, and define municipal water, cover water appropriation, water treatment, bulk supply and water services
Punjab WASH Sector Development Plan	2014-2024	Identifies the investment needs of the province on the basis of access and coverage provided in Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2010-2011 and MICS 2011 Punjab. It proposes short, medium and long-term strategic objectives, and overall investments required
Punjab Sanitation Policy	2018	Developing a safely managed sanitation environment for all citizens of the province, contributing towards high quality life in Punjab.
Punjab Drinking Water Policy	2018	Safe drinking water is accessible at premises, available when needed, and free from contamination on a sustainable basis to the whole population of Punjab, in addition to acquiring and adopting improved knowledge in their daily life
Punjab WASH in School (WinS) Strategy		Sets out Standards & Roll out Action Plan (a minimum hygiene package, training package, hardware package and M&E). This is being integrated in the school education road map
Punjab Water Act	2019	Focuses on the creation of Water Commission to lead on water distribution among different users as per needs and steer the reforms process including the establishment of water regulatory authority. The Act includes water and sanitation services through piped water and appropriate drainage systems. Where it is not possible to provide piped water, other viable approaches and systems shall be in place.

capacity building and policy development. Thus, the government increased the budgetary allocation to PKR 36 billion in 2015-16; PKR 58 billion (US\$ 380 million) in 2016-17 and PKR 71 billion (US\$ 464 million) in 2017-2018. The summary of the allocations and expenditures is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: WASH Investments and Expenditures (in PKR billion) (approx.. PKR 153 = US\$ 1)



The 2018-2019 allocation was low compared to the two previous financial years, largely due to the proposed transition of management of WASH to local authorities and implementation of necessary institutional reforms, equity-based budgetary allocation criteria and capacity development before making high investments required in the sector by the newly elected government.

The new government's White Paper (2018) proposal of a 20% annual increase in the budgetary allocation for water supply and sanitation services was adopted for the next five years. There is greater emphasis on private sector participation and investment on water and sanitation, through private sector investments and local councils.

5. Leaving no one behind

Punjab has set a target to be an open defecation free (ODF) province by 2025. Equity

considerations in the province have been made through:

- Equity profiling, based on an analysis of MICS data, to see which areas receive most sector financing and which are in need of the most.
- A Poverty Scorecard which is used to plan the allocation of resources for under-developed districts.

The government of Punjab commissioned a study to determine the equity profile of water and sanitation at tehsil level based on MICS (2011.) The district-level mapping was done for MICS 2014 and MICS 2018.

Figure 2: Access to Piped Water in Punjab, 2018

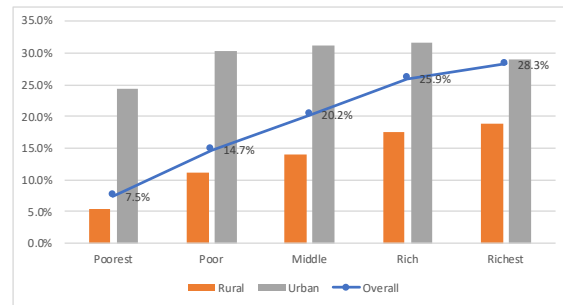
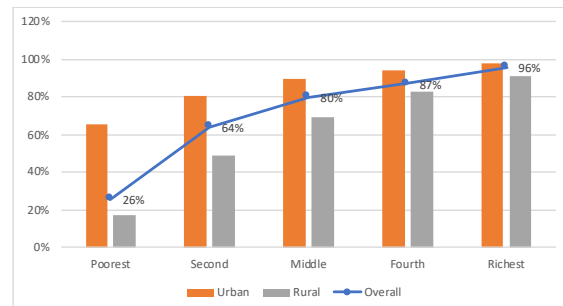


Figure 3: Improved Sanitation in Punjab, 2018



These studies showed that there is considerable inequity within the province, with southern districts requiring urgent action to improve sanitation services. The studies also found a disparity between the most deprived areas and rural areas, compared to urban areas and the richest areas. Based on these studies, the government of Punjab

developed a WASH Stunting Reduction Programme in selected districts. Similarly, the studies also showed that the richest group have greater access to piped water supply compared to the poorest and similarly, the poorest are lagging in accessing improved sanitation.

Three-year rolling investment plans are planned from 2020, to address these disparities. This will increase access to WASH at district and tehsil levels. Allocation of funds is based on the level of poverty, WASH access, and geographical size of the districts as well as the level of acceleration needed to achieve the SDG targets. Moreover, the Provincial WASH Action Plan and Roadmaps include attention to gender, persons with disability, climate and disaster risk reduction – with a budget allocated to progressively reduce inequities in WASH access.

6. Sector monitoring and evaluation

HUD&PHED developed a Management Information System (MIS) to provide a platform for improved planning and design as well as real-time monitoring and verification. A range of documentation is uploaded onto the platform including:

- A management system for projects, based on baseline surveys and mapping
- Monthly project expenditure to track execution of government funds
- ODF achievement together with the number of behaviour change communication (BCC) sessions in community and schools
- Water quality monitoring reports of completed and ongoing projects
- Performance assessment of officers using the management information system (MIS) financial and Key Performance Indicators. CBO performance is monitored through community feedback in an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) call or SMS survey

In addition, School WASH indicators have been included in the Education Managing Information System of the government of Punjab. The updates on district and even sub-district level is available on a periodic basis.

The government has piloted the Clean Green Pakistan Index in 12 cities. This includes reporting against a set of indicators for WASH and solid waste on a periodic basis to assess performance and rank cities as per their achievements.

The MIS has been used for building Provincial WASH Action Plans and roadmaps. The Government of Punjab has also implemented a periodic sector status report.

7. Capacity development

HUD&PHED conducted a WASH Capacity Assessment and developed a Strategic Roadmap for WASH Human Resource development, for service providers in Punjab. Capacity related interventions for the staff in provincial and local government departments include community development, consulting studies, training events, communication and outreach. Capacity development in WASAs includes O&M, tariff setting, accounting and billing and collection, as well as technical assistance to prepare a regulatory framework to strengthen partnerships with the private sector.

Further, the capacity development for Pakistan's Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS) as well as district WASH Coordination Committees are being institutionalized through the Local Government Academy. Moreover, WASH has been added in the curriculum and training modules of Lady Health Workers and School Health & Nutrition Supervisors as well as Community Development Officers (CDOs) and their teams of Community Based Mobilisers (CBMs).

A behaviour change strategy for cascading Clean Green Pakistan in communities and schools has been developed. This included the preparation of

guidelines and materials to be used at different forums.

Outcomes

The policy, legal, and institutional reforms in Punjab, have resulted in several outcomes that aim to accelerate access to WASH:

- **Institutional arrangements:** The WASH Cell has now been upgraded by the government to a Programme Management Unit for improved coordination and reporting. Salaries of all key staff and essential operational expenses at PMU are being met by the government from its annual budget and is currently located at HUD&PHED. Provincial and district WASH committees initially tested under PATS have now been scaled up in the province. Institutional arrangements also include other partners such as NGOs, CBO, private sectors, etc. The PMU coordinates with all key stakeholders especially sector partners and development agencies to identify new innovative approaches and scale up operations.
- **Sector coordination and planning:** A time-bound roadmap, WASH Sector Development Plan 2014-2024 is in place under the guiding sectoral plan with clear targets, indicators and budgeted activities. Sector coordination also refers to bringing key sector partners/stakeholders in key planning, financing, implementation and review processes. The annual WASH Joint Sector Review allows key stakeholders, including NGOs, to participate in reviewing current progress and planning for coming years.
- **Sector policy and strategy:** Provincial water and sanitation policies/strategies have been updated in Punjab, and further amended to respond to the SDGs. These policies set out provincial service norms for households and institutions backed by a legal framework
- **Leaving no one behind:** Evidence has been generated on 'leaving no one behind' through

equity assessments such as equity profiling and MICS secondary analysis. This evidence has been used for informed decision making and for targeting appropriate interventions. For instance, Jhang district in Punjab was selected for an integrated WASH programme from 2017 based on this analysis. Similarly, interventions on reducing stunting through WASH are being implemented in districts with poor access to water and sanitation.

- **Monitoring:** Monitoring processes have been improved, with all stakeholders supporting the government plan and reporting through the provincial MIS reporting system. There are mechanisms in place (such as joint sector reviews with a common performance review framework as well as the government Sector Status Report) whereby stakeholders (including government, non-government and development organizations) review status and make decisions based on evidence collected.
- **Sector budgeting and financing:** Budget analysis has made financial flows (as well as different sources of funding) known, this evidence can be used to ensure that national WASH targets are met. The outcomes were a detailed WASH budget analysis study that identified inequities in terms of per capita spending on WASH in different districts of Punjab. Now, the government is in process of revising its criterion of WASH financial allocation.
- **Sector capacity development:** A WASH Capacity Assessment was performed followed by the development of a Strategic Roadmap for WASH Human Resource Development, for service providers in Punjab. Different training courses especially around community development for PATS and operational guidelines for preparing sustainable WASH interventions were developed and are now being used by HUD&PHED.

Lessons Learned

Achieving the WASH SDG targets requires a robust enabling environment together with an overarching roadmap (the WASH Sector Development Plan) that creates the conditions for universal WASH service delivery.

Leaving no one behind requires government and political commitment supported by frameworks for equitable and sustainable WASH among the marginalised.

A well-coordinated sector underpins rapid WASH improvement: well-defined roles and responsibilities have been critical to addressing sector coordination. Provincial level Coordination and Union Council level Committees have a role in driving WASH improvements.

Next Steps

The next steps for further strengthening the enabling environment for WASH in Punjab province include:

- **Institutional arrangements:** Rolling out the WASH Index at the district level, a component of Clean Green Index, under Clean Green Pakistan. Further integrating WASH in health, education and nutrition sectors under 'Clean Green Pakistan' initiative.
- **Sector coordination and planning:** Strengthen the institutionalization of WASH Joint Sector Review, with a common performance review framework and M&E for WASH.
- **Sector policy and strategy:** A comprehensive legislative review of existing laws and regulations to create an enabling framework for drinking water and sanitation in the province.
- **Leaving no one behind:** Punjab government to review and develop service delivery models for urban and rural water supply and sanitation.

- **Monitoring, regulation and accountability:** Strengthening regular drinking water quality and effluent monitoring and surveillance mechanisms along with promoting reuse, recycle and recharge of wastewater. Mobilise youth groups and local representatives for collective action on sustainability and moving up the water and sanitation ladders.
- **Sector budgeting and financing:** Developing and implementation of a 'resource distribution criterion' for WASH funds at district level.
- **Sector capacity development:** Capacity building and continuous monitoring of programmes to accompany WASH improvements.

KEY POINTS

- *An average increase of WASH budgetary allocation by 35% per annum was noted from 2014-15 to 2017-18. This was from Rs 28 billion in 2014 to Rs 71 billion in 2018. The Punjab WASH Sector Development Plan was developed in 2014.*
- *The budget declined in 2018-19 (new government) and picked up the momentum in 2019-2020 when the budgetary allocation surpassed all previous years.*
- *Drinking Water and Sanitation recognized as integral part of the Chief Minister Water Roadmap since 2017.*
- *The New Water Act 2019 was approved by the Cabinet of the Provincial government, which emphasizes the creation of a Regulatory Authority for water and sanitation.*
- *New Punjab Local government Act 2019 includes ending open defecation by the respective village councils.*

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