



October 2015

WATER AND SANITATION ASSISTANCE

USAID Has Increased Strategic Focus but Should Improve Monitoring

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-81](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

Millions of people in developing countries lack access to safe water and improved sanitation. Congress passed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 to improve access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries. In 2013, USAID released its first *Water and Development Strategy*, which includes the objective of improving health through sustainable WASH.

GAO was asked to review USAID's WASH efforts. Focusing on WASH activities in 9 selected countries, this report (1) describes recent activities and funding, (2) assesses USAID missions' efforts to plan and implement activities, and (3) assesses USAID's monitoring of activities. GAO selected a nongeneralizable sample of 9 countries from USAID's list of 22 priority WASH countries. These 9 countries received about 53 percent of funding attributed to WASH for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. GAO also selected 16 activities for detailed review in the 9 countries, primarily on the basis of levels of funding. GAO analyzed USAID WASH funding data for fiscal years 2012 through 2014 and reviewed agency documents, interviewed mission officials, and visited sites in 2 African countries.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that USAID take steps to improve monitoring and reporting of WASH activities, by identifying and addressing reasons for missions' inconsistent adherence with agency guidance. USAID generally concurred with the recommendations and, in particular, outlined steps it is taking to address the report's second recommendation.

View [GAO-16-81](#). For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov.

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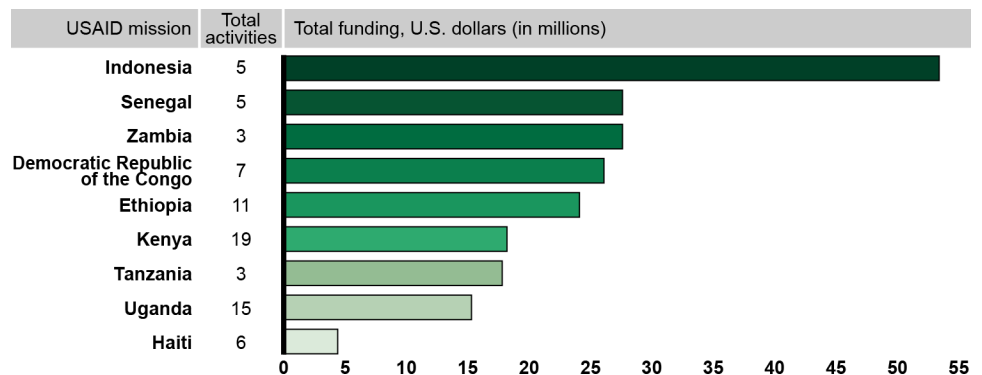
WATER AND SANITATION ASSISTANCE

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What GAO Found

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) missions in the 9 countries GAO selected for its review reported implementing a variety of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. WASH activities included capacity building, behavior-change communication, infrastructure construction, technical assistance, policy and governance, and financing. The missions' funding for WASH activities in these countries ranged from \$4.4 million to \$53.4 million.

Funding for Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Activities Implemented by Nine USAID Missions in Fiscal Years 2012-2014



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data. | GAO-16-81

Note: Funding shown generally represents allocations for activities through Sept. 2014.

USAID missions in these 9 countries are taking steps to develop and implement plans for WASH activities, with some missions making more progress than others. These missions are also generally taking steps to address long-term sustainability when planning WASH activities, as directed by USAID guidance, including the *Water and Development Strategy*. USAID is in the process of developing additional guidance to help all its missions address the sustainability of WASH activities.

The completeness and accuracy of USAID's monitoring of WASH activities varied in the 9 selected countries. GAO found that, inconsistent with agency guidance, these missions did not (1) consistently set annual targets for 6 of 16 WASH activities, (2) disaggregate beneficiaries by gender for 6 of 10 water supply and sanitation activities, (3) verify the accuracy of beneficiary data for 3 of 10 water supply activities, and (4) report accurate numbers of beneficiaries for 6 of 8 sanitation activities. Mission officials cited a variety of reasons for adhering inconsistently with agency guidance in some instances and in others the reasons for inconsistent adherence were not clear. These limitations in the completeness and accuracy of monitoring information for WASH activities may inhibit the effectiveness of USAID's oversight of such activities and affect its ability to accurately report on progress in increasing access to safe water and sanitation.

Contents

Letter		1
	Background	5
	USAID Missions' WASH Activities and Funding Varied	14
	USAID Is Taking Steps to Enhance Strategic WASH Approach and Address WASH Sustainability	18
	Monitoring and Reporting for USAID's WASH Activities in Selected Countries Had Limitations, although Evaluations Were Generally Sound	27
	Conclusions	43
	Recommendations for Executive Action	43
	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	44
Appendix I	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	47
Appendix II	USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries	53
Appendix III	USAID Evaluations' Assessment of Monitoring, Outcomes, and Sustainability	68
Appendix IV	Comments from the U.S. Agency for International Development	72
Appendix V	GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments	75
Tables		
	Table 1: Standard and Custom Indicators That USAID Recommends to Track Its Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Goals	9
	Table 2: Key Focus Areas and Examples of Selected Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented in Nine Selected Countries in Fiscal Years 2012-2014	16

Table 3: Geographic Focus of Selected USAID Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Activities Implemented in Nine Selected Countries in Fiscal Years 2012-2014	17
Table 4: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	53
Table 5: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Ethiopia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	55
Table 6: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Haiti, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	57
Table 7: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Indonesia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	58
Table 8: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Kenya, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	59
Table 9: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Senegal, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	62
Table 10: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Tanzania, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	63
Table 11: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Uganda, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	65
Table 12: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Zambia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014	67

Figures

Figure 1: USAID Definitions Related to Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation	8
Figure 2: USAID-Designated Tier 1 and Tier 2 Priority Countries for Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Assistance, Nine of Which GAO Selected for Review	13
Figure 3: Funding and Focus Areas of Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented by Nine USAID Missions in Fiscal Years 2012-2014	15
Figure 4: Status of Nine USAID Missions' Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Plans and Recent and Planned Activities as of July 2015	21
Figure 5: Nine Missions' Compliance with USAID Requirements in Documenting Annual Targets and Reporting Performance Data for Selected Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented in Fiscal Years 2012-2014	30
Figure 6: Nine USAID Missions' Compliance with State and USAID Requirements for Verifying Beneficiaries of Water	

Activities and Reporting Beneficiaries of Sanitation Activities	32
Figure 7: Basic Household Latrine Built for a USAID Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Activity in Ethiopia	38
Figure 8: Assessment of Evaluations of USAID's Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities in Fiscal Years 2012-2014	41
Figure 9: Drinking Water Tank and Taps Constructed as Part of USAID's WASH Activity in Buda Megada Village, Bule Hora District, Oromiya, Ethiopia	56
Figure 10: Tanzania's Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program Supported Efforts in Mvumi Village, Wami-Ruvu River Basin	64
Figure 11: USAID-Funded Water Point in Ethiopia with One of Three Female Members of a Seven-Person Water Management Committee	70

Abbreviations

ADS	Automated Directives System
APHIA	AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance
BCC	behavior-change communication
CB	capacity building
CLTS	community-led total sanitation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
F	financing
Field Guide	<i>USAID Water and Development Strategy Implementation Field Guide</i>
IC	infrastructure construction
PAD	project appraisal document
PG	policy and governance
SDSH	Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d’Haiti
2005 Act	Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005
2014 Act	Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014
State	Department of State
SUWASA	Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa
TA	technical assistance
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WASH	water supply, sanitation, and hygiene
WATER	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience
Water Strategy	<i>USAID Water and Development Strategy, 2013-2018</i>
WHO	World Health Organization

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October 6, 2015

The Honorable Karen Bass
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health,
Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
House of Representatives

The Honorable Ted Poe
House of Representatives

In many developing countries, a lack of access to safe water and basic sanitation severely limits economic growth and development and leads to suffering and death for millions each year.¹ In 2005, Congress passed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 (2005 Act), making access to safe water and basic sanitation for developing countries a U.S. foreign policy objective.² The 2005 Act required, among other things, that the Department of State (State), in consultation with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), develop and implement a U.S. water and sanitation strategy that included designation of high-priority countries where need is greatest. In 2010, we reported on State's implementation

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Global WASH Fast Facts: Information on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene* (Atlanta, Georgia: June 2015), accessed Aug. 18, 2015, http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/wash_statistics.html

²Pub. L. No. 109-121.

of U.S. water and sanitation assistance.³ In 2014, Congress passed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014 (2014 Act) to strengthen implementation of the 2005 Act by improving the capacity of the U.S. government to implement, monitor, leverage, and evaluate programs to provide first-time or improved access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene to the world's poorest on an equitable and sustainable basis.⁴ The United States has primarily provided water and sanitation assistance through USAID. In fiscal years 2005 through 2014, USAID reported allocating about \$3.5 billion for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

You asked us to review the U.S. government's international water and sanitation assistance. This is the second of two reports responding to your request. In July 2014, we provided information about U.S. agencies' funding for international water-related assistance and the extent to which the agencies complied with congressional spending requirements.⁵ In this report, we (1) describe the types of WASH activities USAID has implemented in selected countries and funding it has provided for these

³In September 2010, we reported that State needed to strengthen its strategic approach to U.S. water and sanitation assistance and recommended that State, in consultation with USAID, (1) ensure that the U.S. water and sanitation strategy addressed all components required by the 2005 Act and (2) explain the basis for its designations of priority countries for U.S. assistance. State concurred with our recommendations. In July 2014, State's Special Coordinator for Water informed us that State had not developed a U.S. government-wide water and sanitation strategy but, because USAID administers the majority of U.S. funding for water and sanitation assistance, had supported the development of USAID's *Water and Development Strategy, 2013-2018* (Water Strategy), which was released in May 2013. Because the 2005 Act called for State to develop a U.S.-government-wide strategy, we were unable to close the first recommendation as implemented. In July 2014, we closed the second recommendation as implemented, because we found that USAID's Water Strategy includes clearly articulated criteria for selecting priority countries. GAO, *U.S. Water and Sanitation Aid: Millions of Beneficiaries in Developing Countries, but Department of State Needs to Strengthen Strategic Approach*, [GAO-10-957](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 24, 2010).

⁴Pub. L. No. 113-289.

⁵We reported that USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and 23 other agencies funded international water and sanitation assistance, with USAID providing the majority of WASH funding. See GAO, *Foreign Assistance: Briefing on U.S. International Water-Related Assistance*, [GAO-14-683R](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 24, 2014). The United States also provides significant contributions to international financial institutions and international organizations, which support international water and sanitation projects. Assistance provided through multilateral institutions was not within the scope of this review.

activities, (2) assess the extent to which USAID guidance has informed the agency's efforts to plan and implement WASH activities in these countries, and (3) assess USAID's monitoring and evaluation of selected WASH activities.

We focused our review on USAID's WASH activities in 9 selected countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia. We selected these countries from 22 that USAID designated as priorities for WASH assistance in fiscal year 2014.⁶ The 9 selected countries accounted for \$155 million—about 53 percent—of funding attributed to congressional spending requirements for WASH by all tier 1 and tier 2 priority countries in fiscal years 2012 and 2013.⁷ For all three reporting objectives, we interviewed USAID and State officials and conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with officials at the USAID missions in the 9 selected countries. Because we judgmentally selected these 9 countries, our findings from these interviews cannot be generalized to all USAID missions. We also conducted fieldwork in Tanzania and Ethiopia to meet with U.S. and host country officials, implementing partners, and beneficiaries and to conduct site visits for USAID water and sanitation activities. To describe the types of WASH activities USAID has implemented and funding it has provided for these activities, we obtained funding data and descriptive information from each mission regarding its ongoing or planned WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. To assess the reliability of the data and information we obtained, we reviewed documentation and interviewed agency officials to identify and correct any missing data and any errors. We determined that the data and information were sufficiently reliable to provide general information on funding and types of WASH activities.

⁶In fiscal year 2014, USAID designated 22 countries as priority for WASH assistance based on the level of need in these countries and opportunities for USAID projects to have an impact: Ethiopia, Kenya, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, and South Sudan (tier 1); and Bangladesh, Cambodia, DRC, Ghana, Haiti, India, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (tier 2). According to USAID, tier 1 countries have the potential to significantly leverage USAID resources to implement WASH projects at scale. USAID anticipates that tier 2 countries will require relatively small investment levels to achieve a significant impact in at least one dimension of WASH.

⁷Annual appropriations acts funding foreign operations have established spending requirements for WASH since the 2005 Act was passed. Funding data for fiscal year 2014 were not available at the time that we made our country selection.

To assess the extent to which USAID guidance informed planning and implementation of WASH activities in the 9 selected countries, we reviewed USAID guidance, mission-level WASH plans, and other documents.⁸ We assessed the status of the USAID missions' efforts to develop WASH plans, steps they have taken to implement these plans and to incorporate USAID guidance into their recent or planned WASH activities, and steps they have taken to address sustainability. We conducted a detailed review of documents and information for 16 activities⁹ that we selected on the basis of factors such as levels of funding and types of activities implemented in the 9 countries in fiscal years 2012 through 2014.¹⁰

To assess monitoring of selected WASH activities in the 9 countries, we reviewed award agreements and modifications, performance management plans, monitoring and evaluation plans, and monitoring reports for the 16 activities that we selected for detailed review. In addition, to assess USAID evaluations for activities in the 9 countries, we assessed the quality of 14 evaluations for WASH activities completed in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 against established principles of evaluation, which correspond with USAID's requirements for evaluations. We did not assess the selected USAID missions' compliance with the requirement to conduct evaluations. Appendix I provides additional information about our objectives, scope, and methodology.

⁸We reviewed USAID guidance including: (1) USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), ch. 201, which contains the agency's policies and procedures and includes guidance on strategic planning and project and activity design; (2) USAID's Water Strategy and (3) USAID's *Water and Development Strategy: Implementation Field Guide* (March 2014).

⁹ADS ch. 201 defines an activity as a component of a project that contributes to a project purpose; a project is a set of executed interventions over an established timeline and with a budget that are intended to achieve a discrete development result. The selected 16 activities generally represented one award each (e.g., cooperative agreement, grant, or contract), with one exception (the Haiti activity represents two contracts).

¹⁰Tanzania had only one primary WASH activity. We initially identified three WASH activities in Haiti; however, USAID's mission in Haiti subsequently informed us that two of the selected activities did not have a WASH component and that the mission had incorrectly attributed WASH funds to these activities. The mission planned to take corrective action to ensure use of allocated funds for WASH. As a result, we reviewed one WASH activity for Haiti.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2014 to October 2015 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Legislation and Key Agency Roles Related to WASH Assistance

The 2005 Act made access to safe water and sanitation a U.S. foreign policy objective. Specifically, the act aimed to promote the provision of access to safe water and sanitation to countries, locales, and people with greatest need, including the very poor, women, and other vulnerable populations.

Congress passed the 2014 Act to strengthen the 2005 Act by improving the capacity of the U.S. government to implement, monitor, and evaluate programs that increase access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. The 2014 Act requires, among other things, that USAID ensure that WASH projects are designed to promote maximum impact and long-term sustainability. The 2014 Act also calls for rigorous monitoring and evaluation to assess improvements in WASH.

State's Office of Conservation and Water within the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs is responsible for the development and implementation of U.S. foreign policy on international water and sanitation assistance. USAID's Office of Water within the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment is responsible for coordinating, managing, and overseeing USAID's response to water policy initiatives, including the 2014 Act.

Annual Spending Requirement for WASH Assistance

Annual appropriations acts funding foreign operations have established a spending requirement for WASH. These spending requirements have ranged from \$315 million to \$365 million since 2012.¹¹ USAID and State have provided annual guidance to USAID missions regarding activities for which they may attribute funding to the annual spending requirement. The guidance notes that for attribution, proposed activities must be able to demonstrate an impact on water supply, sanitation, or hygiene through objectively verifiable indicators to measure progress.¹² The 2005 Act required State to submit an annual report to Congress detailing the status of WASH efforts; these reports included information from USAID about funds allocated to WASH activities to meet the spending requirements for WASH. This reporting requirement was repealed by the 2014 Act.

USAID Water and Development Strategy

Improving health outcomes through the provision of sustainable WASH is the first strategic objective of *USAID's Water and Development Strategy, 2013-2018 (Water Strategy)*.¹³ To achieve this objective, the Water Strategy includes three key WASH-related goals:¹⁴

- **Increase first-time and improved access to sustainable water supply.** First-time access refers to access to an improved water source that is gained by previously unserved populations.¹⁵ Improved access refers to enhancing existing access to, and the quality of, an already improved water supply.

¹¹According to USAID, the spending requirement was reduced to \$302 million in fiscal year 2013 because of sequestration. Funding attributed to the annual spending requirements for WASH must be from accounts funded by Foreign Operations appropriations measures and must adhere to the various statutory requirements imposed on those accounts by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (Pub. L. No. 87–195, as amended).

¹²This annual guidance is called State's Water Key Issue Definition.

¹³The Water Strategy included a second strategic objective, to manage water in agriculture sustainably and more productively to enhance food security. We did not include the Water Strategy's second strategic objective within the scope of our review.

¹⁴For the purposes of this review, we refer to the Water Strategy's intermediate results as goals.

¹⁵An improved drinking-water source is one that, by the nature of its construction and when properly used, adequately protects the source from outside contamination, particularly fecal matter.

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- **Increase first-time and improved access to sustainable sanitation.** First-time access to improved sanitation generally refers to access to a pit latrine with a slab, septic system, or similar type of improved sanitary facility.¹⁶ Improved access to sanitation generally refers to improvement of an existing sanitation facility.¹⁷
 - **Increase adoption of key hygiene behaviors.** The Water Strategy recommends the promotion of three hygiene practices with the greatest demonstrated impact on health: (1) hand washing with soap at critical times; (2) safe disposal and management of excreta; and (3) improving household water storage, handling, and treatment.

Figure 1 shows USAID's definitions for improved and unimproved drinking water and sanitation.

¹⁶An improved sanitation facility is one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact.

¹⁷The Water Strategy puts an emphasis on scaling up and strengthening sanitation programs. For example, the strategy highlights approaches such as community-led total sanitation (CLTS), which focuses on changing collective behavior in communities, rather than on building donor-funded latrines for each household, to end open defecation. Additionally, the Water Strategy notes that USAID missions can promote community or public toilets in dense settlements as well as sanitation facilities in institutional settings such as schools, health facilities, and transportation hubs.

Figure 1: USAID Definitions Related to Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation

Unimproved drinking water sources	Improved drinking water sources
<p>Surface sources: River, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal, irrigation channels</p> <p>Other sources: Unprotected dug well, unprotected spring, cart with small tank/drum, bottled water</p>	<p>Piped water on premises: Piped household water connection in user's dwelling, plot, or yard</p> <p>Other sources: Public taps or standpipes, tube wells or boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater collection</p>
Unimproved sanitation facilities	Improved sanitation facilities
<p>Open defecation: Disposal of human feces in fields, forests, bushes, open bodies of water, beaches, or other open spaces</p> <p>Unimproved facilities: Pit latrines without slab or platform, hanging latrines, and bucket latrines with no mechanism to ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact</p> <p>Shared facilities: Sanitation facilities of an otherwise acceptable type that are shared between two or more households</p>	<p>Improved facilities: Facilities that are likely to ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact and are not shared or public. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush/pour flush to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - piped sewer system - septic tank - pit latrine • Ventilated improved pit latrine • Pit latrine with slab

Source: GAO presentation of World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund information. | GAO-16-81

Note: USAID adheres to the World Health Organization's and the United Nations Children's Fund's definitions for access to drinking water and sanitation.

In March 2014, USAID issued the *Water Strategy Implementation Field Guide* (Field Guide) as a tool to help missions understand and implement the Water Strategy. The Field Guide requires that USAID missions track progress toward the three WASH-related goals using standard indicators and some custom indicators, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Standard and Custom Indicators That USAID Recommends to Track Its Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Goals

WASH goal	USAID-recommended standard and custom indicators ^a
Increase first-time and improved access to sustainable water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source</i> • <i>Number of people receiving improved service quality from existing improved drinking water sources</i> • Percentage of households using an improved drinking water source • Number of policies, laws, agreements, regulations, or investment agreements (public or private) that promote access to improved water supply and sanitation • Public sector expenditures on drinking water and sanitation as a percentage of national budget • Percentage of a drinking water utility’s supply that is non-revenue • Percentage of population using an improved drinking water source • Percentage of children under five who had diarrhea in the past 2 weeks
Increase first-time and improved access to sustainable sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility</i> • <i>Percentage of households using an improved sanitation facility</i> • <i>Number of improved toilets in institutional settings</i> • Number of policies, laws, agreements, regulations, or investment agreements (public or private) that promote access to improved water • Public sector expenditures on drinking water and sanitation as a percentage of national budget • Percentage of population using an improved sanitation facility • Percentage of children under five who had diarrhea in the past 2 weeks • Percentage of population in target areas practicing open defecation • <i>Number of communities certified as “open defecation free”</i> • Number of individuals trained to implement improved sanitation methods^b
Increase adoption of key hygiene behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Number of liters of drinking water disinfected with point-of-use treatment products as a result of U.S. government assistance</i> • Percentage of households in target areas practicing correct use of recommended household water treatment technologies • Number of households with soap and water at a hand-washing station commonly used by family members in U.S. government assistance programs^b

Legend:

Boldface type marks indicators that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) intends to use to track its progress in meeting its Water and Development Strategy’s first strategic objective.

Italic type marks indicators that we used to assess USAID’s monitoring of WASH activities.

Source: GAO presentation of USAID indicators in the Water and Development Strategy Implementation Field Guide (March 2014). | GAO-16-81

Notes: The Department of State (State) and USAID jointly developed standard indicators to measure the results of U.S. foreign assistance. While these indicators do not reflect all indicators tracked by individual bureaus, offices, and missions across State and USAID on an ongoing basis, this standard set of indicators allows for the consolidation of certain key results to provide a picture of what is being achieved with foreign assistance resources to Congress and the public. Performance target and result data are to be collected against these indicators on an annual basis and reported to State’s Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources.

^aIndicators listed are standard indicators unless otherwise noted. For this review, if a selected activity’s indicators did not include any of the WASH indicators listed in USAID’s *Water and Development*

Strategy Implementation Field Guide, we selected at least one of the activity's indicators related to drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene efforts, as applicable.

^bUSAID's *Water and Development Strategy Implementation Field Guide* recommended the use of this custom indicator.

State's annual reports to Congress detailing the status of WASH projects have included country-level results for two of the standard WASH indicators: (1) number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source and (2) number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility.¹⁸ This information has also been reported in USAID's annual report on international water-related assistance, *Safeguarding the World's Water*.

The Water Strategy projected that during the next 5 years, at least 10 million persons would receive sustainable access to improved water supply and 6 million persons would receive sustainable access to improved sanitation.¹⁹ These projections included persons receiving first-time and improved access to water supply and sanitation.

According to the Water Strategy and the Field Guide, to achieve the greatest impact, WASH projects should include the following elements:

- expanded access to “hardware” (e.g., water and sanitation infrastructure and hygiene commodities);
- required “software” activities to promote behavior changes for sustained improvements in water and sanitation access/service and hygiene practices; and

¹⁸These indicators are consistent with the United Nations' (UN) two primary goals for WASH. Specifically, the UN adopted Millennium Development Goals to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's population that lacks sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The UN World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) are responsible for monitoring progress toward this goal.

¹⁹State's fiscal year 2013 annual report to Congress on WASH notes that 3.5 million people gained access to an improved drinking water source and 1.29 million people gained access to an improved sanitation facility. Office of Conservation and Water, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, *Annual Report to Congress: Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act P.L. 109-121; Sec. 6(g)(2)* (Washington, D.C.: June 2014).

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- an improved enabling policy and institutional environment, including strengthened financial frameworks and public-private partnerships for WASH.

The Field Guide states that the level of effort in each area may vary depending on local context and other factors. In addition, the Water Strategy and the Field Guide highlight gender issues in the water sector as a key focus. They note that the burden of inadequate access to water and sanitation often falls heavily on women and girls and that WASH activities should promote gender equality and female empowerment to address the needs and opportunities of both men and women.²⁰

WASH Sustainability

The Water Strategy emphasizes the importance of sustainable WASH services. USAID policy defines sustainable services as public services in which host country partners and beneficiaries take ownership of development processes and maintain project results beyond the life of a USAID project.²¹ The strategy notes that the pillars of sustainability for water projects include integrated water resource management, sound governance, and appropriate environmental design, among other factors. In particular, regarding projects to provide first-time and improved access to quality water supply services, the strategy states that methods for ensuring the sustainability of water quality in the long term should be incorporated into project design and that this may include developing monitoring systems to ensure that water quality and supply are sustained at acceptable levels. Further, regarding sanitation services, the strategy notes that it supports the development and testing of improved, low-cost sanitation and waste management technologies, as well as innovative

²⁰The Field Guide notes that missions should also consider associating WASH activities with improvements in other health objectives, such as nutrition. Further, it states that the Water Strategy's second strategic objective addresses critical linkages between USAID's objectives for the water sector and for its Feed the Future program, which include inclusive agricultural growth, nutrition, and climate change. We previously reported on USAID's global food security efforts; see GAO, *Global Food Security: USAID Is Improving Coordination but Needs to Require Systematic Assessments of Country-Level Risks*, [GAO-13-809](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2013).

²¹Water-related services include those funded by user fees such as water and wastewater user fees. USAID Policy, *Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World* (Washington, D.C.: October 2013.) According to USAID, the agency considers governance, financial, technical, social, and environmental factors in designing, planning, implementing, and monitoring WASH projects for sustainability.

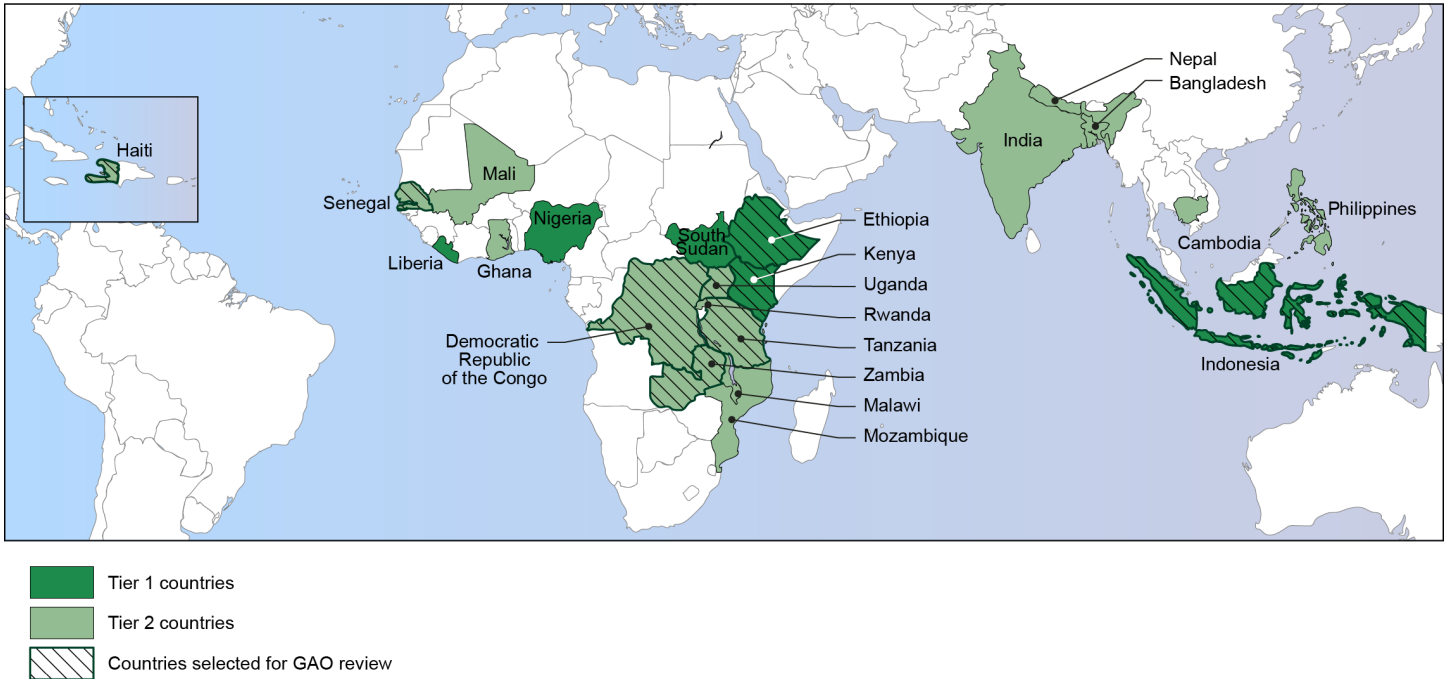
management and financing approaches, to ensure sustainability and to facilitate more rapid expansion of basic sanitation solutions.

USAID Priority Countries for WASH Assistance

In fiscal year 2014, USAID designated 22 countries as tier 1 or tier 2 priorities for WASH assistance on the basis of their need and the opportunity to achieve significant impact.²² The 6 tier 1 countries are those where USAID found an opportunity to have a transformative impact on national-level policies and to leverage host country resources for the development and implementation of assistance. The 16 tier 2 countries are those where USAID determined that relatively small investment levels were likely to generate a significant impact in at least one dimension of WASH. USAID reported attributing about \$463.1 million to the annual spending requirements for WASH in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 for these priority countries. Figure 2 shows the locations of the tier 1 and 2 priority countries.

²²A third priority tier consists of 6 countries or locations where USAID anticipates continued WASH projects because of a combination of strategic considerations and development needs: Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. In these countries, strategic priorities other than low levels of access to improved drinking water and basic sanitation or associated health impacts drive USAID funding of WASH activities. USAID reported attributing about \$369.8 million to the spending requirements for WASH in the 6 tier 3 priority countries in fiscal years 2012 through 2013.

Figure 2: USAID-Designated Tier 1 and Tier 2 Priority Countries for Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Assistance, Nine of Which GAO Selected for Review



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-16-81

Note: According to USAID, Tier 1 countries are those where the agency found an opportunity to have a transformative impact on national-level policies and to leverage host country resources for the development and implementation of assistance. Tier 2 countries are those where USAID determined that relatively small investment levels were likely to generate a significant impact in at least one dimension of WASH. USAID includes the Sahel region—consisting of parts of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal—in its list of tier 2 priority countries, in addition to the countries shown above.

USAID Missions’ WASH Activities and Funding Varied

In the nine countries we selected for our review, USAID missions reported \$214.5 million in WASH funding for 74 activities, with 6 key focus areas.²³ Each mission’s total funding for WASH activities in these nine countries ranged from about \$53.4 million, in Indonesia, to about \$4.4 million, in Haiti.²⁴ Missions reported implementing from as many as 19 WASH activities, in Kenya, to as few as 3 activities, in both Tanzania and Zambia.²⁵ The most frequent key focus areas for these activities were capacity building and behavior-change communication, followed by infrastructure construction, technical assistance, policy and governance, and financing.²⁶ Figure 3 provides additional detail about the activities implemented by each selected mission in fiscal years 2012 through 2014.

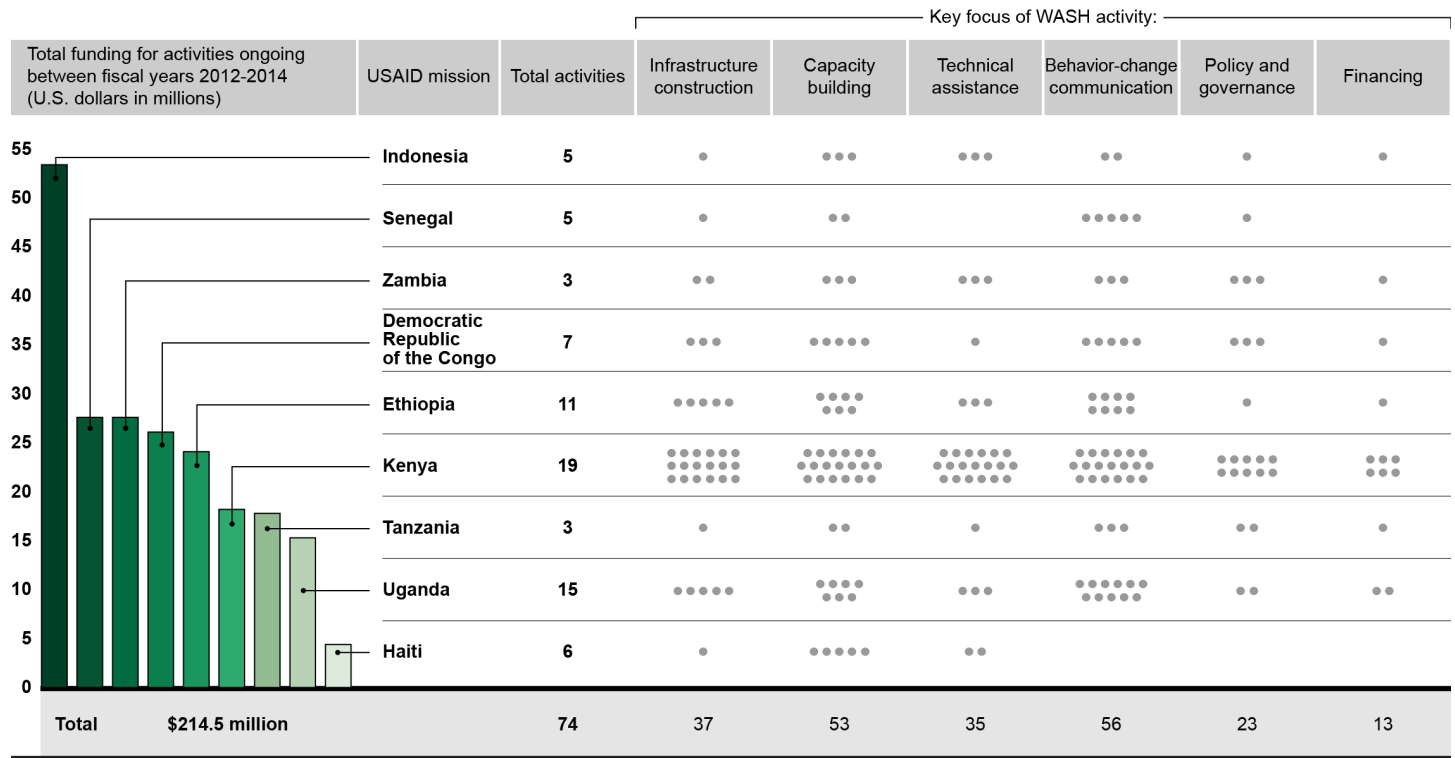
²³We identified these focus areas based on review of USAID documents and information and discussions with USAID officials.

²⁴Some activities started before fiscal year 2012, and some were ongoing at the end of fiscal year 2014. Funding shown generally represents total allocations for WASH activities ongoing at each mission in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including, when applicable, funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases where USAID data do not show WASH activity allocations, such as when a USAID mission obligated previously unplanned funding to an activity for WASH; we included total obligations of about \$4.3 million for 6 WASH activities implemented by 4 missions. State and USAID define allocations as the distribution of resources to bureaus and operating units by foreign assistance account. For the purposes of this review, we defined obligations as orders placed, contracts awarded, and similar transactions during a given period that will require payments during the same or a future period. USAID categorizes these as “sub-obligations”, because it considers these funds to have been obligated through a bilateral agreement with the host country.

²⁵In some cases, activities focused primarily on WASH, while in other cases, activities included WASH in addition to other components, such as maternal-child health, nutrition, or natural resources management.

²⁶Missions reported multiple focus areas for most WASH activities.

Figure 3: Funding and Focus Areas of Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented by Nine USAID Missions in Fiscal Years 2012-2014



• Activity that included the relevant focus area

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data. | GAO-16-81

Notes: Each mission's total funding generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities that were ongoing at the mission at any time in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases where USAID was not able to provide allocations for WASH activities, such as when a USAID mission obligated previously unplanned funding to an activity for WASH. Some activities started before fiscal year 2012, and some were ongoing at the end of fiscal year 2014.

Missions reported multiple focus areas for most activities.

Table 2 describes the 74 activities' key focus areas and provides examples of the types of WASH activities in each focus area for the nine selected countries.

Table 2: Key Focus Areas and Examples of Selected Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented in Nine Selected Countries in Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Key focus area	Description	Example
Behavior-change communication	Communication strategies to promote positive WASH behaviors	Promoting healthy WASH behaviors, including hand washing and water purification, through social marketing campaigns
Capacity building	Development of partner organizations' or governments' capacity related to WASH	Training local governments and community organizations in managing, operating, and maintaining water systems
Financing	Increasing the availability and accessibility of financing for WASH services	Promoting partnerships between water service providers and microfinance banks to increase access to water and sanitation services
Infrastructure construction	Construction of new systems or rehabilitation of existing systems for drinking water and sanitation	Constructing community water points and latrines in households and schools
Policy and governance	Support of an enabling environment to facilitate WASH delivery	Supporting host governments in developing pro-WASH policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks, instruments, and institutions
Technical assistance	Provision of expertise for achieving WASH program objectives	Assisting local governments in developing plans and budgets for WASH activities

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) information. | GAO-16-81

Note: We identified key focus areas for 74 water supply, sanitation, and hygiene activities implemented by USAID missions in, respectively, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia. Missions reported multiple focus areas for most activities.

Missions noted that some of the 74 reported activities included WASH as one of several other components, such as maternal-child health, nutrition, or natural resources management. For example, the Senegal mission's Yaajeende Agriculture activity is an agricultural activity that aims to increase nutritional status by diversifying foods produced and eaten. The activity includes a WASH component to expand access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation and also includes water resources management efforts to promote effective small irrigation technologies. In another example, the DRC mission's Integrated Health Project aims to improve the enabling environment and increase the availability of services, products, and practices for family planning; maternal, newborn, and child health; nutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis; and WASH in targeted health zones.

Additionally, the nine missions reported implementing WASH activities targeting three types of geographic areas: rural, peri-urban (e.g., small

towns), and urban.²⁷ For example, the Tanzania mission’s Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene activity targeted rural and peri-urban areas (e.g., small towns) to provide support including community piped water schemes, rehabilitated wells, training for community groups to operate and maintain water systems, and school latrines, among other efforts. In contrast, the Indonesia mission’s Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene activity aimed to increase access to clean water and improve sanitation facilities for people in urban settings, where about half of Indonesia’s population lives. According to the Indonesia mission, the activity focused on fostering demand for WASH, building capacity, and strengthening the policy and financing environment for WASH through its work with central and local governments, including entities responsible for delivering water and sanitation services.

Table 3 includes information about the geographic focus of the 74 activities in the nine selected countries.

Table 3: Geographic Focus of Selected USAID Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Activities Implemented in Nine Selected Countries in Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Geographic focus area	Number of activities	Total funding (U.S. dollars in millions)
Rural, peri-urban, urban	38 ^a	\$62.4
Rural and peri-urban	12	\$69.5
Rural	10	\$22.4
Urban and peri-urban	7	\$6.3
Urban	7	\$54

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) information. | GAO-16-81

Notes: Funding shown generally represents allocations for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) components of 74 activities implemented by USAID missions in, respectively, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia and includes activity funding through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases for which USAID was not able to provide allocations for WASH activities, such as when a USAID mission had obligated previously unplanned funding to an activity for WASH. According to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, and urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to national census authorities’ definitions of these terms.

^aFor one of the 38 activities, USAID reported targeting rural and urban areas but not peri-urban areas (e.g., small towns).

²⁷ According to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, and urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to national census authorities’ definitions of these terms.

Appendix II provides additional information about WASH activities implemented by USAID missions in each of the nine countries.

USAID Is Taking Steps to Enhance Strategic WASH Approach and Address WASH Sustainability

In the nine countries we selected for our review, we found that USAID missions are taking steps to develop and implement WASH plans and are incorporating the Water Strategy's principles and approach into recent and planned WASH activities. The missions are considering sustainability as part of WASH project planning, and USAID's Office of Water is developing guidance for missions specific to WASH sustainability.

Missions in Selected Countries Have Taken Steps to Develop and Implement WASH Plans and Enhance Strategic WASH Approach

We found that the missions in the nine selected countries have made varying degrees of progress in developing WASH plans. In addition, we found that these missions have generally taken steps to implement WASH plans and enhance the strategic approach in recent WASH projects.

Our review of documents describing these missions' strategic approach to WASH, as well as interviews with officials at the nine missions, found that five of the missions had completed WASH plans. Missions' WASH plans may consist of one or more project appraisal documents (PAD), which document a project's design and expected results.²⁸ The remaining four missions were in the process of developing or finalizing such plans.

- Five of the nine missions—in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia, respectively—had completed WASH plans and taken

²⁸For the purposes of this report, we define WASH plans principally as documentation describing a mission's WASH project design, which may be contained in one or more PADs related to WASH, as well as mission-level WASH sector assessments or other related documents that describe the mission's strategic approach to WASH. ADS ch. 201 (effective July 2, 2013) requires missions to develop a PAD documenting a project's design and to align activities and expected results with the mission's broader results framework as part of the mission's project design process. Components of the PAD include the development problem, technical approach, expected results, and analytical and sustainability considerations, among other components. USAID officials noted that the PAD is broader and may encompass multiple interventions, whereas the activity approval document that USAID previously required was activity specific. We found that, because WASH is a cross-cutting issue, a PAD may focus on WASH or include WASH as a component of a broader project, such as education.

steps to implement these plans as of July 2015. The Indonesia and Tanzania missions initially developed WASH plans in fiscal year 2009.²⁹ The Zambia, Kenya, and Ethiopia missions completed WASH plans more recently, in the period from fiscal year 2013 to fiscal year 2015.

- Three of the nine missions—in the DRC, Senegal, and Uganda, respectively—were in the process of finalizing WASH plans as of July 2015.
- One mission, in Haiti, had begun developing a plan for a more strategic approach to its WASH activities as of February 2015. According to mission officials, the mission had focused its recent water-related activities on agriculture, water resources management, and water productivity. In response to the Water Strategy, the mission has begun to develop a plan for future WASH activities that will consider findings from a fiscal year 2015 mission WASH sector assessment.

Our review of missions' WASH project documents, as well as semi-structured interviews with officials at the nine missions, also found that these missions have generally taken steps to implement WASH plans and incorporate the Water Strategy's strategic principles and approach in recent WASH projects, such as by implementing activities to support expanded access to water and sanitation infrastructure along with activities to support capacity building and behavior change. Although four of the nine missions acknowledged that their prior WASH projects lacked strategic focus, all nine missions cited ongoing efforts to develop more focused, strategic, and impactful WASH projects in accordance with the Water Strategy.

In addition, our review found that the WASH plans initially developed in fiscal year 2009 by the Indonesia and Tanzania missions had informed those missions' implementation of WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. For example, the Indonesia mission's primary WASH activity, Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, focused on building government institutions' capacity for WASH in urban areas, as called for in the mission's WASH plan, which noted that central and local

²⁹These missions completed their latest WASH plans in fiscal years 2015 and 2014, respectively.

USAID’s Multiple-Use Water Services Approach in Tanzania

To help foster the effective management and long-term sustainability of water services, the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) mission in Tanzania employs a multiple-use water services approach that considers domestic (e.g., household) and productive (e.g., livelihood) water needs. For example, the mission’s primary water supply, sanitation, and hygiene activity included support for cattle troughs to meet pastoralists’ water needs and training for chicken husbandry—which requires access to clean water—to support household livelihoods.

Cattle Trough in Msolokelo, Tanzania



Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

Chicken Husbandry in Kilosa, Tanzania



Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

government support and leadership for WASH were critical to sustainability and continued improvement in the sector. The Tanzania mission’s primary WASH activity, the Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program, focused on increasing water supply through a multiple-use water services approach, which the mission’s WASH plan describes as considering domestic and productive water needs to maximize benefits and increase the cost-effectiveness of WASH investments (see sidebar).

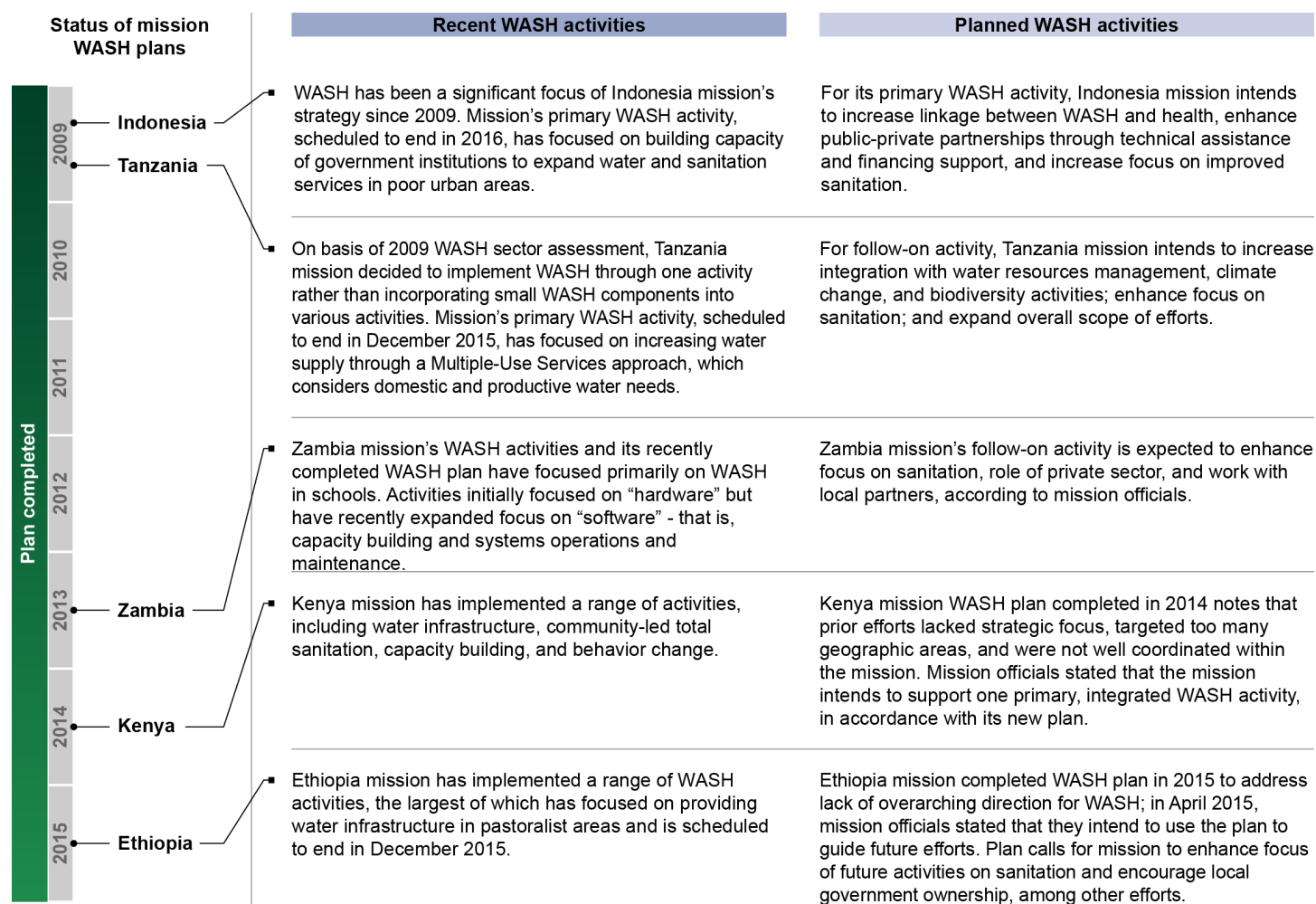
Missions that recently completed, or are in the process of finalizing, WASH plans have also taken steps to incorporate the Water Strategy’s principles and approach into recent activities, such as by implementing activities to support expanded access to “hardware” (e.g., water and sanitation infrastructure), as well as to support “software” activities (e.g., efforts to build capacity and promote behavior change). For example, the Zambia mission’s Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene activity provided support for latrine construction, rehabilitated water points, and handwashing facilities, as well as hygiene education and capacity building related to operations and maintenance of WASH infrastructure. In addition, missions have supported community-led total sanitation efforts to create demand for improved sanitation. For instance, the Senegal mission’s Millennium Water and Sanitation activity included support for community-led total sanitation, among other components.

Additionally, missions cited examples of steps they have planned to enhance the strategic focus and potential impact of WASH projects going forward, such as by increasing investments in sanitation, encouraging local government ownership of efforts, supporting public-private partnerships and WASH financing options, and enhancing activities’ focus on gender issues. For example, six of the nine missions—in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, respectively—cited plans to increase the focus of their WASH activities on sanitation. The Uganda mission noted that although it had previously implemented several activities that addressed sanitation on a small scale, it plans to focus exclusively on sanitation in its upcoming primary WASH activity. According to the mission, the planned activity will seek to improve access to affordable and acceptable sanitation through public-private partnerships, support for affordable sanitation financing options, and subsidization schemes to reach the poor.

Figure 4 summarizes our findings regarding the status of the nine selected missions’ WASH plans and their recent and planned WASH

activities as of July 2015. Appendix II provides additional information about the selected missions' WASH activities.

Figure 4: Status of Nine USAID Missions' Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Plans and Recent and Planned Activities as of July 2015



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data and information. | GAO-16-81

Part 1 of 2

Status of mission WASH plans		Recent WASH activities	Planned WASH activities
Plan in final stages	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	DRC mission's primary WASH activity, scheduled to end in September 2015, included WASH as one of several health components and included "hardware" and "software" components. Mission recently reduced geographic coverage of activity to increase cost effectiveness and potential impact.	DRC mission intends to enhance focus of activities on gender and to support health facilities and schools in addition to villages and households, according to mission officials.
	Senegal	Senegal mission currently plans two primary WASH activities – one focused on behavior change and community-led total sanitation, and the other on capacity building and technical assistance.	Senegal mission intends to increase work with private sector and support for WASH financing options. Future efforts will focus more on sanitation and hygiene, according to mission officials. Mission currently plans two primary WASH activities – one focused on behavior change and community-led total sanitation, and the other on capacity building and technical assistance.
	Uganda	Uganda mission's largest WASH activity supported local government efforts to expand WASH services in northern Uganda. Mission also reported supporting several relatively small, short-term activities that addressed WASH in households, health facilities, and schools, and promoted behavior change.	Uganda mission officials acknowledged that prior WASH efforts lacked strategic focus. Mission intends to implement draft 2013 mission WASH strategy, which it considered in designing the mission's new primary WASH activity. Activity will be larger and more comprehensive than prior efforts, focused on sanitation.
Plan in progress	Haiti	Haiti mission focused recent water efforts on agriculture, water resources management, and water productivity under the 2011-2018 Post-Earthquake Strategy. Mission has implemented WASH as component of several ongoing health activities.	In response to the Water Strategy, Haiti mission has begun to develop a more integrated, strategic approach for WASH efforts, considering findings from 2015 mission WASH sector assessment, according to mission officials.

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data and information. | GAO-16-81

Part 2 of 2

Note: Years shown are fiscal unless otherwise noted. We reviewed WASH activities that the missions implemented in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 as well as activities that the missions were planning during that period.

Missions Are Considering Sustainability as Part of WASH Planning

Our review of mission documents and information showed that the nine selected missions are generally taking steps to address sustainability as part of their WASH project planning, as described below:³⁰

- WASH PADs for all five of the missions that had completed these documents—in Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia— included sustainability analyses.³¹ For example, the Kenya mission’s WASH PAD included an annex with a two-page sustainability analysis that described the mission’s planned steps to address challenges to sustainable WASH, including challenges related to choice of technologies and technical approaches, weaknesses in governance, long-term financing needs, and the need for sustained behavior changes. The Uganda and Zambia missions’ PADs sustainability analyses did not address WASH specifically but described sustainability considerations in the context of broader project efforts (e.g., health or education).
- Missions’ award documents for the 16 activities we reviewed in detail generally described sustainability considerations. For example, the award agreement for a WASH activity in Senegal noted that decades of development experience have shown that merely building water and sanitation infrastructure is not sufficient to deliver adequate service or to ensure that such services are sustainable. The agreement added that WASH efforts would incorporate principles such as optimal balance between hardware and software activities, local ownership and decentralized management of WASH

³⁰We previously reported that USAID had not provided clear guidance to missions for completing what is known as a 611(e) certification, as required by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, attesting to a host country’s capability to effectively maintain and utilize any capital assistance project whose estimated costs exceed \$1 million, and that partly as a result, USAID missions have failed to complete the required certifications for many projects. Our report noted that USAID had set up working groups to discuss the 611(e) certification requirement, and we recommended that USAID provide guidance for identifying activities for which sustainability must be certified and specifying information that these certifications should include. GAO, *Haiti Reconstruction: USAID Has Achieved Mixed Results and Should Enhance Sustainability Planning*, [GAO-15-517](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 3, 2015). We did not assess the completion of 611(e) certification requirements for selected missions’ WASH activities as part of this review.

³¹Missions are generally required to include a sustainability analysis related to WASH as part of a PAD. ADS (ch. 201) requires missions to assess sustainability as part of the process of developing a PAD, which includes analysis of sustainability factors related to issues including economy, finance, gender, culture, and institutional capacity, as well as technical and environmental considerations.

infrastructure and service delivery, and use of appropriate and affordable technologies.³²

- Five of the nine missions conducted more in-depth WASH sustainability assessments to inform planning and design of WASH activities. The Ethiopia mission completed two studies between April 2012 and February 2013 to assess existing water supply schemes and potential strategies to improve sustainability for the mission's primary ongoing WASH activity, which was implemented in several regions.³³ In addition, in 2013 and 2014, USAID piloted a tool that it developed with Rotary International to provide an in-depth assessment of the sustainability of several WASH activities implemented by missions in three of the nine countries we selected for our review—Indonesia, Kenya, and Tanzania.³⁴ The assessments included an overview of the WASH sector in each country; a description of steps taken to apply the sustainability tool; results of using the tool, including scores for institutional, management, financial, technical, and environmental sustainability; key findings; and priority areas for action and recommendations by intervention

³²The award agreement for a WASH activity in Tanzania included a section describing the activity's sustainability and exit plan, which noted that long-term sustainability would be the "cornerstone" of the activity. Among other things, the agreement stated that implementing partners would take steps to help ensure sustainability, including empowering local communities to decide on their water needs and services to meet those needs, requiring communities to contribute toward financing and construction of water systems, establishing governance structures to manage and maintain water systems, and involving the private sector to develop livelihoods and a local water services supply chain.

³³As another example, the Uganda mission also completed a sustainability assessment in September 2014 for one of its ongoing WASH activities to identify ways to address challenges and enhance efforts related to community mobilization and operations and maintenance of WASH facilities and infrastructure.

³⁴According to USAID officials, USAID has applied the sustainability assessment tool in a fourth country, Ethiopia, however, results were not provided to GAO as of September 2015.

category (i.e., water supply, sanitation, or hygiene).³⁵ A USAID official noted that for this type of tool to be effective, USAID would need to use it systematically and incorporate a feedback loop to ensure that results are incorporated into future activities. The Indonesia mission incorporated the results of using the tool into its latest WASH plan, while the Kenya and Tanzania missions completed their latest WASH plans before the results of the tool were available. However, Kenya and Tanzania mission officials stated that they are considering results of the assessments in planning their upcoming activities.

Mission officials in the selected countries generally told us that they plan to enhance the focus of future activities on sustainability. For example, officials at the Senegal mission noted that they conducted a sustainability analysis in the process of developing the mission's forthcoming PAD related to WASH. To enhance its focus on sustainability, the mission is planning, among other efforts, to implement private sector reform activities and more directly engage with the government of Senegal to better ensure ownership of water and sanitation projects. Mission officials in the DRC said that they are in the process of determining the cost of monitoring all of their WASH activities after implementation is completed to better assess sustainability. The officials noted that UNICEF, which is implementing one of the mission's WASH activities, is using its own resources to monitor the activity to assess sustainability 1 year after completion and that the mission would like to standardize the process for other activities.

³⁵For example, the sustainability assessment for Kenya identified sustainability challenges for some activities, including insufficient community funding to support operations and maintenance, highly variable spare parts supply, and low gender balance on some water committees. In addition, almost half of households in target communities traveled more than 1 kilometer or waited more than an hour for water, a fact that could affect beneficiaries' willingness to maintain projects over the long term. Among other things, the assessment included recommendations for the mission to work with national and district stakeholders to meet WASH needs; support the role of women on water committees; and consult with communities early on regarding placement, applicability, and management of services to be provided.

USAID's Office of Water Is Developing Guidance Specific to WASH Sustainability

USAID's Office of Water has begun to develop guidance to address WASH sustainability. The March 2014 Field Guide states that USAID's Office of Water will develop guidance for missions to program effectively for sustainable WASH services, including sustainability indicators, monitoring options, and tools for assessing sustainability.³⁶ To inform future WASH sustainability guidance, in December 2014, USAID's Office of Water developed a draft technical paper that included recommendations for designing projects to achieve sustainable WASH service and for confirming sustained results through longer-term monitoring.³⁷ The draft paper described, among other things, the types of indicators that could be used to assess sustainability, including the functionality and reliability of WASH services. Additionally, the draft paper recommended that USAID's Water Office should

- supplement its sustainability guidance with questions and resources for missions to consider in WASH project design,
- adopt sustainability indicators to assess the functionality and reliability of WASH services,
- develop an approach to post-project monitoring, and
- conduct an evaluation on the sustainability of WASH services in a sampling of countries.

According to USAID officials, USAID's Office of Water intends to finalize its guidance for addressing the sustainability of WASH activities in 2015.

³⁶In addition, USAID officials noted that the agency is in the process of revising agencywide guidance related to sustainability. The officials also noted that USAID intends to make sustainability a central focus of project design, consistent with the approach to sustainability outlined in USAID's Local Systems Framework, which calls for designing, monitoring, and evaluating interventions for sustainable results. For more information, see USAID, *Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development* (Washington, D.C.: April 2014.)

³⁷In 2015, UNICEF published a concept note regarding the need to strengthen WASH governance through accountability to achieve sustainable WASH. The concept note stated that WASH interventions frequently fail to bring sustainable benefits, posing a major obstacle to universal access. It added that UNICEF will develop guidance on how accountability can be reinforced through WASH programming. UNICEF, *Accountability in WASH: Explaining the Concept* (Stockholm, Sweden: 2015). WHO and UNICEF are in the process of determining post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals focusing on universal and equitable access for WASH, to replace the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

The officials stated that the guidance will likely be broad and include a menu of options, tools, and resources that can be tailored to the context in which each mission implements WASH activities.

Monitoring and Reporting for USAID's WASH Activities in Selected Countries Had Limitations, although Evaluations Were Generally Sound

Our detailed review of 16 WASH activities in the nine selected countries found limitations in the monitoring and reporting of some activities' performance, although most evaluations we reviewed were sufficiently reliable and methodologically sound for their intended purposes.³⁸ Monitoring plans for 6 activities did not consistently include annual targets for key WASH indicators in accordance with USAID requirements, limiting the missions' ability to measure progress toward WASH goals.³⁹ Also, while the annual reports submitted by the 16 activities' implementers generally included performance data for the key WASH indicators, the reports for 6 activities did not present data disaggregated by gender as required by USAID policy. Moreover, contrary to agency guidance, missions did not verify beneficiaries for at least 3 activities aimed at increasing access to improved drinking water sources and overstated beneficiaries for 6 activities aimed at increasing access to improved sanitation facilities, calling into the question the accuracy of USAID's annual reporting about progress toward these WASH goals. The reasons for the missions' inconsistent adherence to agency guidance regarding annual targets, gender-disaggregated data, and verification of

³⁸According to USAID policy (ADS ch. 203), performance monitoring and evaluation are mutually reinforcing, but distinct, practices. Performance monitoring is an ongoing process that indicates whether desired results are occurring and whether the development objective and project outcomes are on track. It uses preselected indicators to measure progress toward planned results on a continuous basis. Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of programs and projects as a basis for judgments to improve effectiveness, and inform decisions about current and future programming. It provides an opportunity to consider both planned and unplanned results and to reexamine the development hypothesis of the development objective and to make adjustments based on new evidence. USAID mission personnel have responsibility for oversight of the implementing organization's activity-level monitoring. USAID requires that most evaluations be conducted by external experts.

³⁹In this report, "key WASH indicators" refers to WASH indicators whose use is recommended in the Field Guide. These indicators include number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source, number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility, and number of liters of drinking water disinfected with point-of-use treatment products. If an activity did not use WASH indicators recommended in the Field Guide, we selected at least one of the activity's indicators related to drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene efforts, as applicable. A complete suite of WASH indicators can be found in the Field Guide.

beneficiaries were generally unclear, while USAID officials provided differing reasons for the inaccurate reporting for sanitation activities. In contrast, 12 of the 14 performance evaluations that we reviewed were sufficiently reliable and methodologically sound for their intended purposes.

Monitoring Plans and Reports for Several Activities Lacked Annual Targets, and Reports Did Not Consistently Disaggregate Beneficiaries by Gender

For more than one-third of the 16 activities we reviewed, the monitoring plans did not consistently include annual targets for key WASH indicators, such as the number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source. USAID requires that at the start of each activity, the implementer establish a monitoring plan with indicators and associated targets to assess progress on an activity.⁴⁰ Additionally, State guidance to USAID missions requires that proposed activities demonstrate impact through objectively verifiable indicators to measure progress toward WASH goals, if funds are attributed to the annual congressional spending requirement for international water and sanitation assistance. We found that, of the 16 activities, 3 lacked annual targets for key WASH indicators for the entire duration of the activity and 1 lacked annual targets for key WASH indicators for the remaining 2 years of the activity's 5-year duration. Additionally, 1 activity included annual targets for the drinking water and sanitation component but not for the hygiene component; for another activity, annual targets were clearly identified for 2 years of its 5-year duration.

While annual reports for the 16 activities we reviewed generally included performance data for key WASH indicators,⁴¹ the reports for more than half of activities with beneficiary indicators did not disaggregate data for

⁴⁰USAID ADS 203 (revised in Nov. 2012). A previous version of ADS (revised in April 2010) also required that for each indicator in a performance management plan, a USAID mission should include performance baselines and set performance targets. Additionally, this version of ADS noted that annual targets are generally required for the standard indicators selected for the annual operational plans and the performance reports from the missions.

⁴¹The annual reports for 13 of the 16 activities we reviewed included performance data for key WASH indicators.

these indicators by gender as USAID policy requires.⁴² Ten activities had indicators to measure numbers of beneficiaries gaining increased access to an improved water source or improved sanitation facility. However, for 6 of these activities, the missions did not disaggregate performance data by beneficiaries' gender, making it difficult for USAID to assess the activity's contributions to gender equality and female empowerment.

Reasons for the inconsistency that we observed in the selected missions' adherence to agency guidance regarding annual targets and gender-disaggregated data were unclear. USAID officials in Washington, D.C., noted the absence of consistent reasons among the nine missions for a lack of regular reporting on annual targets and of gender-disaggregated data. Officials at the DRC mission noted that staffing constraints had generally limited their ability to monitor their WASH activities and that they planned to hire additional staff to improve monitoring.

Figure 5 summarizes our findings regarding the nine selected missions' compliance with USAID requirements in documenting targets and reporting performance data for the 16 activities that we reviewed.

⁴²USAID ADS 203 (revised in Nov. 2012) requires that all people-level indicators at the mission strategy, project, or activity level be sex disaggregated to help USAID assess contributions to gender equality and female empowerment. Previous version of ADS 203 (revised April 2010) also required that USAID missions include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the analyses supporting an objective, project, or activity demonstrated that the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household affected the activities to be undertaken. This report uses the terms gender and sex interchangeably.

Figure 5: Nine Missions' Compliance with USAID Requirements in Documenting Annual Targets and Reporting Performance Data for Selected Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities Implemented in Fiscal Years 2012-2014

USAID mission	Activity	Total WASH funding ^a	Annual targets for key WASH indicators identified	Annual performance data for key WASH indicators reported	Performance data on water and sanitation were disaggregated by gender
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Integrated Health Project	\$13,377,369			
	Sustainable WASH Interventions: Healthy Villages Program in Two Health Zones, Provinces of Katanga and Kasai Oriental	\$9,141,101			
Ethiopia	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience	\$10,984,723	^b	^c	
	Your Health is in Your Hands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program	\$4,300,000			
Haiti	Services de Santé de Qualité pour Haïti	\$1,324,487			N/A
Indonesia	Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	\$38,696,403			^d
	Urban Household Water Supply in Indonesia (Water Hibah)	\$10,000,000			N/A
Kenya	AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance Program (APHIA) Plus Northern Arid Lands Service Delivery	\$3,024,887	^e		
	Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa Project to Support Urban WASH in Kenya (Kenya 2)	\$500,000			
Senegal	USAID/Senegal Millennium Water and Sanitation Program (PEPAM)	\$20,866,000	^f		
	Health Communication and Promotion Program Component	\$700,000			N/A
Tanzania	Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program	\$17,443,586			
Uganda	WASHPlus: Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities	\$500,000			N/A
	Health Marketing Initiative (AFFORD II)	\$450,000		^g	N/A
Zambia	Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene	\$15,200,000	^h		
	Partnership for Integrated Social Marketing	\$6,900,000	ⁱ		N/A
Total		\$153,408,556	= 10 = 4 = 2	= 13 = 2 = 1	= 4 = 6 N/A = 6

Legend Yes No Partial **N/A** Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data. | GAO-16-81

Notes: USAID ADS ch. 203 (revised in November 2012) requires that at the start of each activity, the implementer establish a monitoring plan with indicators and associated targets to assess progress on the activity. This policy also requires that all people-level indicators at mission strategy, project, or activity level be sex-disaggregated to help USAID assess contributions to gender equality and female empowerment.

In this report, “key WASH indicators” refers to WASH indicators whose use is recommended in USAID’s *Water Strategy Implementation Field Guide* (Field Guide) (March 2014). These indicators include number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source, number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility, and number of liters of drinking water disinfected with point-of-use treatment products. If an activity did not use WASH indicators recommended in the Field Guide, we selected at least one indicator related to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene efforts, as applicable.

^aTotal funding generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases for which USAID was not able to provide allocations for WASH activities such as when a USAID mission obligated previously unplanned funding to an activity for WASH.

^bThis activity had final targets—for example, “about 203,000 to 213,000 beneficiaries gaining access to an improved drinking water source.” However, the activity lacked annual targets, which are necessary to monitor progress on an ongoing basis.

^cAnnual performance data were reported for the activity’s water indicator but not for the sanitation and hygiene indicators.

^dAccording to officials at the Indonesia mission, the unit of measurement for this activity was households, which cannot be disaggregated by gender. The implementer estimated that the number of beneficiaries on the basis that each household had an average of 5 people.

^eThis activity lacked annual targets for key WASH indicators for the remaining 2 years of its 5-year duration.

^fTargets were included for the activity’s water and sanitation indicators but not for hygiene indicators for liters of water disinfected and villages attaining “open defecation free” status.

^gThe monitoring plan for this activity did not identify any WASH-specific indicators.

^hAlthough the monitoring plan for this activity did not identify annual targets for key WASH indicators, the mission-wide annual reports included targets for two school WASH activities until fiscal year 2013 and targets specific to Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

ⁱAlthough the monitoring plan for this activity did not identify annual targets for key WASH indicators, the mission-wide annual reports included targets related to this activity.

Missions Did Not Verify Results for Some Water Activities and Overstated Results for Most Sanitation Activities

For some of the 10 activities with a water component that we reviewed, the missions did not verify the numbers of beneficiaries as required, and for most of the 8 activities with a sanitation component, the missions overstated the numbers of beneficiaries.⁴³ As a result, because activity performance data contribute to USAID’s annual public reporting of WASH results, the data that USAID uses to report the numbers of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source and to an improved sanitation facility annually may not be accurate. The reasons for lack of verification for water beneficiaries were generally unclear, and mission officials, as discussed later, generally provided varying reasons for the inaccurate reporting for sanitation activities. Figure 6 summarizes our findings regarding the nine selected USAID missions’ compliance with

⁴³Of the 16 activities that we reviewed, 10 included a water component and 8 included a sanitation component.

State and USAID requirements for verifying beneficiaries of water activities and reporting beneficiaries of sanitation facilities.

Figure 6: Nine USAID Missions' Compliance with State and USAID Requirements for Verifying Beneficiaries of Water Activities and Reporting Beneficiaries of Sanitation Activities

USAID mission	Activity	Total WASH funding ^a	USAID mission verified beneficiaries gaining access to improved drinking water sources	USAID mission's reporting of beneficiaries gaining access to improved sanitation facilities was consistent with State and USAID guidance
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Integrated Health Project	\$13,377,369		
	Sustainable WASH Interventions: Healthy Villages Program in Two Health Zones, Provinces of Katanga and Kasai Oriental	\$9,141,101		^b
Ethiopia	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience	\$10,984,723		N/A ^c
	Your Health is in Your Hands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program	\$4,300,000	Not clear	
Haiti	Services de Santé de Qualité pour Haïti	\$1,324,487	N/A	N/A
Indonesia	Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	\$38,696,403		
	Urban Household Water Supply in Indonesia (Water Hibah)	\$10,000,000	N/A ^d	N/A
Kenya	AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance Program (APHIA) Plus Northern Arid Lands Service Delivery	\$3,024,887	Not clear ^e	
	Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa Project to Support Urban WASH in Kenya (Kenya 2)	\$500,000	Not clear	N/A
Senegal	USAID/Senegal Millennium Water and Sanitation Program (PEPAM)	\$20,866,000	Not clear ^f	
	Health Communication and Promotion Program Component	\$700,000	N/A	N/A
Tanzania	Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program	\$17,443,586		
Uganda	WASHPlus: Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities	\$500,000	N/A	N/A
	Health Marketing Initiative (AFFORD II)	\$450,000	N/A	N/A
Zambia	Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene	\$15,200,000	^g	
	Partnership for Integrated Social Marketing	\$6,900,000	N/A	N/A
Total		\$153,408,556	= 3 = 3 Not clear = 4 N/A = 6	= 2 = 6 N/A = 8

Legend Yes No **N/A** Not applicable **USAID** U.S. Agency for International Development **State** Department of State **WASH** Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID data. | GAO-16-81

Lack of Verification of Beneficiaries Gaining Access to Improved Water Sources

Notes: State and USAID guidance on standard indicators, including indicator definitions, require that on completion of construction or rehabilitation of an improved water source, the implementer or evaluator estimate beneficiaries by verifying usage through observations and interviews with initial users and by taking into account the time to collect water and the quantity of water produced by the water source. USAID follows World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund definitions of improved water source and improved sanitation facility, which state that a pit latrine without a slab or platform is an "unimproved" sanitation facility. Additionally, only facilities that are not shared or are not public are considered improved.

^aTotal funding generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases for which USAID was not able to provide allocations for WASH activities, such as when a USAID mission obligated unplanned funding to an activity for WASH.

^bAlthough the DRC mission's Sustainable WASH Interventions activity adhered to the definition of improved sanitation facilities, USAID mission officials could not verify the accuracy of the reported data.

^cThe Ethiopia mission's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience activity included a sanitation component but used a custom indicator, rather than the standard indicator for number of people gaining access to improved sanitation facilities, to assess progress.

^dThe Indonesia mission's Water Hibah activity included verification of households that obtained a new water connection from the local utility. Because the activity used a custom indicator (number of new household water connections) rather than a standard indicator, we designated it as not applicable to State's and USAID's requirement for verification of the standard indicator of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source. USAID guidance gives missions flexibility to report using custom indicators relevant to their activities.

^eOfficials at the Kenya mission stated that they had conducted a data quality assessment in November 2013. However, we found an inconsistency in beneficiary data in the monitoring report for fiscal year 2014. One section of the report stated that 116,779 beneficiaries had gained access to an improved drinking water source, while another section of the report stated that 55,200 beneficiaries had gained access to the improved source. The mission officials acknowledged this error and stated that the lower estimate was more accurate.

^fAlthough officials at the Senegal mission stated that they undertook regular site visits and data quality assessments to verify estimated beneficiaries, they did not provide documentation for such verification.

^gAccording to officials at the Zambia mission, while the beneficiaries gaining access to improved drinking water in schools could be verified, the beneficiaries from communities surrounding the school, who also have access to water points constructed or rehabilitated under this activity and are included in reported results, could not be verified.

For 7 of the 10 activities that we reviewed, the missions and implementers did not undertake efforts to verify reported beneficiaries or did not document such efforts, calling into question the accuracy of the reported results. State and USAID guidance for the standard indicator of access to an improved drinking water source requires that the implementer or evaluator verify these estimates by assessing factors such as the amount of time the user spent in collecting water and the

quantity of water produced by the new or rehabilitated water source.⁴⁴ The reasons for the lack of verification, or documentation of verification, of beneficiaries of the 7 activities were generally unclear.

Documents for only 3 of the 10 activities—in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, respectively—evidenced verification efforts and, in one case, corrective actions related to verifying results of activities to provide access to improved drinking water.⁴⁵ For 4 other activities, it was unclear, on the basis of documents that the missions provided and mission officials' responses to our queries, whether the reported results were verified. For example, although officials at the Senegal mission stated that they undertook regular site visits and data quality assessments to verify estimated beneficiaries, they did not provide documentation of such verification. Moreover, the midterm evaluation for this activity noted that estimating the number of beneficiaries on the basis of the Senegalese government's assumptions was feasible at the planning stage but not during implementation, when the number of beneficiaries could be verified. The evaluation also noted that, absent precise numbers of

⁴⁴Consistent with WHO and UNICEF definitions, USAID considers a shared water source, such as a public tap or tube well, an improved drinking water source. State and USAID guidance allows USAID missions to estimate beneficiaries accessing an improved drinking water source but requires that on completion of construction or rehabilitation of an improved water source, the USAID implementer or third-party evaluator estimate beneficiaries by verifying usage through observations and interviews with initial users and by taking into account time to collect water and quantity of water produced by the water source. According to State and USAID guidance for the indicator of the number of people accessing an improved drinking water source, the beneficiaries should spend 30 minutes or less to collect water from the improved drinking water source. Additionally, the water source should generate enough water to allow each beneficiary to consume at least 20 liters of water per day. The guidance recognizes that this indicator can be difficult and time consuming to measure accurately; therefore, it requires robust data quality assurance on the part of USAID.

⁴⁵The Tanzania mission's estimate of beneficiaries of its largest WASH activity was initially based on the assumption that one water pump benefitted 250 people. The mission subsequently undertook a verification study that indicated that the number of beneficiaries was overestimated and that the actual number of users per pump was closer to 150. On the basis of the study's results, the mission lowered its estimate of the activity's beneficiaries. For its current primary WASH activity, the Ethiopia mission commissioned a midterm evaluation that confirmed the planning estimate of about 20 liters of water per beneficiary per day. For its current primary WASH activity, officials at the Indonesia mission stated that they undertook verification of data for indicators including access to improved drinking water sources. Additionally, the midterm evaluation for this activity noted that results were reasonably attributed and can be verified.

beneficiaries, it was difficult to determine the cost-effectiveness of the investment.⁴⁶

For the remaining 3 activities—2 in the DRC and 1 in Zambia—mission officials informed us that they had not verified the reported results and cited varying reasons.

- In the DRC, annual reports for 2 of the WASH activities we reviewed indicated that more than 900,000 people gained access to an improved drinking water source between fiscal years 2012 and 2014.⁴⁷ In USAID’s annual report for fiscal year 2013, the number of beneficiaries reported as gaining access to an improved drinking water source in the DRC constituted more than 13 percent of worldwide beneficiaries (446,989 out of 3,509,090). Officials at the DRC mission informed us that they had been unable to conduct a data quality assessment planned for October 2014 because of challenges that included security concerns and difficulties of traveling in a country with limited roads. Mission officials also noted that estimating numbers of people who gained access to an improved drinking water source was complicated by the displacement of population in the areas where USAID was implementing its WASH activities.
- In Zambia, the mission reported in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 that 82,606 and 62,098 people, respectively, gained access to an improved drinking water source as a result of the mission’s two school WASH activities. Officials at the Zambia mission informed us that although they undertook verification of data for the ongoing school WASH activity’s sanitation component, they did not verify all reported beneficiaries of the water component, which included the school population as well as people from the surrounding communities. The

⁴⁶The Senegal mission reported in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 that 17,190 and 19,860 people, respectively, gained access to an improved drinking water source as a result of the mission’s primary WASH activity. Mission officials stated that the calculation of these estimates conformed with host-government guidance that one mini-borehole or rehabilitated well provides access to 150 people, while one medium-sized or deep mini-borehole provides access to 300 people.

⁴⁷The annual reports for the DRC mission’s primary WASH activity reported that 793,922 people gained access to an improved drinking water source between fiscal years 2012 and 2014. The mission’s second WASH activity we reviewed reported 123,464 beneficiaries gaining access to an improved drinking water source as of October 2014.

Inaccurate Reporting of Beneficiaries Gaining Access to Improved Sanitation Facilities

officials noted that while beneficiaries gaining access to improved drinking water in schools could be verified, it was not possible to verify beneficiaries from communities surrounding the school, who also have access to water points constructed or rehabilitated under this activity.

For six of the eight activities aimed at increasing access to improved sanitation facilities that we reviewed, the activities' implementers reported beneficiaries for facilities that did not meet USAID's definition of an improved facility.⁴⁸ As a result, the data reported to track progress toward the goal of increasing access to improved sanitation are likely overstated. USAID uses WHO and UNICEF definitions of an improved sanitation facility, which state that a pit latrine without a slab or platform is an unimproved sanitation facility and that only facilities that are not shared or are not public are considered improved.⁴⁹

For six of the eight sanitation activities that we reviewed, implementers tracked and reported numbers of people gaining access to sanitation facilities that included unimproved latrines and shared facilities.⁵⁰ Mission officials generally provided differing reasons for the inaccurate reporting for these activities, such as perceived agency emphasis on reporting beneficiaries and adherence to host-government policy or practice. USAID officials in Washington, D.C., noted that, to some extent, the missions' inconsistency in accurately reporting on the sanitation indicator resulted from inadequate understanding of USAID's definition of improved sanitation facilities among some mission staff overseeing these activities.

⁴⁸In its Water Strategy, USAID noted that it would increase its focus on sanitation given more limited progress worldwide on access to improved sanitation compared with access to improved drinking water sources. USAID's primary indicator to assess progress on sanitation is the number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility.

⁴⁹According to USAID, basic latrines (such as a pit latrine without a slab) can count toward the indicator for reducing open defecation. USAID also has a separate indicator to measure the number of improved toilets in institutional settings.

⁵⁰For its primary WASH activity, the Senegal mission used separate sanitation indicators to report progress on (1) construction of basic latrines under the community-led total sanitation effort (indicator reported: number of villages attaining open defecation free status in 6 months), (2) construction of shared sanitation facilities (indicator reported: number of improved toilets provided in institutional settings), and (3) construction of improved sanitation facilities for households (indicator reported: number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility).

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- In the DRC, more than 520,000 people gained access to an improved sanitation facility in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 as a result of the mission's primary WASH activity, according to activity annual reports.⁵¹ However, according to mission officials, the activity's reported beneficiaries included those who gained access to household-built latrines, including basic pit latrines. USAID officials in Washington, D.C., stated that community-led total sanitation, which reflects the DRC mission's approach, involves changing people's behavior regarding use of sanitation facilities by encouraging them to build latrines; however, the officials said that these latrines generally do not meet USAID's definition of improved sanitation facilities. These officials noted that the results of community-led total sanitation efforts should be reported for USAID's WASH indicator for a community becoming open-defecation free rather than for the WASH indicator for increased access to an improved sanitation facility. According to officials at the DRC mission, the mission reported results of community-led total sanitation efforts for the indicator for first-time access to an improved sanitation facility in part because of perceived USAID headquarters emphasis on reporting numbers of beneficiaries of WASH assistance. Mission officials noted that headquarters' emphasis on numbers of beneficiaries had, to some extent, led the mission to focus on activities to increase direct access to water and sanitation rather than on efforts to improve institutions or governance.
 - In Ethiopia, according to the final report for one of the activities we reviewed, 385,909 people gained access to improved sanitation in fiscal years 2009 through 2013 as a result of this activity. However, the latrines built through this activity included pit latrines without slabs (see fig. 7 for an example), which do not meet USAID's definition of improved sanitation facilities;⁵² consistent with WHO and UNICEF definitions, USAID categorizes a basic pit latrine without a slab as an unimproved sanitation facility. According to Ethiopia mission officials, the activity did not fund the construction of household latrines but instead encouraged households to build their latrines with locally

⁵¹The monitoring reports for this DRC mission activity indicate that 43,980 (in fiscal year 2012), 249,678 (in fiscal year 2013), and 228,543 (in fiscal year 2014) beneficiaries gained access to an improved sanitation facility. In USAID's annual report for fiscal year 2013, the number of beneficiaries reported as gaining access to an improved sanitation facility in the DRC constituted 25 percent of worldwide beneficiaries (320,924 out of 1,299,023).

⁵²We did not assess the extent to which latrines built under this activity included slabs.

available materials, in consistency with Ethiopian government policy. Furthermore, mission officials noted that the reported results for this activity were based on data from the Ethiopian government's Health Management Information System, which uses an official Ethiopian government definition of improved sanitation that is not consistent with USAID's definition.

Figure 7: Basic Household Latrine Built for a USAID Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Activity in Ethiopia



◀ Thatched door opening into a pit latrine built for an activity, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Ethiopia mission, that ended in March 2013. To assess progress for this activity, the implementer used USAID's standard indicator for number of people gaining access to improved sanitation facilities, although USAID does not define a pit latrine without a slab as an improved sanitation facility.

Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

- In Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia, respectively, the reported beneficiaries of activities to increase access to improved sanitation facilities included people who gained access to shared facilities, such as school toilets. For example, the Zambia mission reported that more than 133,000 people gained access to an improved sanitation facility in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 as a result of the activity focused on increasing WASH access in schools.⁵³ However, according to USAID guidance, shared sanitation facilities, such as those in schools and hospitals, cannot be included in the results to track progress on the number of people gaining access to improved sanitation facilities, because this indicator is assessed at the

⁵³In USAID's annual report for fiscal year 2013, the number of beneficiaries reported as gaining access to an improved sanitation facility in Zambia constituted 9 percent of worldwide beneficiaries (110,737 of 1,299,023).

household level. According to officials at the Zambia mission, the data they reported included the entire population of schools where sanitation facilities were built; moreover, the ratio of population to sanitation facility exceeded the national standards.⁵⁴ Mission officials noted that they focused on schools rather than households because the mission's WASH efforts are aimed at improving the environment in schools to improve education outcomes.

Evaluations of Selected USAID WASH Activities Were Generally Sound

While we found limitations in the monitoring of several of the 16 activities we reviewed, the WASH activity evaluations that we assessed were, in general, sufficiently reliable and methodologically sound for their intended purposes.⁵⁵ Ten of the 14 evaluations in our review assessed 9 of the 16 activities that we selected to examine monitoring. As noted previously in this report, performance monitoring and evaluation are separate activities; evaluations entail collection of additional information from sources that may be different from sources of monitoring data. For example, evaluators of the Ethiopia mission's primary WASH activity selected a random sample of 6 out of 41 activity sites and obtained information through focus groups with potential beneficiaries, interviews with local government officials, and personal observation of new or rehabilitated water sources. The evaluators used monitoring data where it was available for one indicator (final target and final performance data for beneficiaries gaining access to an improved water source) but independently collected data via surveys to assess the results of hygiene and sanitation component for which the implementer established a final target but did not report on annual targets or performance data. This example also illustrates that while evaluations are distinct from monitoring, they can fill some gaps in monitoring information. (See app. III for USAID's evaluation findings related to monitoring, outcomes, and sustainability.)

⁵⁴According to the Zambia mission, all schools where toilets were built under this activity have two or three sessions for students. For example, students in some grades might attend schools in the morning, while students in other grades might attend school in the afternoon. The mission calculated the ratio of students to toilets based on the session with the largest student population rather than the total school population because not all students attend school at the same time.

⁵⁵USAID requires that each USAID mission or office commission at least one evaluation of each large project and of each pilot or innovative project it implements. Furthermore, USAID requires that these external entities, other than USAID and activity implementer, conduct these evaluations (ADS, ch. 203). We did not assess selected USAID missions' compliance with the requirement to conduct evaluations.

We assessed 14 evaluations of USAID’s WASH-related activities—2 baseline evaluations, 6 midterm evaluations, and 7 final evaluations—that were conducted in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 in the nine selected countries.⁵⁶ We assessed the methodological quality of these evaluations on the basis of established evaluation principles, including the appropriateness of the evaluation design; clarity of population selection; clarity of data collection; and adequacy of support for findings, conclusions, and recommendations.⁵⁷

- Of the 14 evaluations, 7 had clearly supported findings, conclusions, and recommendations, while 5 had certain limitations in their support for some findings, conclusions, or recommendations. These limitations included insufficient details about data collection and unclear or inappropriate criteria for population selection, given research objectives. However, we determined that, while such limitations can lead to unsupported findings and limit the usefulness of findings, conclusions, and recommendations, the limitations in these 5 evaluations were either clearly stated or otherwise did not substantially detract from the evaluations’ overall purpose or utility.
- The 2 remaining evaluations had significant design limitations that suggested a lack of appropriate support for at least one finding, conclusion, or recommendation. For example, the sampling approaches for these evaluations were problematic. Both evaluations selected locations or participants on the basis of convenience, which is a nongeneralizable sampling method. This approach was not appropriate, because the evaluations’ research questions were aimed at generalizing to the entire population or establishing a baseline for the future.

⁵⁶These 14 evaluations represent all evaluations that USAID completed for WASH activities in the nine selected countries in fiscal years 2012 through 2014.

⁵⁷These factors are consistent with USAID guidance, which supplements USAID’s policy on evaluation. This guidance consists of a checklist of 40 factors, including the following topics: adherence to general principles in USAID’s evaluation policy; identification of the activity, project, or approach to be evaluated; identification of existing performance information source, with special attention to monitoring data; stating the purpose of, audience for, and use of the evaluation; identification of the evaluation methods; specification of evaluation deliverables and the timeline; and discussion of evaluation team composition (one team member should be an evaluation specialist) and participation of customers and partner.

Figure 8 shows the results of our assessment of the 14 evaluations of USAID’s WASH activities.

Figure 8: Assessment of Evaluations of USAID’s Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Activities in Fiscal Years 2012-2014

USAID mission	Evaluation title	Evaluation design appropriate	Population selection clear	Data collection clear	Findings, conclusions, and recommendations supported
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Evaluation of the Integrated Health Project				^a
Ethiopia	Final Performance Evaluation of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience (WATER) Project				
	Terminal Evaluation Report on Your Health is in Your Hands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program				^b
Haiti	Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d’Haiti (SDSH) Project Evaluation				
Indonesia	Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: Mid-term Evaluation Review				
	Independent Evaluation of the Water and Sanitation Hibah Program Indonesia				^b
	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector Status and Trends in Indonesia				^b
Kenya	Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa (SUWASA) Project				
Senegal	Mid-term Evaluation of the USAID/PEPAM Water and Sanitation Project				^b
	Yaajeende Agricultural Development Project Mid-Term Performance Evaluation				^b
Tanzania	Performance Evaluation for the Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program: Final Report				
	Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program: Impact Assessment Case Study				
Uganda	Evaluation of WASHPlus: Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities Project				
Zambia	End-Term Performance Evaluation for the USAID/Zambia School Water Supply and Hygiene and Quality Education				^a

Legend Yes No Partial

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) information. | GAO-16-81

Notes: When determining the overall quality of an evaluation, we considered whether design, population selection, and data gathering were sufficient to support findings, conclusions, and recommendations. If limitations in these areas were clearly explained in the evaluation, or if they did not substantially affect findings, conclusions, or recommendations, our overall judgment of evaluation quality was positive.

^aThe evaluation had a significant design limitation that suggested a lack of appropriate support for at least one finding, conclusion, or recommendation.

^bThe evaluation had certain limitations in its support for some findings, conclusions, or recommendations; however, these limitations did not substantially detract from the overall purpose or utility of the evaluation.

We found that in some cases, USAID incorporated evaluation results to improve activity monitoring. Our interviews with mission officials and reviews of monitoring documents indicated that the selected USAID missions modified ongoing or planned activities—for at least 6 of the 10 we reviewed that had relevant evaluations—on the basis of evaluation results.⁵⁸ For example, the midterm evaluation of the primary WASH activity in Indonesia recommended reducing the activity’s target of 40,000 households willing to pay for sanitation improvements, because of the challenges involved in meeting this goal. As a result, the Indonesia mission modified its agreement with the implementer and reduced the target to 15,000 households. Mission officials noted that the midterm evaluation also provided specific recommendations for future USAID projects that would be taken into consideration during the design process for follow-on WASH investments in Indonesia.

Of the 7 final performance evaluations of WASH activities that we reviewed, 3 were conducted before the activity’s completion, 3 were conducted within 1 month of the activity’s completion, and 1 was conducted within 3 months of the activity’s completion. As a result, these studies were not set up to allow for an assessment of the longer-term sustainability of these projects. To enable assessments of activities’ impact and sustainability, USAID has identified plans to conduct evaluations for some WASH activities several years after project completion. Specifically, USAID’s Water Strategy notes that the agency plans to conduct assessments of WASH sustainability beyond the typical USAID project cycle and to provide support for issues that arise subsequent to completion of WASH activities. Additionally, in an April 2014 document, USAID noted plans to increase its focus on sustaining development outcomes by, among other things, conducting evaluations 3 to 5 years after project conclusion.⁵⁹ According to USAID, such long-term

⁵⁸In one case, an activity in our review was modified based on an evaluation of an earlier activity that was not part of our review.

⁵⁹USAID plans to initiate an annual series of long-term evaluations of projects in different sectors, each year examining a different set of projects with similar aims to understand their lasting effects. USAID, *Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development* (Washington, D.C.: April 2014).

evaluations provide opportunities to explore the impact of interventions and may contribute to a deeper understanding of programmatic risk.

Conclusions

Since 2005, USAID has reported that millions have gained access to improved drinking water and sanitation facilities as a result of its assistance. In 2013, USAID issued its first Water Strategy, articulating goals for the provision of sustainable WASH assistance. In response, USAID missions in a number of priority countries are developing a more strategic approach to WASH, and USAID's Office of Water and missions have begun taking steps to address sustainability of WASH investments. Nevertheless, these efforts are still in the early stages.

However, limitations in some missions' monitoring and reporting for WASH activities that we reviewed call into question USAID's ability to reliably assess and report progress toward its strategic WASH goals. Unless USAID identifies and addresses factors contributing to missions' inconsistent adherence to guidance regarding establishing annual targets for key WASH indicators for all WASH activities and disaggregating activity data by gender, USAID cannot reliably measure these activities' contributions to achieving WASH goals or toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, unless USAID identifies and addresses factors contributing to missions' inconsistent adherence to guidance for verifying beneficiaries of water activities and accurately reporting beneficiaries of sanitation activities, USAID cannot ensure the accuracy of its annual reports regarding progress in increasing access to safe water and sanitation.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To effectively address limitations in missions' monitoring and reporting of USAID's WASH activities, we are making the following two recommendations to the USAID Administrator. Specifically, with respect to inconsistent adherence to agency guidance for establishing annual targets, for reporting gender disaggregated data, for verifying beneficiaries of water activities, and for accurately reporting beneficiaries of sanitation activities, USAID should

- identify factors contributing to missions' inconsistent adherence to agency guidance and
- take steps to address these factors.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to State and USAID. USAID provided written comments, which appear in appendix IV, as well as technical comments that we incorporated as appropriate. State did not provide comments.

In its written comments, USAID generally concurred with our recommendations and outlined steps it is taking to address our second recommendation. Following are highlights of USAID's comments, with our evaluation:

1. USAID noted that our definition of "obligations" excludes bilateral obligations that have not yet been sub-obligated at the mission-level for WASH activities. As our report states, for the purposes of our review, we defined obligations as orders placed, contracts awarded, and similar transactions during a given period that will require payments during the same or a future period. USAID categorizes these as "sub-obligations," because it considers these funds to have been obligated through a bilateral agreement with the host country.

In reporting funding for nine selected missions' WASH activities, we generally reported total allocations for WASH activities ongoing at each mission in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including, when applicable, funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. (State and USAID define allocations as the distribution of resources to bureaus and operating units by foreign assistance account.) We included obligations when USAID data did not show WASH activity allocations.

2. USAID stated that it develops targets through multiple processes and that it had provided us with performance plans and reports, which include future-year targets for missions. On the basis of USAID's technical comments on our draft report, we revised our assessment to acknowledge that the mission-wide performance management plans and reports for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 included annual targets for the two activities we had selected for Zambia ("Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene" and "Partnership for Integrated Social Marketing"). Although we included this information in response to USAID's comments, it is important to note that neither the monitoring plans nor the annual reports for these two activities included annual targets. According to USAID policy (ADS ch. 203), activity-level monitoring plans feed into project-level monitoring plans and mission-wide performance management plans. Therefore, the absence of annual targets in activity-level monitoring plans calls into question the completeness of the Zambia mission-

wide performance management plan. Additionally, given that mission-wide performance plans and reports provide only aggregate target and performance data, it may not be possible to identify activity-specific targets or performance data from these reports.

3. USAID stated that our report does not reference certain key documents that USAID had provided. Although USAID's letter does not specify which key documents it is referring to, in its technical comments, USAID refers to mission-wide performance plans and reports and to State's annual Water Key Issue Definition guidance. In our report, we refer to performance plans and reports as mission-level annual reporting. In appendix I of our report, we also note that to assess data reliability, we compared implementer reporting on an activity with mission-level annual reporting for the nine selected USAID missions. In addition, our report notes that we reviewed State's annual Water Key Issue Definition guidance and assessed the extent to which WASH activities in the nine missions generally adhered to this guidance's requirement regarding activities for which funds can be attributed to the congressional spending requirement for water and sanitation. We described the content of State's guidance in the background section of our report, where we added a footnote, in response to USAID comments, to more clearly identify the guidance documents we referred to.
4. USAID stated that the inconsistencies identified in our draft report pertaining to the inaccurate categorization of results were the byproduct of isolated incidences of reporting against incorrect indicators. We found inaccuracies in six of eight activities we reviewed that reported on the standard indicator "number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility." While USAID's comments confirmed these inaccuracies, the agency has not provided any documentation or other support for its statement that they represent isolated incidences.
5. USAID stated that missions are allowed to use custom indicators to track results against water-directive funded activities. We did not intend to imply that use of custom indicators was not in compliance with State and USAID requirements. While we assessed the selected missions' use of a number of WASH indicators to track progress for 16 selected activities, our review focused in particular on the standard indicators for access to improved water source and improved sanitation. As our report notes, State and USAID have reported overall progress on WASH using these two indicators, and USAID's *Water and Development Strategy (2013-2018)* uses these two indicators to project numbers of beneficiaries during the strategy's 5-

year period (i.e., at least 10 million persons would receive sustainable access to improved water supply and 6 million persons would receive sustainable access to improved sanitation). Nevertheless, in our report's background section, we include a table of standard and custom indicators that USAID allows missions to use in reporting on results of WASH activities. Additionally, on the basis of a follow-up discussion with USAID, we understand that the agency was particularly concerned that our report might seem to imply that its Indonesia mission's use of a custom indicator for verifying households for the mission's Water Hibah activity was not in compliance with agency guidance. As a result, we have added a note to figure 6 to clarify that USAID guidance allows missions the flexibility to report using custom indicators.

6. USAID noted that it informed us that verification information could be found in data quality assessments and site visit reports from missions such as Senegal. During our audit work, after the mission informed us that it had conducted verification of beneficiaries through these assessments, we requested data quality assessments from the USAID mission in Senegal. However, the mission did not provide these assessments to us. In the absence of documentation of verification of beneficiaries, we maintain that it is unclear whether the mission verified the number of beneficiaries gaining access to an improved water source.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the USAID Administrator, and the Secretary of State. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.



David Gootnick, Director
International Affairs and Trade

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

In this report, we (1) describe the types of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has implemented in selected countries and the funding it has provided for these activities; (2) assess the extent to which USAID guidance has informed the agency's efforts to plan and implement WASH activities in these countries; and (3) assess USAID's monitoring and evaluation of selected WASH activities.¹

We focused our review on WASH activities that USAID missions had implemented in 9 selected countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.² We selected these countries from the list of 22 countries that USAID designated as priority countries for WASH assistance in fiscal year 2014.³ We based our country selection primarily on the amounts of funding that the missions in these countries attributed to the congressional spending requirement for international water and sanitation assistance in fiscal years 2012 through 2013.⁴ During that period, WASH assistance in the 9 selected countries accounted for 53 percent—\$155 million—of the funding attributed to the spending requirement by the missions in all tier 1 and tier 2 priority countries.⁵ To

¹This is the second of two reports in response to a congressional request that we review the U.S. government's international water-related assistance. In our first report, issued in July 2014, we provided information regarding U.S. agencies' funding, roles and responsibilities, staffing, and coordination and collaboration on international water-related assistance. *GAO, Foreign Assistance: Briefing on U.S. International Water-Related Assistance*, [GAO-14-683R](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 24, 2014).

²In July 2014, we reported that USAID had provided WASH assistance in a total of 85 countries in fiscal years 2009 through 2013. See [GAO-14-683R](#).

³In fiscal year 2014, USAID designated 22 countries as priorities for WASH assistance: Ethiopia, Kenya, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, and South Sudan (tier 1); and Bangladesh, Cambodia, the DRC, Ghana, Haiti, India, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (tier 2). According to USAID, tier 1 countries have the potential to significantly leverage USAID resources to implement WASH projects at scale. USAID anticipates that tier 2 countries will require relatively small investment levels to achieve significant impact in at least one dimension of WASH.

⁴Funding data for fiscal year 2014 were not available when we made our country selection.

⁵USAID reported attributing about \$743 million in total funding to the congressional spending requirement for international water and sanitation assistance in fiscal years 2012 through 2013. The 9 selected countries accounted for about 21 percent of this funding.

address our three reporting objectives, we interviewed USAID and Department of State (State) officials and conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with officials at the nine USAID missions regarding their efforts to plan, monitor, and evaluate WASH activities. Because we judgmentally selected the nine USAID missions for our review, our findings from these interviews cannot be generalized to all USAID missions. In addition, we conducted fieldwork in Tanzania and Ethiopia from January 26, 2015, to February 6, 2015. We selected these countries for fieldwork based on factors such as level of funding and type of WASH activities implemented in each country. For example, the Ethiopia mission attributed the most funding to the congressional spending requirement in fiscal years 2012 through 2013 for a range of WASH activities, and the Tanzania mission has implemented one long-standing (since 2009) primary activity focused on WASH.

To describe the types of WASH activities that USAID has implemented and the funding it has provided for these activities, we developed a data collection instrument to obtain funding data and descriptive information from each mission regarding its WASH activities that were ongoing or planned during fiscal years 2012 through 2014. Each mission's total funding for WASH activities generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities that were ongoing at the mission at any time in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations in cases for which USAID was not able to provide allocations for WASH activities, such as when a USAID mission obligated unplanned funding to an activity for WASH.⁶ To assess the reliability of the data and information we obtained, we reviewed documentation and interviewed agency officials to identify and correct any missing data and any errors. We determined that the data and information we gathered were sufficiently reliable to provide general information about the types of activities implemented and approximate funding provided for these activities.

⁶State and USAID define allocations as the distribution of resources to bureaus and operating units by foreign assistance account. For the purposes of this review, we defined obligations as orders placed, contracts awarded, and similar transactions during a given period that will require payments during the same or a future period. USAID categorizes these as sub-obligations, because it considers these funds to have been obligated through a bilateral agreement with the host country.

To assess the extent to which USAID guidance informed planning and implementation of WASH activities, we reviewed USAID guidance, mission-level WASH plans, and other documents. We reviewed USAID guidance including: (1) USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), chapter 201, which contains agency policies and procedures and includes guidance on strategic planning and project and activity design; (2) USAID's *Water and Development Strategy, 2013-2018* (Water Strategy); and (3) USAID's *Water and Development Strategy Implementation Field Guide* (Field Guide). We assessed the status of the USAID missions' efforts to develop WASH plans, steps that they have taken to implement these plans, and steps that they have taken to adopt the Water Strategy's principles and approach for their recent or planned WASH activities. Missions' WASH plans may consist of one or more project appraisal documents (PAD), which document a project's design and expected results, as well as a WASH sector assessment or other related documents that describe the mission's strategic approach to WASH. To assess steps that missions have taken to address sustainability, we reviewed documents that included PADs and sustainability assessments; we also reviewed award documents for selected activities.

We generally selected two activities per country on the basis of factors such as the level of funding allocated and types of WASH activities implemented in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. We based our activity selection on funding data reported in State's Foreign Assistance Coordination and Tracking System for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, data included in missions' operational plans for fiscal year 2014, and discussions with mission officials about their WASH activities between fiscal years 2012 through 2014. The activities we selected included those to which the missions in the selected countries had allocated the largest amounts of WASH funding, with one exception: In Uganda, the selected activities did not include the Uganda mission's activity that received the largest allocations of WASH funding in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, because the mission had allocated the majority of funding for its largest WASH activity before fiscal year 2012, did not initially inform us of this activity, and did not provide the prior-year funding data until after we had made our activity selection. We selected one activity in Tanzania, because the Tanzania mission implemented only one primary WASH activity during the period we reviewed. We initially selected three WASH

activities in Haiti.⁷ However, the Haiti mission subsequently informed us that two of the selected activities did not have a WASH component and that the mission had incorrectly attributed WASH funds to these activities and planned to take corrective action to ensure use of attributed funds for WASH. As a result, we reviewed one WASH activity for Haiti.

To assess monitoring of WASH activities in the nine countries, we obtained and analyzed documentation for selected WASH activities, including award agreements and modifications, performance management plans, monitoring and evaluation plans, quarterly and annual monitoring reports, and annual funding data. We compared monitoring plans with quarterly and annual reports to determine whether specific WASH indicators had been identified for the activity. Since several activities had multiple WASH indicators, we focused our analysis on standard indicators related to water, sanitation, or hygiene that were used to monitor the activity. When an activity's monitoring plans included no standard WASH indicators, we identified at least one activity indicator related to access to water, access to sanitation, or hygiene improvement, as relevant. For the purposes of this report, we refer to the indicators that we identified for our review as key WASH indicators. We reviewed each activity's monitoring plan and monitoring reports to determine whether (1) annual targets were identified for the key WASH indicators and (2) results or performance data for each key WASH indicator were reported on an annual basis, if applicable. Further, we reviewed monitoring reports to assess whether they included gender-disaggregated data for indicators on number of people gaining access to an improved drinking water source or number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility. We compared the reported performance data for three key WASH indicators—number of people gaining access to improved drinking water source, number of people gaining access to an improved sanitation facility, and number of liters of drinking water disinfected with point-of-use treatment products as a result of U.S. government assistance—with USAID and State's guidance for these indicators to assess the extent to which the reported data conformed to the definitions in the guidance document. Although USAID and State guidance required verification of estimated beneficiaries for the indicator for access to an improved water source, the guidance did not require verification of estimated numbers of

⁷To assess if WASH activity funding was appropriately attributed, we compared information we obtained from missions on selected activities to State's annual Water Key Issue Definition guidance.

liters of water purified. In addition to assessing activity performance data against agency guidance, we conducted internal consistency checks to assess the reliability of reported data. For example, to the extent feasible, we compared implementer reporting on an activity with mission-level annual reporting and USAID-wide annual reporting on WASH indicators. Because we found data inconsistencies for several activities, as noted in the report, we did not use the performance data to report the extent to which activities met intended targets.

To assess USAID evaluations for WASH activities in the nine countries, we selected all evaluations for WASH activities completed in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. We identified 14 completed evaluations, including evaluations for 10 of the 16 activities we selected to assess monitoring. To assess the soundness of the evaluations, we reviewed background information about programs and evaluation questions, assessed evaluation design and process, and considered the evaluation results and limitations of each study. Two GAO specialists conducted these assessments independently, using a tool that incorporated key elements of USAID's scope-of-work checklist for evaluations and considered various aspects of these issues. The two specialists compared the results of their independent assessments and came to agreement about all conclusions. We did not assess selected USAID missions' compliance with the requirement to conduct evaluations.⁸

- To review background information about the evaluated programs, we considered whether the evaluations considered evaluator independence, program objectives and mechanisms, and evaluation goals. We also assessed whether the relationship between the evaluation objectives and program design was clear and appropriate.
- To assess evaluation design and process, we considered whether the evaluations clearly described their design; whether appropriate methods were used to select the locations and people covered by the study, including whether the evaluations provided sufficient detail

⁸USAID's Automated Directive System (ch. 203) requires that each USAID mission or office conduct at least one evaluation of each large project it implements. The policy defines a large project as one that equals or exceeds in dollar value the average project size for each development objective for that USAID mission or office. Additionally, USAID recommends evaluation of any activity within a project involving untested hypotheses or demonstrating new approaches that are anticipated to be expanded in scale or scope through U.S. government foreign assistance or other funding sources.

about sampling methods; whether measures used were clearly related to evaluation questions; and whether data collection and analysis were sufficient and appropriate. We also assessed whether selection methods, sample sizes, criteria, measures, data collection, analysis, and overall design were appropriate, given the evaluation objectives.

- To consider evaluation results and limitations, we determined whether findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned were clearly stated, whether stakeholders were given an opportunity to comment on the results, and whether evaluations provided information about how results should be used. We also assessed whether the evaluations clearly and sufficiently described assumptions and limitations of their design and results, including potential biases, confounding variables, unintended consequences, alternative explanations, and methodological limitations. We assessed whether any findings, conclusions, recommendations, or lessons learned were appropriately supported and caveated, given the evaluation design. To summarize evaluation results, we determined whether the sections of evaluations related to program monitoring, outcomes, or sustainability contained descriptive information or appropriately supported findings, conclusions, recommendations, or lessons learned.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2014 to October 2015 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Following are funding data and descriptive information about water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities implemented in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 in the nine countries that we selected for our review—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo implemented seven WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 to 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$26,125,075 (see table 4). The mission reported two primary WASH activities—the Integrated Health Project and Sustainable WASH Interventions: Healthy Villages Program in Two Health Zones—focused on improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services in target locations. Allocations of WASH funding for these two activities totaled \$22,518,470.

Table 4: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Integrated Health Project (2010-2015) ^c	Activity works at the provincial and community levels to improve access to health services, including water, sanitation, and hygiene. For example, the activity has supported water points, latrines, and WASH behavior-change communication.	BCC, CB, IC	Rural, peri-urban	\$13,377,369
Sustainable WASH Interventions: Healthy Villages Program in Two Health Zones, Provinces of Katanga and Kasai Oriental (2010-2015) ^c	Activity supports access to improved water and sanitation in selected villages. Efforts include capacity building to provide WASH technical skills and project management skills to local technicians and community workers, support for water points and latrine construction, and support for improved national-level coordination on WASH issues.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban	9,141,101
Advancing Social Marketing for Health (2009-2013)	Activity promoted and distributed point-of-use water purification products and conducted behavior-change communication for improved WASH practices.	BCC, CB	Peri-urban, urban	1,400,000
Asili Social Enterprise Zones (2014-2018)	Activity supports increased access to, and use of, clean water points.	BCC, F, IC	Rural, peri-urban	1,000,000
Communication for Change (2012-2015)	Activity supports behavior-change communication to improve health outcomes related to WASH. For example, activity produces WASH educational materials for use by USAID partners and other stakeholders nationwide.	BCC, CB, PG	Rural, peri-urban, urban	726,605
Health Systems 20/20 (2010-2012)	Activity provided support for national level WASH coordination.	PG	Rural, peri-urban, urban	300,000

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
Measure Demographic and Health Surveys III ICF MACRO (2012-2015)	Activity supports national survey on household access to water and sanitation and WASH behaviors, to inform programming and measure progress related to WASH.	CB	Rural, peri-urban, urban	180,000
Total activities				Total funding
7				\$26,125,075

Legend:

- BCC = behavior-change communication
- CB = capacity building
- F = financing
- IC = infrastructure construction
- PG = policy and governance
- TA = technical assistance
- USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development
- WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We show obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Ethiopia

The USAID mission in Ethiopia implemented 11 WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$24,055,770 (see table 5). The mission's largest WASH activity, called Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience, included \$10,984,723 in funding for WASH and focused on providing water infrastructure in pastoralist areas.

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Table 5: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Ethiopia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience (2011-2015) ^c	Activity supports integrated WASH services in the Ethiopian drylands, including new and rehabilitated water systems and extension services.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural	\$10,984,723
Your Health is in Your Hands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program (2009-2013) ^c	Activity supported efforts to improve the use of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services and practices at households, schools, and health facilities.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban	4,300,000
Empowering New Generations to Improve Nutrition and Economic Opportunities (2011-2016)	As the mission's main Feed the Future nutrition activity, this activity is working to integrate WASH through subsidizing water filters for home use and by conducting sanitation marketing.	BCC, F, PG	Rural	3,400,000
American Councils on Education (2010-2015)	Activity aims to build local capacity in the areas of water, public health, sanitation, and resource management.	CB	Rural, urban	1,500,000
Transforming Education for Adults and Children in the Hinterlands II (2009-2015)	Activity provides capacity building related to water, sanitation and health for alternative basic education centers.	CB, BCC	Rural, peri-urban	1,100,000
Global Team for Local Initiatives (2009-2012)	Activity included construction of hand dug wells and community training related to hygiene behaviors, including hand and face washing. Activity also included construction of pit latrines to protect water access points.	BCC, IC	Rural	586,966
Oromo Self-Help Organization (2013-2016)	WASH implemented as component of broader activity focused on mitigating fluorosis, a disease caused by consumption of excess fluoride.	BCC, CB, IC	Peri-urban, urban	549,982
Strengthening Institutions for Peace and Development (2004-2012)	Activity provides support to government and local institutions to build capacity for conflict mitigation, including conflict related to potable water.	IC	Rural	500,000
Higher Education for Development (2010-2015)	Activity provides training to students and support to augment curricula at Ethiopian universities, particularly curricula related to water and wastewater treatment and water and public health. Activity also supported inauguration of the Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources.	CB, TA	Peri-urban, urban	496,355
Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia (2013-2015)	Activity includes conducting survey of community and institutions on hygiene and sanitation waste disposal, establishment of environmental sanitation learning and practice alliances, and training for community groups on productive reuse of solid waste and waste water.	BCC, CB	Urban	337,744
Tsehai Loves Learning (2013-2016)	Activity produces an award-winning, Ethiopia-specific children's television show to promote early literacy skills and health messages, including WASH segments related to latrine use, hand and face washing, and food safety.	BCC	Peri-urban, urban	300,000

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Total activities				Total funding
11				\$24,055,770

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Figure 9 shows a drinking water reservoir and a water point constructed through the Ethiopia mission's largest WASH activity.

Figure 9: Drinking Water Tank and Taps Constructed as Part of USAID's WASH Activity in Buda Megada Village, Bule Hora District, Oromiya, Ethiopia



Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

Haiti

The USAID mission in Haiti implemented six WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$4,436,481 (see table 6). The mission’s largest WASH activity, called Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d’Haiti, included \$1,711,000 in funding for the WASH component of a broader activity that focused on improving the health status of Haitians through improved primary care, referral networks, and management practices at health facilities and in communities.

Table 6: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Haiti, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d’Haiti (2007-2012)	Activity supported improved health status of Haitians through improved primary care, referral networks, and management practices, including WASH, at health facilities and in communities.	CB, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	\$1,711,000
Services de Santé de Qualité pour Haiti (2013-2016) ^c	Activity supports improved health status of Haitians through improved primary care, referral networks, and management practices, including WASH, at health facilities and in communities.	CB, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,324,487
PROMARK II and AIDSTAR (2009-2014)	Activity supported healthy family planning and safe water systems behavior to improve health outcomes.	CB	Rural, peri-urban, urban	512,384
Community Health and AIDS Mitigation Program (2009-2013)	Activity supported increased access to and use of basic health services, including WASH, through community-based care and support services for vulnerable populations.	CB	Rural, peri-urban, urban	488,610
Health Information Systems (2013-2017)	Activity strengthens capacity of the Haitian government to manage program resources and monitor patient outcomes related to cholera. Co-managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.	CB	Rural, peri-urban, urban	200,000
Health Through Walls Prison Project (2011-2015)	Activity provides comprehensive care to prisoners in Haiti’s National Penitentiary, women’s and children’s prisons, and included a WASH component to prevent spread of cholera.	IC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	200,000
Total activities				Total funding
6				\$4,436,481

Legend:

- BCC = behavior-change communication
- CB = capacity building
- F = financing
- IC = infrastructure construction
- PG = policy and governance
- TA = technical assistance
- USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development
- WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID did not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Indonesia

The USAID mission in Indonesia implemented five WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$53,401,700. The mission's largest WASH activity, called Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, included \$38,696,403 in WASH funding and focused on providing access to water and sanitation facilities in urban areas.

Table 7: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Indonesia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (2011-2016) ^c	Activity provided support for national and local governments and utilities to mobilize demand for WASH, increase service delivery, and provide policy and financing options for WASH in urban areas.	BCC, CB, F, PG, TA	Urban	\$38,696,403
Urban Household Water Supply in Indonesia (Water Hibah) (2011-2015) ^c	Activity supported water connections in urban areas.	IC	Urban	10,000,000
Development Grant Program High Five (2011-2014)	Activity implemented community-led total sanitation in urban areas.	BCC, TA	Urban	2,000,000
Development Grant Program IWINS (2013-2016)	Activity aims to increase the urban poor's access to a safe water supply and improved sanitation facilities.	CB, TA	Urban	1,405,297
Development Grant Program Water SMS (2010-2013)	Activity developed a system to enable feedback on services for water utilities.	CB	Urban	1,300,000
Total activities				Total funding
5				\$53,401,700

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities, and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data did not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Kenya

The USAID mission in Kenya implemented 19 WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$18,245,655. The mission's largest WASH activity, called AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance Program (APHIA) Plus Northern Arid Lands Service Delivery, included \$3,024,887 in funding for WASH. The activity focuses on HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, WASH, and nutrition for orphaned and vulnerable children. The mission reported five similar activities targeting other regions of the country.

Table 8: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Kenya, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance Program (APHIA) Plus Northern Arid Lands Service Delivery (2012-2017) ^c	Activity addresses HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	\$3,024,887
APHIA Plus Nyanza/Western (2011-2015)	Activity addresses HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	2,562,254
Kenya Agriculture Value Chain Enterprises (2013-2018)	The WASH component in this Feed The Future activity is to provide drinking water for the communities	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	2,000,000
Agile and Harmonized Assistance to Devolved Institutions (2014-2018)	Activity primarily focuses on governance and includes support for the national policy and legal framework for WASH, as well as capacity building for selected communities related to water laws, policies, regulations and strategies.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,500,000
Kenya Arid Lands Disaster Risk Reduction (2012-2015)	Activity works to increase access to clean water and improve sanitation and hygiene in Kenya's arid lands.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,500,000

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
APHIA Plus Eastern/Central /Kamili (2011-2015)	Activity addresses HIV/AIDs, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,188,906
APHIA Plus Rift Valley (2011-2015)	Activity addresses HIV/AIDs, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban	1,000,843
APHIA Plus Nairobi/Coast (2011-2013)	Activity addresses HIV/AIDs, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	684,304
Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (2008-2014)	Activity addressed maternal and child health, nutrition, and WASH in health facilities and communities.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban	670,000
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Plus (2011-2016)	Activity focuses on providing technical assistance and building the capacity of the ministry of health for WASH.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	620,000
Financial Inclusion for Rural Microenterprise (2012-2017)	Activity motivates financial institutions to finance the WASH sector, especially to increase water access.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	600,000
Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program/Jhpiego (2014-2019)	Activity addresses maternal and child health, nutrition, and WASH at health facilities, schools, and in communities.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	600,000
Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program (2009-2015)	Activity includes a small WASH component related to drinking water supply. Activity also addresses water resource management for downstream biodiversity.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	500,000
Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa Project to Support Urban WASH in Kenya (Kenya 2) (2013-2017) ^c	Activity supports long-term financial sustainability for water and sanitation service delivery, working closely with utilities.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	500,000
National Training, Funzo Kenya Project (2012-2017)	Activity supports training of health service providers in various technical areas, including WASH.	BCC, CB, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	400,000
Development Credit Authority Program (2014-2017)	Activity supports private sector financing for WASH through credit guarantees.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Urban	300,000
APHIA Plus Nairobi Coast Follow-on (2011-2013)	Activity supported maternal child health, HIV/AIDs, nutrition, and WASH activities in health facilities and communities.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	294,461
University of North Carolina/Pima/Measure Evaluation Project (2012-2017)	Activity provides technical support to the government of Kenya and implementing partners for data collection systems for decision making related to WASH.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	200,000

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare Plus (2012-2017)	Activity addresses HIV/AIDs, maternal and child health, WASH and nutrition in health facilities, schools, and at the community and household level.	BCC, CB, IC, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	100,000
Total activities				Total funding
19				\$18,245,655

Legend:

- BCC = behavior-change communication
- CB = capacity building
- F = financing
- IC = infrastructure construction
- PG = policy and governance
- TA = technical assistance
- USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development
- WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities, and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Senegal

The USAID mission in Senegal implemented five WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$27,616,000. The mission's largest WASH activity, called Senegal Millennium Water and Sanitation Program, included \$20,866,000 in funding for WASH. The activity focused on governance and management, the creation of local business opportunities, increasing demand for clean water and sanitation, the construction of infrastructure, and hygiene.

Table 9: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Senegal, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Senegal Millennium Water and Sanitation Program (2009-2014) ^c	Activity focuses on governance and management, the creation of local business opportunities, increasing demand for clean water and sanitation, infrastructure construction, and community-led total sanitation for hygiene.	BCC, CB, IC, PG	Rural, peri-urban	\$20,866,000
Yaajeende Agriculture (2010-2015)	Activity focuses on nutrition-based agriculture to improve nutritional status and includes some WASH activities to promote clean drinking water.	BCC, CB	Rural	3,250,000
Development Grant Program III (2012-2015)	Activity focuses on community-led total sanitation and also promotes clean drinking water.	BCC	Rural	2,000,000
Community Health Program Component (2011-2016)	Activity supports access to a range of health services, including WASH. WASH component supports improved hygiene practices.	BCC	Rural	800,000
Health Communication and Promotion Program Component (2012-2016) ^c	Activity supports communications related to a range of health areas, including WASH. WASH component provided support for water purification tablets.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	700,000
Total activities				Total funding
5				\$27,616,000

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Tanzania

The USAID mission in Tanzania implemented three WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$17,753,586. The mission's primary WASH activity, called Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program, included \$17,443,586 in funding for WASH. The activity supported community piped and gravity-fed water schemes, rehabilitated wells with rope pumps, training

for community groups responsible for operations and maintenance of water schemes, and school latrines. Activity also included a water resource management component.

Table 10: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Tanzania, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program (2010-2015) ^c	Activity supports community piped and gravity-fed water schemes, rehabilitating wells, training for community groups responsible for operations and maintenance of water schemes, and school latrines. Activities also include a water resource management component.	BCC, CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban	\$17,443,586
Scaling Up Conservation in Maasai Steppes (2010-2013)	Activity supported investments in land, water, and resource management strategies, and included efforts related to potable water and sanitation.	BCC, PG	Rural	300,000
Peace Corps Volunteers' Small Projects Activities Program (2009-2012)	Activity supported institutional capacity building, investments in basic rural water infrastructure, and efforts to foster improvements in sanitation and hygiene behavior.	BCC, CB	Rural, peri-urban	10,000
Total activities				Total funding
3				\$17,753,586

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Figure 10 shows a demonstration rope pump, which the Tanzania Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program supported as a cost-effective, easy-to-maintain technology, and a piped water point in the village of Mvumi, Wami-Ruvu River Basin, Tanzania.

Figure 10: Tanzania's Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program Supported Efforts in Mvumi Village, Wami-Ruvu River Basin



Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

Uganda

The USAID mission in Uganda implemented 15 WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$15,284,415. The mission's largest WASH activity, called Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods, included \$6,225,000 in funding to support local government efforts in northern Uganda to expand basic WASH services. Another activity, called WASHPlus: Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities, included \$500,000 in funding for WASH and aimed to build the capacity of district government and USAID implementing partners for WASH efforts to support community-led total sanitation, promoting handwashing in villages, and integrating WASH with nutrition and HIV/AIDS services and programs.

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Table 11: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Uganda, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods (2009-2014)	Activity supported local government efforts in northern Uganda to expand basic WASH services.	CB, IC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	\$6,225,000
Increase Access to Potable Water in Rural Northern Uganda (2014-2016)	Activity aims to promote the development and implementation of sanitation plans in selected towns in northern Uganda.	BCC, CB, IC	Peri-urban, urban	2,000,000
Strengthening Decentralization for Sustainability (2010-2016)	Activity engages district governments to design, implement, and monitor WASH activities. It aims to support an enabling environment for policy reforms for improved sanitation and hygiene in districts.	BCC, CB	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,500,000
Rehabilitation and Expansion of Kitgum and Pader Supply Systems (2012-2014)	Activity aimed to improve the delivery of water services in town councils. USAID supported water infrastructure construction, and the government of Uganda assumed control of the water supply after completion.	BCC, CB, IC	Peri-urban, urban	1,000,000
Water Infrastructure Program in Kitgum and Pader (2011-2013)	Activity focused on water infrastructure projects and included support for hardware, computer software, and training related to operations and maintenance of water supply.	CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	1,000,000
Northern Uganda Health Integration to Enhance Services (2012-2015)	Activity includes WASH as a component of a broader health behavior-change communication effort.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban	550,000
Community Connector (2011-2016)	Activity supports sustainable food and livelihood security through community-level action. WASH component includes support for latrines and point-of-use clean water interventions.	BCC	Rural	500,000
WASHPlus: Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities (2013-2014) ^c	Activity worked to build capacity of district government and USAID implementing partners for WASH, including support for community-led total sanitation, promoting handwashing in villages, and integrating WASH with nutrition and HIV/AIDS services.	CB, TA	Rural, peri-urban	500,000
Health Marketing Initiative (AFFORD II) (2010-2014) ^c	Activity used communication and marketing techniques to improve attitudes and knowledge about childhood diarrhea and clean water. Promoted products to treat diarrhea-related illness and purify water.	BCC	Peri-urban, urban	450,000
Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (2009-2015)	Activity supports mass media campaigns related to WASH behavioral change.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	450,000
Water Infrastructure Consultancy and Supervision (2011-2013)	Activity provided technical assistance for water infrastructure.	CB, F, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	409,415

Appendix II: USAID WASH Activities in Nine Selected Countries

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus^a	Total funding^b
Communication for Better Health/Communication for Healthy Communities (2013-2018)	Activity designs and executes health communication interventions to improve knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and demand for services related to WASH.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	350,000
Strides for Family Health (2009-2015)	Activity aims to address diarrhea prevention at the facility and community levels. Interventions include training care givers on good practices.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban	250,000
PATH—Advocacy for Better Health (2014-2019)	Activity aims to build the capacity of communities to identify needs and to demand quality WASH services; build the capacity of organizations to advocate and represent community demands; and increase organizations' influence on decision-makers for WASH.	BCC	Rural, peri-urban, urban	50,000
Peace Corps Small Project Assistance Participating Agency Program Agreement (2014-2017)	Activity supports Peace Corps Volunteers' WASH activities in rural Ugandan communities.	BCC	Rural	50,000
Total activities				Total funding
15				\$15,284,415

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities' definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission had obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID's planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH. We did not select the Uganda mission's largest WASH activity, Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods, for our assessment, because the activity received the majority of its funding before fiscal year 2012, and the mission did not initially inform us of the activity and did not provide prior year funding data for the activity until after we had made our activity selection. We based our activity selection on funding data reported in State's Foreign Assistance Coordination and Tracking System for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, on data included in missions' operational plans for fiscal year 2014, and on discussions with mission officials about their ongoing WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014.

Zambia

The USAID mission in Zambia implemented three WASH activities in fiscal years 2012 through 2014, with WASH activity funding totaling \$27,600,000. The mission’s largest WASH activity, called Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene, included \$15,200,000 in funding for WASH and focused on providing WASH services in schools. Efforts included hygiene education, capacity building for operations and maintenance, and support to establish private-sector spare-parts supply.

Table 12: USAID WASH Activities Implemented in Zambia, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Activity (duration)	Description	Activity focus	Geographic focus ^a	Total funding ^b
Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene (2011-2015) ^c	Activity provides WASH services in schools, hygiene education, capacity building for operations and maintenance, and support for private sector spare-parts supply.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	\$15,200,000
Partnership for Integrated Social Marketing (2009-2014) ^c	Activity distributed point-of-use water disinfecting solution.	BCC, CB, F, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	6,900,000
School WASH (2009-2012)	Activity provided WASH services in schools, hygiene awareness training, and capacity building for school WASH committees related to operations and maintenance.	BCC, CB, IC, PG, TA	Rural, peri-urban, urban	5,500,000
Total activities				Total funding
3				\$27,600,000

Legend:

BCC = behavior-change communication

CB = capacity building

F = financing

IC = infrastructure construction

PG = policy and governance

TA = technical assistance

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

WASH = water supply, sanitation, and hygiene

Source: GAO analysis of USAID documents and data. | GAO-16-81

^aAccording to a USAID official, USAID missions do not employ a universal definition for rural, peri-urban, or urban, and missions are encouraged to defer to host-country census authorities’ definitions of these terms.

^bFunding shown generally represents allocations for WASH components of activities and includes, when applicable, WASH funding for years before fiscal year 2012 and through fiscal year 2014. We included obligations for activities for which USAID data do not show WASH allocations, such as activities for which a USAID mission obligated unplanned funding for WASH.

^cWe selected this activity for our assessment of USAID’s planning, monitoring, and—where applicable—evaluation of WASH.

Appendix III: USAID Evaluations’ Assessment of Monitoring, Outcomes, and Sustainability

Our review of 14 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) evaluations of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities in nine selected countries found that the evaluations assessed monitoring, outcomes, and sustainability to varying extents.¹

Monitoring. Evaluations reported on various issues, including monitoring, WASH indicators, indicators’ limitations, and data related to gender.

- All 14 evaluations reported on monitoring of WASH activities.
- Ten evaluations reported on one or more of USAID’s indicators related to access to drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene, including whether WASH activities were on track to meet their targets.
- Five evaluations discussed limitations in the quality of one or more indicators used to monitor WASH activities. For example, an evaluation of Senegal’s Yaajeende activity noted limitations of the indicator for the number of individuals trained on improved hygiene behaviors. The evaluation stated that, according to USAID’s guidance, the success of training and other interventions related to human and organizational capacity building is to be measured by improvement in organizational output and performance, not simply by the number of individuals trained.

¹USAID missions commissioned the 14 evaluations for, respectively, one activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, two activities in Ethiopia, one activity in Haiti, three activities in Indonesia, one activity in Kenya, two activities in Senegal, two activities in Tanzania, one activity in Uganda, and one activity in Zambia.

- Five evaluations presented and discussed data related to gender, thereby filling some gaps that we had identified related to a lack of disaggregated gender data in monitoring reports. For example, the evaluations for the primary WASH activities in Ethiopia and Senegal assessed women's participation in community water management committees, which were generally responsible for operations and maintenance (see fig. 11).²

²The evaluation for USAID's major WASH activity in Senegal noted that the participation of women in water-users associations was noticeable and that women held decision-making positions such as that of vice president, which is reserved for them. The report noted that this position was filled in 57 percent of the water-users associations. The evaluation for USAID's major WASH activity in Ethiopia noted that approximately one-third of the members of water management committees were women, who worked as cashiers and helped to address villagers' concerns and grievances. The evaluation noted that women, who were generally responsible for fetching water, were also well represented as beneficiaries of the activity.

Figure 11: USAID-Funded Water Point in Ethiopia with One of Three Female Members of a Seven-Person Water Management Committee



Source: GAO. | GAO-16-81

Outcomes. Six of the 14 evaluations that we reviewed provided insights into WASH activity outcomes. Specifically, these evaluations had findings related to outcomes such as disease incidence, health expenses, school attendance, time spent getting water, economic impacts, and beneficiary satisfaction. For example, the evaluation of Ethiopia's Water Sanitation and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resiliency found that the activity resulted in access to safe water at a much closer distance than before and also increased access to safe latrines and improved health practices (such as handwashing). In addition, the evaluation found that activity results included increased time for beneficiaries to participate in other productive and income-generating activities, including more time at school, as well as reduced health expenses.

Sustainability. Twelve of the 14 evaluations that we reviewed addressed the sustainability of WASH activities. Specifically, these evaluations

broadly discussed WASH sustainability issues, and 7 of the 12 had findings related to WASH sustainability challenges. These challenges included limitations related to capacity building, a lack of spare parts, and a lack of funding for operations and maintenance. For example, the evaluation of Tanzania's Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program reported on factors that improved sustainability, such as the ease of repairing a rope pump. The Tanzania evaluation also noted challenges related to capacity building for community water committees. The evaluation assessed 10 of 26 committees as having "fair" usage and maintenance, where community fees were generally not collected or maintenance was spotty, and rated 6 of the 26 as "poor" for underperformance relative to the rest of the project.

Appendix IV: Comments from the U.S. Agency for International Development



SEP 22 2015

David Gootnick
Director
International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Gootnick:

I am pleased to provide USAID's formal response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report entitled "*WATER AND SANITATION ASSISTANCE: USAID Has Increased Strategic Focus but Should Improve Monitoring*" (GAO-15-712).

This letter, together with the enclosed USAID comments, is provided for incorporation as an appendix to the final report.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO draft report and for the courtesies extended by your staff in the conduct of this audit review.

Sincerely,

Angelique M. Crumbly
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Management
U.S. Agency for International Development

Enclosure: a/s

Subsequent to USAID's letter, the GAO report number was revised to GAO-16-81.

- 2 -

USAID COMMENTS ON GAO DRAFT REPORT
No. GAO-15-712

Water and sanitation (WASH) is a high priority within USAID and we have read the findings contained in your draft report with interest. We greatly value the analysis undertaken by GAO and thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft.

USAID would like to provide the following comments on the report methodology and recommendations:

Regarding GAO's definition of the term "obligations" for purposes of this report, USAID would like to note that this definition excludes bilateral obligations that have not yet been sub-obligated at the Mission level for WASH activities.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that the USAID Administrator identify factors contributing to missions' inconsistent adherence to agency guidance.

Response: We concur with this recommendation, with the qualifications and clarifications expressed below, and as previously submitted in our technical comments.

With regard to target setting, the Agency develops targets through multiple processes and provided GAO with Performance Plans and Reports, which include out-year targets for Missions (including Zambia). The draft report does not reference these documents. As a general comment, GAO did not reference certain key documents provided by USAID that might have led GAO to reach different conclusions.

With regard to the assertion of inaccurate results reporting, the inconsistencies identified in the draft report pertain to the categorization of results (for instance, reporting school latrines against an 'improved sanitation' indicator, rather than an 'institutional latrines' indicator). To this effect, we have already identified that inconsistencies are the byproduct of isolated incidences of reporting against incorrect indicators.

In addition, the draft report categorizes verification of beneficiaries as N/A for specific Missions where custom WASH indicators are being used. The draft report asserts custom indicators do not comply with State and AID requirements on the use of standard indicators for reporting against water directive funding. USAID disagrees with this characterization because the directive guidance in both the Water and Development Strategy Implementation Field Guide and the Operational Plan Key Issues Guidance allow the use of custom indicators to track results against water directive-funded activities. With respect to verification of beneficiaries, GAO was informed that verification information could be found in Data Quality Assessments and site visit reports from Missions (for instance, Senegal).

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the USAID Administrator take steps to address the factors contributing to missions' inconsistent adherence to agency guidance.

- 3 -

Response: We concur with this recommendation, with the following qualifications and clarifications, and as previously submitted with our technical comments. Several measures are already underway to address more consistent reporting across Missions, including: 1) upcoming trainings on WASH programming for Mission staff (with specific modules on monitoring); 2) dissemination of best practices through technical implementation briefs to Missions; 3) webinars on key Water and Development Strategy themes (including monitoring and reporting); and 4) coordinated annual reviews of results data by technical WASH specialists in USAID/Washington. The Agency is also in the process of updating standard indicators on WASH, to include updates to indicator reference sheets and a socialization period with Mission staff.

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

David Gootnick, (202)512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Emil Friberg (Assistant Director), Mona Sehgal (Assistant Director), Lisa Helmer, Mitchell Delaney, Jesse Elrod, Reid Lowe, Bethany Patten, Steven Putansu, and Monica Savoy made significant contributions to this report. Mark Dowling, Jon Melhus, and Ozzy Trevino provided technical assistance.

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