

## Management Response

Evaluation Title	Evaluation of WHO's contribution to Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) and Health: the WHO Global WASH Strategy 2018 – 2025
Commissioning Unit	WHO Evaluation Office
Link to the evaluation	<a href="#">Report</a> ; <a href="#">Annexes</a> ; <a href="#">Brief</a> ; <a href="#">Executive Summary</a>
WHO Evaluation Workplan	WHO Organization-wide Evaluation Workplan for 2024-2025
Unit Responsible for providing the management response	HQ/HEP/ECH/WSH
<p><b>Overall Management Response: Accepted</b></p> <p>The recommendations presented in the evaluation of its Global WASH Strategy 2018–2025 are timely given the development of WHO’s new General Programme of Work (GPW14) for 2025–2028 with its priority of climate and health, the emerging role of WHO in the new UN System-wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation, the need for a successor WHO WASH strategy beginning in 2026, and the ongoing Organization-wide process of prioritization in response to significant budget cuts. This evaluation has enabled reflection on achievements, identification of areas for improvement, and has provided a basis to inform the next WHO WASH strategy. The evaluation highlights the unique normative role of WHO through its WASH-related Guidelines as well as the organization’s efforts on SDG monitoring, including WASH access and use and WASH-related Burden of Disease, country-level WASH systems strengthening, emergency response, and intersectoral collaboration with external partners. At the same time, it encourages further strengthening, alignment and integration of WHO WASH programming with priorities such as climate resilience, antimicrobial resistance, primary health care, infection prevention and control, and gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI).</p> <p>The evaluation acknowledges the benefits of strengthening and sustaining WASH capacity, particularly at WHO Country Offices while considering real-world restraints, including funding. Building on the achievements of the past years, WHO is committed to increasing the impact of its WASH programme through the development of a new WASH strategy that aligns with WHO’s broader health objectives, integrates emerging priority areas, improves efficiencies, and ensures increased engagement at the regional and country levels, including through mechanisms that encourage accountability and integration of WASH and other health programmes.</p> <p>This management response, already underway, was developed and agreed through a consultative process that engaged relevant Units and programmes at the headquarters and regional levels of WHO.</p>	
Management Response Status	<i>In Progress</i>
Date	<i>March 2025</i>

## Recommendations and Action Plan

<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Develop a new WASH strategy based on WHO established core areas of work in WASH (including setting standards, guidelines, strengthening WASH systems at country level, monitoring, and promoting evidence-based policy and research), while integrating newly identified priority areas where WHO contributions add significant value (e.g. climate change resilience, WASH in emergencies including cholera, antimicrobial resistance, primary health care, infection prevention and control, vector-borne diseases, cholera, neglected tropical diseases, as well as GEDSI). The new Strategy should enhance intersectoral engagement and be aligned with both internal and external strategies of key WASH actors (including UNICEF), primarily the GPW14 and the UN System-wide Water and Sanitation Strategy.				
<b>Management response</b>	<b>Accepted.</b>			
<b>Status</b>	<i>In Progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible Entity(ies)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Develop an inclusive process for drafting and consulting on a new WASH strategy	HEP/ECH/WSH with Regional Offices; HEP/ECH, AMR, IPC, WHE, PHC, NTD, GTFCC, CHD, and DDI.	Q1 2025	Implemented	WHO established a robust process involving external partners and internal colleagues to establish the scope for the strategy, inclusive of different levels (global, regional and country) to guide its development, situate it appropriately vis-à-vis core and newly identified issues and align with already articulated Member State priorities. The process included planning and preparation (Q4 2024), gathering inputs, conducting consultations and setting priorities (Q1 2025), drafting the updated strategy (Q2 2025), validation and finalization (Q3 2025), and launch (Q4 2025) and implementation as from Q1 2026.
Conduct a document review of and related consultations for related WHO strategies and programmes of work as a basis for the new WASH strategy and to increase alignment and collective impact.	HEP/ECH/WSH with Regional Offices; HEP/ECH, AMR, IPC, WHE, PHC, NTD, GTFCC, CHD, and DDI.	Q1 2025	In progress	Through a document review and consultations as part of the process, align with internal and external strategies, mechanisms and programmes of work. This will enable external partners, internal departments and units, and Regional Offices, to see entry points for themselves within the WHO strategy (and WHO in relation to their own strategies), with an aim to amplify collective impact, drive meaningful change and enhance accountability. Consultations initiated; document review underway; strategy 'entry point' mock-up developed.
Develop and implement a strategy for integrating climate-resilient WASH into broader organization-wide workplans for climate resilience and One Health.	HEP/ECH/WSH with Regional Offices; HEP/ECH, AMR, IPC, WHE, PHC, NTD, GTFCC, CHD, and DDI.	Q2 2025	In progress	WHO is positioning climate-resilient WASH strategically within a broader organization-wide workplan on climate resilience and One Health. This will include updating and integrating into the new strategy and supporting workplans the actions identified in 'Addressing climate change: supplement to the WHO water, sanitation and hygiene strategy 2018-2025, published in 2023.

				Inputs and review into GPW 14 process; consultations with Climate Change and Health Unit; updating of climate change supplement for relevance in 2026-30 Strategy and related WPs.
Establish a dedicated focal point within ECH to strengthen WHO internal coordination on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	HEP/ECH/WSH	Q3 2025	Not initiated	Assigned as part of work planning process for 2026-2027, and dependent on resource availability. Establish a dedicated focal point within its team to strengthen internal coordination on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), with the aim to reflect GEDSI considerations more clearly in guidelines, monitoring approaches, support to country-level implementation, capacity building, etc

<b>Recommendation 2:</b> To implement the new strategy, develop an operational plan anchored in the GPW 14. This plan should be accompanied by a results (monitoring and evaluation) framework that outlines clear accountabilities and defines specific roles for headquarters, regional and country offices.				
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<b>Status</b>	In progress			
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Update the Theory of Change and develop a results framework and monitoring and evaluation framework linking the WASH strategy outcomes to GPW14 and considering partner strategies, other WHO health strategies and earlier WHO WASH strategies	HEP/ECH/WSH	Q3 2025	Not initiated	Theory of Change linked to strategy drafting process to be completed Q2; Results framework with indicators developed in relation to final GPW 14 & review of related strategies/workplans (units, departments, regions). This will include standardized indicators to monitor progress on GEDSI, climate resilience, wastewater environmental surveillance and other health objectives identified in existing strategic frameworks.
Integrate WASH outputs/indicators (across all levels of the organization) in PB2026-2027 operational planning and in WHO country cooperation strategies.	HEP/ECH/WSH, BOS/PRP, DGC/CSS, CRS, Regional Offices.	Q3 2025	In progress	The ECH/WSH Unit is supporting integration of WASH-related outputs and indicators into the WHO GPW14 and its 2026-2027 programme budget. This includes aligning WASH contributions under Outcome 2.2 (reducing environmental health risks) and Outcome 3.1 (essential health services, including WASH in healthcare facilities). Efforts focus on tracking SDG indicators (3.9.2, 6.1.1, 6.2.1), supporting the output indicator under 2.2.1 (WASH implementation in policies and programs), and addressing Member State feedback on reporting burdens.  Country 'tiers' developed concurrently with strategy, results framework drafting. Recognizing differences in capacity and resources at the country level, WSH will develop an action plan to articulate clear roles and expectations across the WHO three levels, incorporating country-level indicators and aligning with Country Strategy and Support (CSS) and Country Readiness Strengthening (CRS) as necessary.
Establish a monitoring system with shared WASH-related indicators aligned with GPW14	HEP/ECH/WSH, BOS/PRP, DGC/CRE	Q3 2025	Not initiated	Monitoring system to be developed after refining WASH-related indicators, aligning them with GPW14 finalization, and ensuring integration into WHO's broader health monitoring frameworks. Indicators will cover core WSH areas like risk management and cross-cutting priorities.

**Recommendation 3:** To position the WHO WASH programme of work more strategically within and beyond WHO, expand and capitalize on internal and external partnerships, leveraging and strengthening awareness, and understanding of its utility. This will also support joint advocacy and fundraising efforts.

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<b>Status</b>	In progress			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible Entity(ies)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Develop an advocacy and communications plan with clear objectives, target audiences, channels, key messages, engagement tactics, partnerships and measurable outcomes.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices, DGC/DCO, with UNICEF, multilateral development banks and key stakeholders	Q4 2025	Not initiated	Process includes: drafting the plan (Q3 2025) once the WASH strategy is developed so as to specify aligned/supporting corporate, development, and advocacy approaches; Work planning integration/communications infrastructure updating for communications plan rollout in Q4 2025.
Develop a focused strategy to engage with decision-makers in the UN and key partners to increase awareness, align programming as relevant, prioritize and enhance the function of collaborative mechanisms.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices, DGC/DCO, with UNICEF, multilateral development banks and key stakeholders	Q4 2025	In progress	WASH ‘Huddle’ held with 30 sector organizations/bilateral partners Jan 2025 w/follow up throughout the year. External bi-lateral consultations Q2 2025. Continued contributions to development of UN System-wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation ‘Priority Collaborative Actions’ & post-2030 agenda. Strategy presentation workshop with Partners Q3 2025 (Stockholm Water Week). Collaborate with decision-makers at partner organizations to tackle WASH challenges and align programming as relevant. Partnerships will focus on aligning mandates to address vulnerable people living in regions with high disease burdens.
Conducting costing to identify required resource envelope to deliver against the WASH strategy, and finalize development of a resource mobilization strategy to support implementation of the WASH strategy at all levels of the Organization.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices, EXT/CRM	Q3 2025	In progress	Initial draft developed Q3 2024; final RM mobilization developed Q3 2025 once broad outlines/ambition of new Strategy & subsequent workplan needs/requirements identified, also aligned with WHO RM efforts & funding measures. Finalize a realistic and action-oriented resource mobilization, with global components and support to regional and country priorities, defining a feasible and appropriate resource envelope to deliver against the strategy.

<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Enhance the sustainability of WHO's WASH and health interventions at the country level by working with key partners to develop strategies and foster country-level partnerships that progressively integrate WASH standards, guidance, and tools into national policies and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, clarify WHO's comparative advantage vis a vis other stakeholders and partners.				
<b>Management response</b>	<b>Accepted:</b>			
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible Entity(ies)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Conduct comprehensive mapping of UN agency's and partner's work on WASH, including mandates, roles and responsibilities and ongoing work to define respective comparative advantages, WHO's strategic and normative contributions and facilitation of implementation.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices, DGC/DCO, with UNICEF, multilateral development banks and key stakeholders	Q3 2025	In progress	See comment for Recommendation 3 actions. Work with key partners to define the extent of WHO's mandate/comparative advantage, as well as those of partners, in supporting country-level adaptation, dissemination and implementation of standards. Specifically, WHO will define in which technical areas it will facilitate implementation versus constraining its role to disseminating guidance.
Progressively transition UN-Water GLAAS to a joint programme with UNICEF and towards use of data produced via national systems and aligned with globally agreed WASH systems indicators.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices, DGC/DCO, with UNICEF, multilateral development banks and key stakeholders	Q1 2026	In progress	A formal in-person meeting with UNICEF took place to discuss collaboration and planning, especially between regional and country offices (Q1 2024). A joint proposal for GLAAS funding with FCDO was prepared, making GLAAS a joint program (Q2 2024). From Q4 2024 onwards, the UNICEF GLAAS focal point joined GLAAS calls, activities, and meetings. The GLAAS/JMP Strategic Advisory Group meeting was held to update the WHO/UNICEF joint work plan, alongside a WHO-UNICEF partner huddle (Q1 2025). Joint planning and production of the GLAAS 2025 report with UNICEF is ongoing (Q1–Q3 2025).
Revise and enhance standards, guidance, tools and regulatory frameworks, as well as capacity-building and training approaches for WASH, focusing on country-level needs and improved resource allocation.	HEP/ECH/WSH, Regional Offices	Q4 2025	Not initiated	Global survey of WHO WASH capacity-building/training approaches to be conducted Q3 2025. Resulting recommendations in Q4 for implementation in 2026 workplanning. Additionally, WHO is exploring partnerships with regional or national training and research institutions to enhance local capacity-building and support the operationalization of WASH standards and guidance in local contexts.

For further information about the evaluation, please contact the WHO Evaluation Office [evaluation@who.int](mailto:evaluation@who.int)

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