



District-level Joint Sector Review and WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool: Lessons Learned from Jhang, Pakistan

SUMMARY

In 2017, the Government of Pakistan rolled out Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) in four provinces in order to periodically assess the performance of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. UNICEF, the Government, development partners, and civil society participated in the process, using the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASH-BAT) as a guiding framework. The WASH-BAT, which was designed by UNICEF with inputs from WASH sector stakeholders, was used to facilitate joint identification and prioritisation of sector bottlenecks and create an action plan for their removal. The WASH-BAT covers different sub-sectors (e.g. urban water supply, rural water supply, urban sanitation, rural sanitation, urban hygiene, and rural hygiene) and different levels of implementation (e.g. national, provincial and district).

The WASH-BAT has already proven to be an effective tool in assessing the WASH sector bottlenecks, at both provincial and national levels in Pakistan. During the past three years, it has become evident that bottlenecks also exist at the grassroots level, hence the need for district JSRs. With DFID support, UNICEF and the Government of Punjab conducted a district-level JSR in Jhang District, where implementation of the Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA-2) project is underway.

This field note describes how the JSR was conducted in Jhang District, using WASH-BAT. Key WASH bottlenecks in Jhang District are described, along with proposed actions for mitigation and the removal of identified impediments.

Introduction

In 2016, Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), in collaboration with provincial governments and WASH sector partners, organised a capacity development workshop to roll out Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) in Pakistan. The WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASH-BAT) was introduced and participants were trained on using WASH-BAT in Pakistan.

A JSR is a periodic process that brings together different WASH stakeholders and government to engage in dialogue; review the status, progress and performance; as well as make decisions on priority actions aimed at improving access to WASH services. Through the coordination of the MoCC, JSRs have been used as a platform for sharing and building relationships between government agencies, NGOs, and CSOs. In Pakistan, JSRs have had a positive impact on

KEY POINTS

- The WASH-BAT building block on ‘Sector Policy and Strategy’ is more applicable to provincial JSRs, hence the need to ensure that the pillar captures district-level bottlenecks.
- A costed district-level WASH investment plan is key to guide implementation of WASH services by all concerned stakeholders.
- Raising community awareness of the budgeting process is key to ensuring community participation and reducing their dependence on political leaders.
- Political leaders also require regular trainings and engagement to prioritise WASH financing.
- A strong institutional framework at the district level is necessary to ensure an efficient and effective use of limited resources. This will also help to avoid the duplication of efforts.
- Districts require a human resource, capacity-development plan to equip staff with the skills required to meet current challenges including faecal sludge management.
- Formalising WASH indicators in the monitoring mechanisms of provincial health and education departments can improve district service delivery. These should be linked with the provincial MIS.

public financing for the WASH sector as they now link to the national budgeting process (as highlighted in Figure 1).

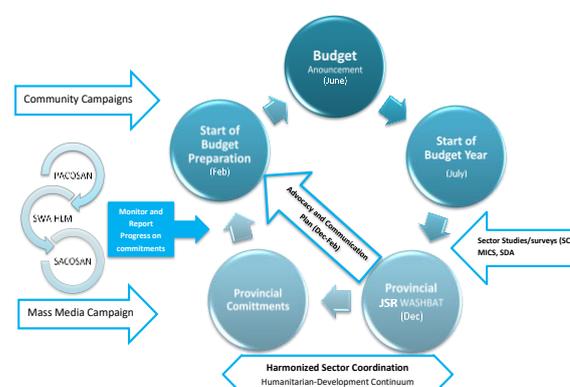
The WASH-BAT aims to assess the enabling environment for WASH service delivery by identifying and tracking barriers to delivering sustainable and efficient services at national, regional, service provider, and community levels. Key pillars assessed by the tool include: sector policy and strategies; institutional arrangements; sector financing; planning, monitoring, and review;

¹ Sixth Population & Housing Census, Pakistan, 2017.

capacity development; data analysis and development; broader enabling environment; and services provision. The performance of key factors in the enabling environment are scored, bottlenecks are identified, and activities to remove bottlenecks are agreed upon, sequenced, and prioritised. Costs are estimated, funding sources are assessed, and additional funds are allocated to the activities according to their priority level.

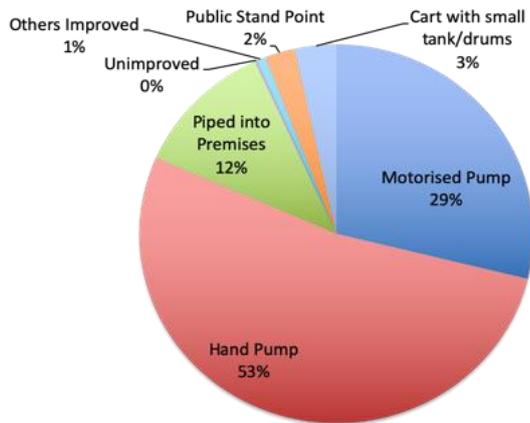
Since 2017, the MoCC has facilitated implementation of the WASH-BAT and JSR in all the four provinces and Gilgit Baltistan. The successful implementation of WASH-BAT at the provincial and national levels over the last three years indicates that many bottlenecks exist at the grassroots level, hence the need for district-level JSRs. With support from DFID, UNICEF supported the Government of Punjab to conduct a district-level JSR in Jhang District, where it is working with implementing partners to execute the Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA-2) project.

Figure 1: JSR planning and contribution to the national budgeting cycle in Pakistan



Jhang is an important district of Punjab, with Jhang city as its capital. The district is spread over an area of 8,809 square kilometres, with 427,513 households, and a population of 2,744,085.¹ About 78 percent of the people in Jhang District reside in rural areas. The district is divided into four tehsils

Figure 2: Drinking water sources in Jhang, MICS Punjab 2017-2018



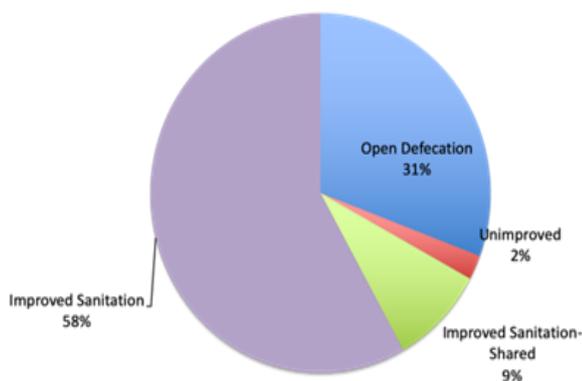
(sub-districts): Ahmedpur-Sial, Chiniot, Jhang, and Shorkot, as well as 55 Union Councils.

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Punjab 2017-2018, the main source of drinking water in Jhang District is hand pumps.

Overall, 69 percent of households have access to improved sanitation facilities.² However, 31 percent of households have no access to any sanitation facility and defecate in the open.

Handwashing with water and soap is above 80 percent, yet there are disparities between different economic classes.

Figure 3: Sanitation facilities in Jhang-MICS Punjab 2017-2018



² Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Punjab 2017-2018.

Description of Intervention

In December 2019, WASH sector stakeholders convened in Jhang for the first ever district-level JSR. The process reviewed government WASH-related documents including: the Punjab WASH Sector Development Plan 2014-2024; the Punjab Environmental Quality Standards for Drinking Water and Municipal Effluents 2016; the Punjab Local Government Act 2019; the 2017-2018 MICS; the Annual Development Program; the Provincial WASH Budget; and provincial WASH expenditures.

This was followed by a consultative JSR workshop in which participants used the WASH-BAT tool to identify WASH bottlenecks. Deliberations during the JSR focused on:

- Sector policy and strategies
- Institutional arrangements
- Sector financing
- Planning, monitoring, and review
- Capacity development
- Data analysis and development
- The broader enabling environment
- Services provision

Stakeholders then identified and agreed on recommendations to mitigate the impact of identified bottlenecks on the provision of WASH services in the district.

Outcomes

The consultative meeting identified key bottlenecks and their causes as highlighted in each section below.

Sector Policy and Strategy

The 'Sector Policy and Strategy' building block in the WASH-BAT tool is more applicable and relevant at provincial and national levels. However, stakeholders deliberated over the need for a district

WASH Sector Development Plan as well as rolling out the Clean Green Pakistan Movement in line with the provincial WASH Sector Development Plan and the national roadmap for Clean Green Pakistan.

Institutional Arrangements

Jhang District WASH sector stakeholders concluded that institutional arrangements for drinking water and sanitation fall mainly under the jurisdiction of the Housing, Urban Development, and Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and the Local Government and Community Development Department in Punjab. However, it was also concluded that certain related functions are delegated to the Environment Protection Department, the Health Department, the Communication and Works Department, and the Education Department.

Institutional roles among these organisations are unclear and often overlapping. For instance, the community development department in PHED is responsible for community awareness/mobilisation for WASH while Sanitary Inspectors, Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and School Health & Nutrition Supervisors have very similar functions under the health department.

Jhang District lacks a 'one government'-led WASH plan. The existing 2014-2024 Provincial WASH Sector Plan and the 2014-2024 WASH in Public School's Strategic Plan do not have district WASH Plans.

In 2016, Punjab established 'Environmental Quality Standards for Municipal and Liquid Effluents' and 'Environmental Quality Standards for Drinking Water'. Standard benchmarking for water service delivery exists to some extent in Jhang District. Yet, the district laboratory only provides drinking water quality testing services and does not have the capacity to test municipal effluent, mainly due to lack of resources for outreach services.

The Prime Minister's Citizens' Portal and Chief Minister's Complaint Cell are two major forums for registering citizens' complaints. However, the complaint redressal mechanism at the service providers level is inefficient and needs to be revamped. This was highlighted by the Prime Minister himself as more than 30 percent of complaints registered at the Prime Minister's Citizens' Portal were related to municipal services of water and sanitation. This situation led to the creation of the Prime Minister's Clean Green Pakistan Movement. The major bottlenecks related to poor municipal service delivery are the capacity of technical staff and haphazard tasking of human resources with no relevance to their job descriptions.

Furthermore, the link between field monitoring and the provincial WASH management information system (MIS) is non-existent. Hence, when water quality monitoring and other field work is conducted, results are not widely disseminated at community and organisational level.

Coordination of WASH is mainly done by the village council, tehsil, and district WASH committees, which meet regularly.

CLEAN GREEN PAKISTAN

The Clean Green Pakistan Movement is being rolled out at the district level with the help of Volunteer Clean Green Champions from local districts and District Government funding for municipal services. The Punjab government has allocated special funds for hiring sanitary workers on daily wages to complete activities identified by district governments under the District Plan for Clean Green Pakistan.

For more information visit cleangreen.gov.pk

Budgeting and Financing

Discussion on the 'Budgeting and Financing' building block revealed that the Jhang District's WASH budget is not disaggregated and there are no mechanisms in place to track expenditure.

There is, however, debate at the provincial level for district WASH expenditure codes.

Though Jhang District received a budget increase in the 2018-2019 financial year (compared to the previous year), the budget is still below the required threshold for the district to achieve universal coverage of safely-managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion services as envisioned in the provincial Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.1 and 6.2 targets.

The participation of ordinary citizens in the budgeting and resource allocation process is limited. Only political leaders and their local representatives participate in the process. However, political leaders are poorly-oriented to understand SDG commitments and equity-based resource distribution. A lack of citizens' participation and resources for awareness raising at the local level is attributed to the dearth of public awareness of the budgeting process .

Jhang District's financial needs for rural water and sanitation are not known, and there is no clear district legal and/or institutional framework for resource mobilisation, despite the legal framework of the 2019 Local Government Act at the provincial level.

Planning, Monitoring, and Review

As highlighted previously, while provincial plans such as the WASH Sector Plan 2014-2024 and WASH in Public Schools Strategic Plan 2014-2024 exist, a district WASH plan with a clear implementation roadmap is missing.

Community participation in the planning, design, and implementation of WASH projects is limited. Beneficiaries are mostly involved at the handover stage. There have been challenges in coordination between the community development and engineering wing of PHED. The non-participation of beneficiaries has resulted in a lack of community ownership over projects, thereby affecting the sustainability of facilities and behaviours.

PHED has an established monitoring and feedback system to improve decision making across different levels, although the system is not efficient. The Prime Minister's Citizens' Portal and Chief Minister's Complaint Cell forums are also used for community feedback.

Interventions such as Pakistan's Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS) and the ASWA-2 Ab-e-Pak programme deliberately target vulnerable areas/groups but access to WASH services by these vulnerable groups is not properly monitored within the district, mainly due to a lack of coordination.

As previously highlighted, a government-led MIS on rural water is in place at the provincial level. However, there is little coordination with the district system. The Punjab 'Environmental Quality Standards for Municipal and Liquid Effluents' and 'Environmental Quality Standards for Drinking Water' exist but the PHED district laboratory only provides water quality testing services and has no capacity to test the municipal effluent.

Capacity Development

Although a provincial WASH sector Human Resource Development Plan exists, it is generic and does not cater to district-specific needs. Furthermore, a significant number of established posts are vacant at the district level.

There is no specific public-private partnership (PPP) for WASH in Jhang District.

The district has limited capacity to monitor WASH indicators as per national standards, due to limited resources and a lack of coordination with the provincial system.

Broader Enabling Environment

There is a high-level of government ownership of the issue, especially through the Clean Green Pakistan Movement, which is supported by most WASH stakeholders.

However, there is currently no district WASH plan backed by resources nor accountability mechanisms in the district. Furthermore, there is no organised approach for local advocacy. Decision makers, particularly political leaders, have limited participation in strategy development.

Whilst the 2019 Local Government Act delegates the major responsibilities for WASH to the local government, its implementation will not start until after local government elections, planned for 2020.

The government and its stakeholders have been implementing the PATS and Ab-e-Pak programmes which use social norms to achieve behaviour change and community mobilisation. However, changing social norms on sanitation and hygiene is not considered a top priority among service providers.

Service Providers

Currently, WASH service providers in Jhang District do not have a costed, WASH business plan. Furthermore, there is no clear WASH business model that is financially sustainable and includes full operations and maintenance services to ensure water continuity and safety as well as minimum service levels that are affordable to poor and vulnerable groups. Going forward, an overarching district WASH plan would be useful to guide and coordinate the work of district service providers.

Most service providers have the capacity to implement best practices using up-to-date tools and technologies for improving service delivery and scaling up services. They, however, lack technical expertise on topics such as wastewater treatment and faecal sludge management. Furthermore, the private operators of water filtration plants in Jhang District are neither registered nor monitored by the Local Government and Community Development Department.

Water supply schemes are maintained on a community self-help basis. This has led to some

water schemes not functioning due to a lack of resources.

Lessons Learned

The following are lessons learned from the district-level JSR and WASH-BAT from Jhang District:

- Government departments and key WASH stakeholders at the provincial level do not always play the same role at the district level. It is therefore imperative to convene regular district level JSRs rather than relying solely on provincial ones.
- While the PHED plays a major role in WASH at the provincial level, at the district level the departments of local government, health, and education are key. Nutrition supervisors and sanitary inspectors under the Department of Health can play a pivotal role in the WASH services delivery system.
- District-level stakeholders often have limited knowledge about provincial policies and strategies. They are largely driven by the directives issued by provincial line departments for specific issues and actions, and therefore have little strategic perspective in their interventions and approaches.
- Summarised versions of key policy and strategy documents for district-level stakeholders would increase their awareness of interventions and how these fit into broader frameworks.
- JSRs at the district level can strengthen the district WASH committee and coordination mechanisms by bringing various stakeholders together, and may contribute to breaking the barriers to participation faced by specific groups such as women, CSOs, and the private sector, etc.
- A district-level WASH-BAT is informative in terms of reviewing coordination and collaboration challenges as well as understanding the duplication of efforts.

- A district WASH plan would be a useful mechanism to promote mutual accountability and track progress jointly. It would also provide guidance on water security, disaster, and climate-risk management.

Next Steps

After the district-level JSR and WASH-BAT in Jhang District, the below next steps were identified:

- To strengthen district-level institutional arrangements, a clear framework is needed that highlights the roles and responsibilities of each government department and stakeholder.
- JSRs need to be institutionalised at the district-level as well as the provincial level. This will provide districts and stakeholders with the opportunity to regularly assess progress against targets and set priority activities for the following year(s).
- To mitigate budgeting and financing bottlenecks, the government and stakeholders should regularly engage and train political and other influential stakeholders on the need for increased WASH financing. In particular, CSOs need to intensify their awareness-raising activities on the Clean Green Pakistan Movement and the budgeting process.
- A district WASH investment and implementation plan, developed in consultation with all stakeholders, would support a more coordinated approach to WASH. A district WASH plan should be supported by a specific WASH related human resource development plan. This will pave the way for more initiatives demonstrating the feasibility of faecal sludge management, wastewater treatment options and strengthening PPPs in WASH.
- Link the district laboratories' management system with the provincial WASH MIS.
- Private water filter operators should be registered and monitored.
- Mobile water quality testing laboratories should be extended to the tehsil level. Government high schools already have laboratories that could be used for this purpose. Qualified staff should be trained and equipped for water quality testing in order to extend outreach to rural settings.
- A government-led, district level, social and behaviour change communications strategy and implementation plan would support better coordination of CSO inputs. Decentralising responsibility for hygiene promotion and social and behaviour change interventions to schools and health councils is necessary to achieve a more sustainable adoption of desired WASH behaviours. This should be accompanied by the capacity building of PHED technical staff on social and behaviour change communication.
- Community feedback could be strengthened through a toll-free number for the complaint cell and CRM of service providers, which would be linked with provincial WASH MIS.
- The district-level record of support provided to vulnerable groups should be managed by the Social Welfare Department to avoid duplication of resources.

References

- Sixth Population and Housing Census, Pakistan, 2017.
- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Punjab 2017-2018.

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About the Authors

This paper was written by Ziggy Kugedera (Knowledge Management Specialist, UNICEF Pakistan Country Office) with support from Sabahat Ambreen (WASH Specialist, UNICEF Punjab). Technical review was provided by Kamran Naeem and Prakash Raj Lamsal (both WASH Specialists from the UNICEF Country Office) and Thewodros Mulugeta (Chief of WASH, UNICEF Pakistan). Additional technical review and quality assurance was provided by Mohanlal Peiris (WASH Specialist) and Gloria Lihemo (Knowledge Management Specialist) both from UNICEF ROSA. For more information, contact the Chief of WASH on tmulugeta@unicef.org.

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United Nations Children's Fund
3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA

For more information, please contact: WASH@unicef.org