

CSOs SHADOW REPORT ON THE IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

in the 8th National Development Plan

CSOs Shadow Report on the 8NDP-Water Supply and Sanitation Development Outcome

About NGO WASH Forum



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This report is intended to serve as a critical resource for strengthening the WASH sector. It highlights successes, identifies gaps, and provides actionable recommendations to enhance coordination, financing, and inclusivity in achieving the 8NDP WASH targets. We believe it will be a valuable tool for policymakers, practitioners, and all stakeholders committed to advancing equitable and sustainable WASH solutions in Zambia.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this endeavour. Your efforts bring us closer to a future where every Zambian has access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and improved hygiene.

Bubala Muyovwe

Coordinator
NGO WASH Forum

ABBREVIATIONS

8NDP	8th National Development Plan
AU	African Union
CAG	Cluster Advisory Group
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPs	Cooperating Partners
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDCC	District Development Coordinating Committee
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
DMMU	Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
D-WASHE	District Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education Committees
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IDPs	Implementation District Plans
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LGA	Local Government Authority
MCLEP	Multisectoral Cholera Elimination Plan
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MoFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MWDS	Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation
NAZ	National Assembly of Zambia
NDCC	National Development Coordinating Committee
NGO-WASH	Non-Governmental Organisation Water Sanitation and Hygiene Forum
NRWSSP	National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme
NUWSSP	National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Programme

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NWASCO	National Water Supply and Sanitation Council
OBB	Output Based Budgeting
SDA	Strategic Development Area
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOMAP	Spare Parts and Operation Maintenance Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
VIPs	Ventilated Improved Pit-latrines
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WDCs	Ward Development Committees
ZIP	Zambia Water Investment Plan
ZMW	Zambian Kwacha

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REPORT ON THE SHADOW REVIEW OF THE 8TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This shadow review evaluates the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector's progress within Zambia's 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) for the period from 2022 to mid-2024. This is in response to the need to undertake a mid-term review of the Plan having reached mid-point as per requirement by the planning and budgeting regulations in Zambia. The 8NDP is a key strategic framework intended to drive socio-economic transformation and advance Zambia's Vision 2030. The plan is structured into four Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), with WASH initiatives nested within the Human and Social Development cluster. As the country confronts growing environmental and socio-economic challenges, including debt burden, droughts, cholera outbreaks, and limited financial resources, WASH is increasingly recognised as essential to Zambia's health, welfare, and economic stability.

The shadow review was undertaken by civil society organisations (CSOs) as an independent evaluation, providing a comprehensive analysis of WASH sector performance, particularly focusing on budget and data management efficiency, target achievement, and cross-cutting issues such as climate resilience, gender, and disability inclusion. The review's methodology involved a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative analysis of budget allocations and expenditures, community assessments, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. Seven districts across Zambia were selected based on diverse criteria such as urban-rural demographics, cholera vulnerability, and infrastructure needs.

Key findings from the shadow review present a nuanced picture of WASH sector progress under the 8NDP. While Zambia has achieved significant milestones in water supply expansion and sanitation awareness, substantial challenges remain, especially in rural and underserved areas. The performance of WASH programmes is affected by financial constraints, inconsistent reporting, and insufficient community engagement. These factors highlight critical areas for intervention as the country approaches the second half of the 8NDP implementation period.

Summary of Findings

This section therefore discusses summary of the findings and recommendations from the shadow review.

Relevance

The WASH sector's alignment with Zambia's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals underscores its critical role in achieving broader development objectives. The government also launched a number of strategic policy documents in line with regional WASH commitments such as the Zambia Water Investment Plan. Stakeholder feedback highlights the sector's relevance in addressing public health challenges and enhancing rural development, though more targeted interventions are needed for underserved populations.

The WASH development outcome was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the Rapid Integrated Assessment. However, Zambia did not report on SDG 6 in the 2022 Voluntary National Review, primarily due to data gaps. Additionally, the persistent failure to meet

regional and global financing commitments for WASH threatens to undermine the significance of these commitments within the national context.

Effectiveness: Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement

The shadow review found that local WASH committees, such as District Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education Committees (D-WASHE), are instrumental in coordinating community-level projects. Furthermore, the frequency of Meetings and Reporting by the Cluster Advisory Groups and the National Development Coordinating Committee had also significantly improved.

However, inconsistencies in committee activity levels and resource limitations hamper their effectiveness. Additionally, irregularities in national coordination meetings, such as the Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs) and the National Development Coordinating Committee (NDCC), create gaps in accountability and hinder timely decision-making. Stakeholders suggested maximising the use of digital platforms to improve communication, transparency, and coordination among WASH actors.

Data Tracking and Reporting Consistency

Variations in WASH target reporting between 2022 and mid-2024 highlight the need for improved data tracking systems. While 100% of targets were reported in 2023, the reporting rate dropped to 30% in mid-2024, indicating potential issues with data reliability and resource availability. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework, with real-time data capabilities, would enable better tracking of progress and inform timely policy adjustments.

Effectiveness – Improved Water Supply and Sanitation Results and Targets at Mid Term.

Overall Performance Analysis

From 2022 to mid-2024, the WASH development outcome under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) achieved roughly 56% of its mid-term targets. Despite this progress, 44% of the targets remain either partially met or unmet, signalling areas needing further improvement in resource allocation and planning. In 2022, out of 19 targets, 11 were met, with 67% of targets met in 2023. However, by mid-2024, only two of the 10 targets set were fully achieved, and 70% were unreported, indicating potential reporting or implementation delays.

Achievement Rate of 8NDP WASH Targets (2022 to Mid-2024)

A traffic light rating system assessed the annual achievement rates, categorising targets as "On Track," "Partially on Track," or "Off Track."

- **On Track:** Twelve (12) indicators, such as the rehabilitation of boreholes (104.1%) and household water and sewer connections (202.1% and 284.5%, respectively), exceeded or met their targets. These achievements demonstrate effective strategies, especially in expanding access and promoting sanitation and hygiene.
- **Partially On Track:** Four (4) targets, including the construction of institutional waterborne sanitation facilities (78.5%) and solid waste recycling (70%), showed moderate progress but require intensified focus to meet future targets.

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- **Off Track:** Eight (8) targets, such as borehole construction (57.6%) and the development of a water and sanitation capacity strategy (0%), are lagging. These areas reveal significant challenges, like limited funding or infrastructure gaps, affecting progress towards equitable water and sanitation access.

Overall, the performance highlights both strong achievements in service expansion and ongoing challenges in rural access and institutional capacity building.

Analysis of Progress Towards 2026 Targets

Strategy 1: Improved Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Significant progress has been made in urban water maintenance (89%) and water metering (79%), demonstrating robust efforts in water infrastructure reliability and consumption management. However, lagging indicators, such as boreholes drilled outside resettlement schemes (0%) and piped water scheme rehabilitation (0%), indicate critical gaps in rural water access and infrastructure maintenance. Additionally, targets for boreholes and piped water schemes remain far from the 2026 objectives, achieving only 26% of their respective goals. While urban areas see improvements, expanded focus on rural access and capacity building remains essential to meet equity targets.

Strategy 2: Sanitation Performance Review

Sanitation milestones such as sewer network expansion (107%) and household sewer connections (124%) are well ahead of schedule, underscoring strong infrastructure development efforts. Similarly, sanitation and hygiene promotion efforts exceeded expectations with 483% of the target achieved, indicating successful community engagement. However, areas like solid waste collection (23%) and wastewater treatment plant construction (25%) are lagging, requiring additional resources to support infrastructure goals. Enhancing focus on these areas will be crucial for achieving the sanitation objectives by 2026.

Stakeholders' Perspectives

In assessing the effectiveness of WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) programme performance under the 8NDP, stakeholders identified both significant achievements and ongoing challenges:

1. **Progress in Rural Water and Sanitation:** Stakeholders noted improvements in rural water access and sanitation infrastructure. Key successes included increased borehole construction and rehabilitation from 2022 to mid-2024, facilitated by Constituency Development Fund (CDF) resources and drought response efforts. The "Keep Zambia Clean Campaign" was also highlighted as an effective ongoing hygiene initiative in several districts.
2. **Challenges in Data Reliability and Monitoring:** Despite infrastructure progress, stakeholders expressed concerns about data accuracy and the robustness of monitoring and evaluation systems. Reliable data collection was emphasised as crucial to understanding WASH impacts, especially in underserved regions. To sustain and enhance progress, stakeholders recommended pairing infrastructure investment with improved data and monitoring practices especially through annual statistical bulletins.

3. **Achievement of WASH Targets:** Progress toward WASH targets was attributed to increased financial and technical contributions from the CDF and Cooperating Partners. Positive community responses to initiatives like water connections and hygiene promotion also supported success.
4. **Remaining Obstacles:** Challenges persist in community-level prioritisation of sanitation projects, partly due to awareness gaps. Stakeholders stressed the importance of local engagement, suggesting that community-led decision-making and awareness initiatives could better align WASH activities with public health goals.
5. **Policy Advancements and Funding Shortfalls:** While regulatory and policy updates, such as the Zambia Water Investment Plan and the 2024 National Water Policy, are seen as major steps forward, funding for the WASH sector has declined between 2022 and 2024. The sector relies heavily on donor funding and grants due to shortfalls in budget allocations and disbursements, impeding the realisation of annual financing goals.
6. **Impact of Political Influence on Commercial Utilities:** Non-state actors voiced concerns about political interference in setting water tariffs, which affects the performance and sustainability of Commercial Utilities (CUs). Stakeholders noted that despite consistent data indicating the need for tariff adjustments, political factors often override evidence-based decisions, compromising the efficiency of CUs.

Community Perceptions on Improved Water and Sanitation Development Outcome at Midterm

This section summarises community-led assessments on water and sanitation services across multiple districts, reflecting community perceptions on access to basic water and sanitation services under the 8th National Development Plan (NDP). Findings were gathered using a community scorecard where respondents rated various aspects of service provision and quality on a scale from 1 (not happening); 2 (happening to a lesser extent) and 3 (happening to a large extent).

Key Findings on Water Supply and Quality

1. **Access to Clean Drinking Water:** Most communities in sampled districts reported limited or no access to clean drinking water, with better access noted in areas like Mpulungu and Kafue due to natural water sources or local authority projects. Key issues include:
 - **Erratic Supply:** Urban areas like Kafue and Mufulira experience inconsistent water supply due to electricity shortages, leading to water rationing and reliance on unsafe sources.
 - **Shared Water Sources with Livestock:** Rural residents often share water sources with livestock, increasing contamination risks.
 - **Dependence on Natural Water Sources:** Many rural communities rely on untreated natural water sources, which poses health risks.
2. **Water Infrastructure:** Borehole installations financed by the Constituency Development Fund are improving water access slightly, but sustainability is hampered by poor maintenance practices, community-led repairs, and lack of resources. NGOs provide significant support in some areas, although interventions are limited to their project scopes.

3. **Water Quality Concerns:** Reports of rusty, contaminated water were common, especially in mining areas, affecting the perceived safety of available water. Limited awareness about water testing procedures exacerbates these concerns.

Key Findings on Sanitation Services

1. **Sanitation Infrastructure:** Sanitation facilities, particularly flushable toilets and Ventilated Improved Pit-latrines (VIPs) are scarce outside public institutions. Shared pit latrines are the norm in high-density and rural areas, often posing hygiene risks. Only Kafue district reported low levels of facility sharing, while other districts rely on unimproved latrines, creating public health vulnerabilities.
2. **Open Defecation:** Persistent in rural and some peri-urban areas due to inadequate toilet facilities, open defecation remains a significant challenge. Community-led sanitation programmes have had limited success in the long term, due to insufficient monitoring and infrastructure, with many households reverting to open defecation during water scarcity.
3. **Handwashing and Hygiene Practices:** Handwashing facilities are mainly accessible in public places, with inconsistent practices at the household level due to water scarcity and soap costs. Public health campaigns, such as those during the COVID-19 pandemic and cholera outbreak, temporarily improved hand hygiene but did not sustain long-term behavioural change.
4. **Waste Management:** Waste disposal is predominantly self-managed through pit burning or burial, especially in rural areas lacking formal waste collection. In predominantly urban districts, periodic waste collection is available, although limited to public spaces, with frequent service interruptions impacting waste accumulation and public health.

Sustainability

The review found that several strategies had been put in place by service providers to promote community-level sustainability of WASH interventions and results and these included:

- **Community Ownership:** Local committees are responsible for maintenance, and financial contributions from community members (e.g., user fees) provide funding for repairs, promoting accountability and investment.
- **Financial Mechanisms:** Community-led savings and fee structures create sustainable funding sources for ongoing maintenance needs.
- **Training & Support:** Regular training equips community members with skills for minor repairs, while programmes like SOMAP ensure easy access to spare parts to facilitate prompt maintenance.

Stakeholders emphasised that community involvement is vital for sustainability, particularly in rural areas. Local authorities have bolstered WASH efforts by recruiting specialized staff, including engineers, planners, and health inspectors, to support community initiatives. However, stakeholders also note risks to sustainability from factors such as natural hazards, insufficient maintenance plans, and reliance on external funding

Challenges include limited responsiveness to community feedback, budget restrictions, and logistical constraints, which hinder consistent service delivery.

Budget Performance

Budget allocations for WASH totalled ZMW 2.4 billion annually from 2022-2024, but only 20% of these funds were disbursed on average. The government set a target to increase WASH budget allocations to 5% of the national budget by 2026, up from a baseline of 2.4% in 2020. However, whereas total budgetary allocations increased during 2022-2024, the percentage share allocated to WASH decreased from 1.4% in 2022 to 1.3% in 2024, reflecting a decline in prioritisation.

The sector also failed to meet regional benchmarks of allocating 0.5% of GDP to sanitation and hygiene, as committed under the Ngor Declaration.

Political interference in tariff settings for Commercial Utilities (CUs) further weakened financial sustainability and efficiency. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) played a critical role in financing local WASH initiatives, particularly borehole construction and rehabilitation in underserved areas. However, limited technical oversight and coordination in utilising CDF resources sometimes resulted in suboptimal outcomes.

Debt Impact on WASH

Between 2022 and 2024, debt servicing consumed around 40% of Zambia's national budget annually, while WASH allocations remained constant, indicating no significant correlation between the two. Debt restructuring measures, such as rescoping projects like the Nkana Water and Sanitation Project and Kafulafuta Dam, delayed infrastructure expansion, particularly in rural areas, hindering progress toward 8NDP WASH targets and SDG 6.

While concessional loans supported key projects like the Lusaka Sanitation Programme, funding gaps persist. For example, the Integrated Small Towns Water Supply Program faces a K95 million shortfall despite a K150 million allocation in 2025. To sustain progress, timely funding, public-private partnerships, and climate-resilient designs are critical to balancing fiscal responsibility and service delivery.

Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues

Climate Resilience and Humanitarian Response

The WASH sector has demonstrated resilience in crisis situations, particularly during recent droughts and cholera outbreaks. The Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) played a crucial role in mobilizing resources to address these emergencies, highlighting effective inter-sectoral coordination. However, the reactive nature of these efforts underscores the need for a proactive climate resilience strategy that addresses water scarcity, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and disaster preparedness within the WASH sector.

Gender and Disability Inclusion

Despite the 8NDP's emphasis on inclusivity, gaps remain in addressing the needs of marginalized groups, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Although national policies promote gender-responsive and disability-friendly WASH services, community feedback indicates that sanitation facilities are often inaccessible or insufficiently adapted for persons with disabilities. Representation of women and youth in WASH decision-making structures at the local level had

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improved, however, social and cultural norms still limit their effectiveness. PWDs were not actively involved in decision making in WASH structures.

To address critical gaps in Zambia's WASH sector as highlighted in the 8NDP draft shadow report, the following priority recommendations are proposed:

Summary Recommendations

To strengthen Zambia's WASH sector, the following key actions are recommended:

1. **Increase Funding:** Raise and ringfence WASH budget allocations to ensure stable financing, especially for rural areas.
2. **Improve Data and Monitoring:** Implement a real-time M&E system and train local committees for consistent data collection. The Baseline indicators need to be further revised which will also require realigning the targets.
3. **Expand Rural Access:** Prioritize borehole construction and community-managed water points to boost coverage in underserved areas.
4. **Enhance Sanitation and Waste Management:** Invest in waste treatment plants and support community-led waste initiatives.
5. **Build Climate Resilience:** Adopt and implement a pro-active climate resilience strategy for WASH infrastructure to protect against future droughts and floods.
6. **Promote Inclusive Governance:** Strengthen local WASH committees and ensure gender and disability inclusivity in services.
7. **Support Evidence-Based Policies:** Establish independent, evidence-based tariff setting to ensure utility sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Background

On 2 September 2024, the Republican President of Zambia, His Excellency Dr. Hakainde Hichilema, officially launched the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) under the theme "Socio-Economic Transformation for Improved Livelihoods." The 8NDP, covering the period from 2022 to 2026, succeeds the 7th National Development Plan (7NDP), which spanned from 2017 to 2021. As Zambia's penultimate medium-term development strategy, the 8NDP serves as a critical step toward realizing the country's National Long-Term Vision 2030.

Continuing the multi-sectoral integrated approach introduced in the 7NDP, the 8NDP adopts a cluster-based model that organizes related sectors under specific Strategic Development Areas (SDAs). This approach represents a shift from traditional sectoral planning to a more cohesive framework, emphasizing the alignment of resources toward achieving common development outcomes. The integrated model also supports Zambia's commitment to broader global and regional agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2030, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Integrated Development Plan.

Within the 8NDP framework, the Water Supply and Sanitation sector is grouped alongside Education, Health, Social Protection, Housing, and Rural Development under the Human and Social Development SDA. The sector's objectives, aimed at improving water supply and sanitation, are structured around three strategic priorities and encompass multiple programmes, each with defined indicators and targets to be achieved by 2026.

In compliance with the National Planning and Budgeting Act No. 1 of 2020, the 8NDP is scheduled for a mid-term review (MTR) in 2024, marking the third year of its implementation. This review provides an essential evaluation point for assessing progress before the plan's conclusion in 2026.

Recognizing the significant role of civil society organisations (CSOs) as outlined in the National Planning and Budgeting Act, the 8NDP Coordination Framework promotes the involvement of non-state actors in the plan's implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Accordingly, during the 8NDP MTR, the government will engage CSOs to incorporate their perspectives and insights, enhancing the assessment of the plan's performance at its midpoint.

Rationale for the Shadow Review

As the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) approaches its Mid-Term Review in 2024, in alignment with the National Planning and Budgeting Act No.1 of 2020, it is imperative for non-state actors—particularly civil society organisations (CSOs)—to undertake a comprehensive shadow review of the Plan's performance. This independent review serves as a critical parallel assessment, enhancing the breadth and depth of insights that will inform the remaining implementation period of the 8NDP and shape the groundwork for the next National Development Plan. Specifically, this shadow review offers an unbiased, consolidated evaluation of progress towards the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) outcomes outlined in the 8NDP at its mid-term stage.

While CSOs have independently reviewed the performance of specific WASH programmes and budget allocations from 2022 to 2024, this shadow review is distinct in its focus on tracking progress toward the 8NDP's annual WASH targets. It delves into budget execution within the

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sector and scrutinizes achievements across key performance indicators, drawing on both official secondary data and qualitative insights from lived experiences and WASH sector experts.

With community members as primary respondents, the review integrates critical perspectives on how government-led WASH initiatives under the 8NDP are impacting citizens, particularly against the backdrop of public health challenges and climate-related crises since 2022. This is vital for ensuring that WASH policies and interventions are responsive to the actual needs of end users, reinforcing the alignment between policy objectives and on-the-ground realities.

Considering emerging challenges, the shadow review further addresses the impact of Zambia's debt situation and concurrent humanitarian crises on the WASH sector during the 8NDP period. This analysis will be instrumental in identifying barriers and potential strategies to enhance sector resilience and performance during crises, providing actionable recommendations for navigating such challenges moving forward.

The contributions of CSOs and citizens to this policy and plan review align with government mandates on public finance and planning management, fulfilling their designated role within the 8NDP Implementation and Coordination Framework. This engagement also ensures that CSOs are equipped to contribute meaningfully within the 8NDP-WASH Coordination structures, such as the Cluster Advisory Groups and National Development Coordinating Committees at various levels. Ultimately, the shadow review promotes inclusivity and sustainability in the implementation of development programmes, reinforcing a participatory approach that aims to deliver long-term benefits for the WASH sector and beyond.

Objectives of the Shadow Review

The NGO WASH Forum, therefore, undertook a shadow review on the performance of the WASH development Outcome in the 8th National Development Plan with the following objectives:

- 1.1.** Effectiveness: Analyse the performance and coordination structures of the 8NDP improved water supply and sanitation development outcome in achieving its targets at Mid-Term.
- 1.2.** Efficiency: Review the Budget allocations and reporting status of the WASH programmes during the implementation of the 8th National Development Plan during the first half of implementation between 2022 and mid-2024.
- 1.3.** Relevance: Assess the progress made by the government through the 8NDP in attaining the WASH commitments and targets in the Ngor Declarations and Sustainable Development Goals
- 1.4.** Cross cutting and Emerging issues: Examine the integration of Climate Change, Gender and Disability Inclusion in the planning, budgeting and implementation of WASH programmes in the 8NDP between 2022 and 2024.
- 1.5.** Emerging Issues: Review WASH coordination during the 2023/ 2024 Cholera and Drought Humanitarian Situation in Zambia.
- 1.6.** Sustainability: Assess the Sustainability of the interventions and progress made in the WASH sector during the implementation of the 8th National Development

- 1.7.** Formulate stakeholder-led recommendations and interventions to enhance the WASH sector's performance in Zambia as part of the 8NDP Mid-Term Review and the 2025 National Budget.

The shadow review was undertaken in 7 districts and at national level through stakeholders and government institutions.

Format of the Report

The report is organised systematically, beginning with an executive summary that provides a high-level overview of the findings, followed by sections dedicated to key performance areas such as coordination, budget allocations, and target achievements in the WASH sector under the 8th National Development Plan. The content flows from a country context background to a detailed methodological approach, which explains the mixed methods used in data collection. This is followed by sections presenting key findings, analysis of progress toward targets, and community perceptions, and concludes with recommendations. Each section is supported by relevant data, charts, and qualitative insights gathered through field assessments and stakeholder interviews, providing a comprehensive view of WASH sector progress and challenges.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Economic

Between 2022 and mid-2024, Zambia's economic outlook reflected varying growth trajectories, largely shaped by sectoral performance and external shocks. Real GDP growth was initially projected at a steady upward trend, with 3.5% in 2022, 3.7% in 2023, and 4.4% in 2024, driven by strategic investments in agriculture, tourism, mining, manufacturing, energy, and transport to bolster employment, particularly for youth (2022-2024 Medium Term Budget; Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2021).

Economic Growth

As show in Figure 1, the average GDP growth for the period 2022 to 2023 stood at 5.0%, reflecting a robust but unsustainable trend that gave way to considerable vulnerabilities in 2024.

- **2022:** Actual GDP growth surpassed expectations, reaching 5.2%, with primary contributions from education, transport and storage, and ICT sectors, while agriculture, mining, and construction lagged behind due to structural constraints and limited productivity gains.
- **2023:** Growth moderated to 4.8%, with the Information and Communication sector recording the highest positive impact (2.7%), while the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors detracted from growth (-0.6%) due to adverse climatic and operational challenges.
- **Mid-2024:** GDP growth is projected to decline sharply to 2.3%, attributed to drought conditions during the 2023-2024 farming season and reduced water levels affecting power generation. Consequently, contractions of 19.4% and 15% are expected in the agriculture and energy sectors, respectively, signalling the economy's vulnerability to environmental and resource-dependent shocks.

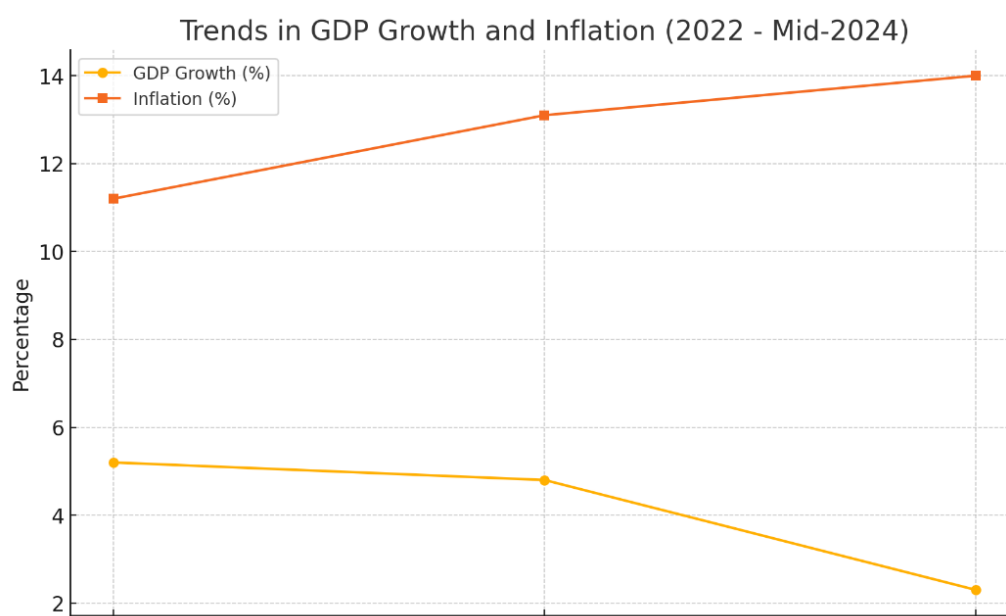


Figure 1 Trends in GDP and Inflation (2022-Mid2024) Source: Author's own construction from GRZ Economic Reports

Inflation Trends

The average inflation rate for the period 2022 to 2023 was approximately 12.2%, (figure 1) a level significantly above the target range, complicating monetary policy objectives and eroding purchasing power.

- **2022:** Inflationary pressures eased, with annual inflation averaging 11.2%, a significant decrease from 22.1% in 2021. However, inflation remained above the target band (6-8%), closing at 9.9% in December 2022 due to persistent cost-push factors.
- **2023:** Inflationary momentum resumed, rising to 13.1% in December, driven by elevated food and non-food price inflation, reaching 14.2% and 11.6%, respectively, reflecting supply chain disruptions and exchange rate volatility.
- **Mid-2024:** Average inflation reached 14.0% in the first half of 2024, exacerbated by rising maize prices and Kwacha depreciation. These inflationary pressures have constrained purchasing power and posed challenges to fiscal policy, with limited room for monetary adjustments in an environment of ongoing debt restructuring and slow economic growth.

Humanitarian Situation (Drought and Cholera)

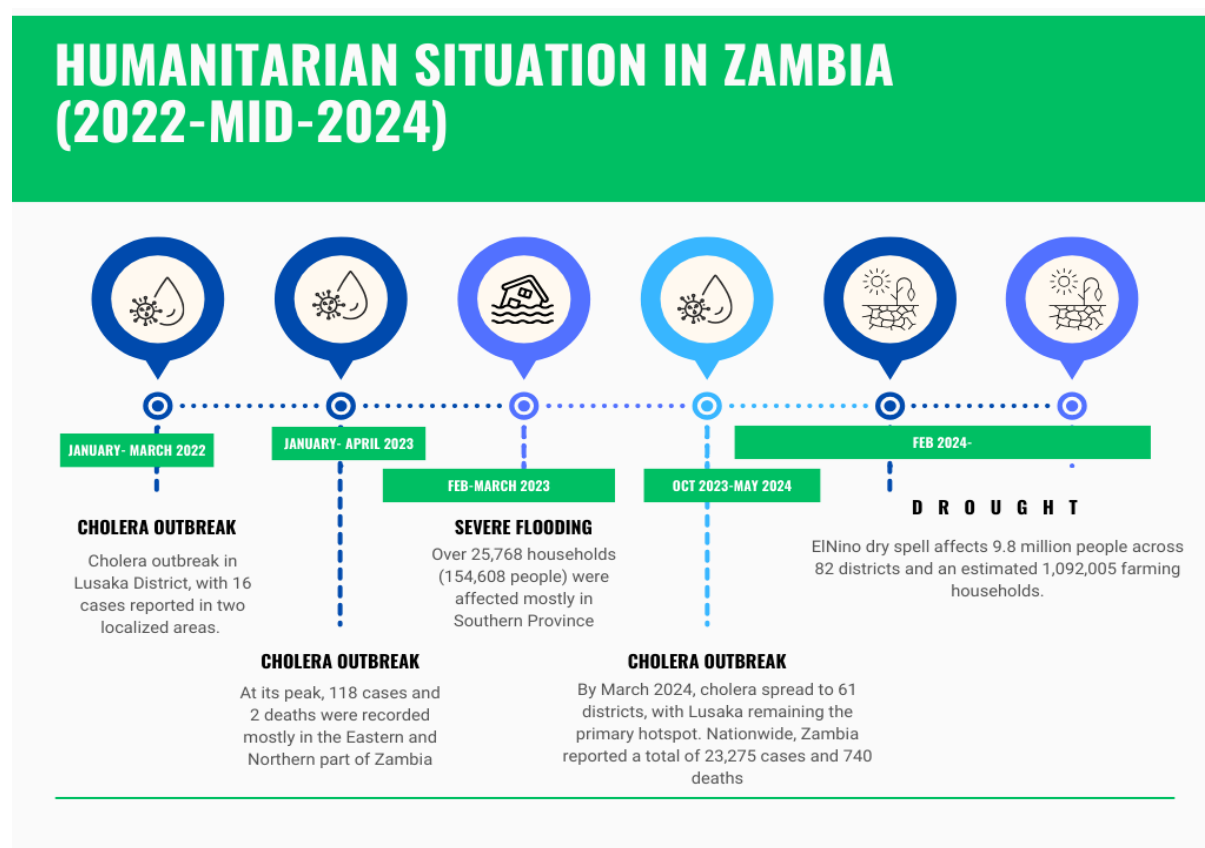


Figure 2 WASH related natural hazards in Zambia between 2022 and Mid-2024

The Figure 2 shows Zambia's humanitarian events and public health outbreaks between 2022 and 2024, marked by three major cholera outbreaks, severe flooding, and a drought emergency.

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- **Cholera Outbreaks:** Zambia experienced significant cholera outbreaks in early 2022, 2023, and late 2023, with the most severe wave spreading across 61 districts by March 2024. By May, the outbreak had resulted in 23,275 cases and 740 deaths, with Lusaka Province most affected.
- **Flooding Crisis (2023):** In February 2023, Zambia faced the most severe flooding in five decades, impacting 37 districts. The Southern Province bore the brunt, with over 25,000 households affected and significant displacement. Flooding led to extensive crop damage, restricted access to health and education, and poor sanitation due to compromised water sources.
- **Drought Emergency (2024):** In February 2024, a national drought disaster was declared as Zambia endured its driest season in over 40 years. This crisis affected 9.8 million people across 82 districts, severely impacting water availability, food security, and agricultural livelihoods, especially in rural areas.

Collectively, these events reflect the scale of Zambia's humanitarian needs, with extensive, WASH, health, displacement, and resource challenges across the country.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This shadow review utilised a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to evaluate Zambia's WASH sector under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP). Using the OECD evaluation model, the shadow review focused on effectiveness of coordination of the 8NDP-WASH structures, effectiveness in the achievement of the planned results, efficiency in budget performance and reporting, sustainability, relevance, as well as cross cutting and emerging issues. Below is a summary of the different phases and tasks that were undertaken for the shadow review process and the techniques which were used.

Desk Review: Desk Review: The initial phase of the desk review involved analysing the 8NDP strategic (Vol.1) and results framework (vol.2) as well as topline review of the performance reports. This enabled the review team to develop the research design and data collection tools.

Phase two (2) of the desk review which continued throughout the shadow review involved the following in-depth scrutiny:

- Budget Analysis: Evaluation of government budget estimates from the "Yellow Book" for 2022–2024.
- Expenditure Review: Analysis of actual public spending on WASH from the "Blue Book" (2022–2024).
- Sector Performance Reports: Annual and quarterly reports from sources such as the 8th National Development Plan and National Water and Supply Council (NWASCO) provided insights into sector performance.

Validation and Consensus Building: Both state and non-state actors or stakeholders reviewed the proposed study design, scope and methodology of the shadow review and made recommendations. It was through consensus building that the scope was adjusted and the criteria for the districts also recommended.

Sampling: The study employed **purposive sampling** to select districts based on criteria like urban-rural demographics, cholera vulnerability, and industrial impact and contingency considerations. **Cluster Random Sampling** targeted specific communities within districts, **Stratified Sampling** ensured demographic diversity, and **Expert Sampling** included sector-specific experts to provide insights on WASH policy and sustainability.

Data Collection: A pretest was conducted in Lusaka for Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews after which data collection commenced in 7 districts (Monze, Kazungula, Ithezhithezhi, Rufunsa, Kafue, Mpulungu and Mufulira) and at national level in Lusaka.

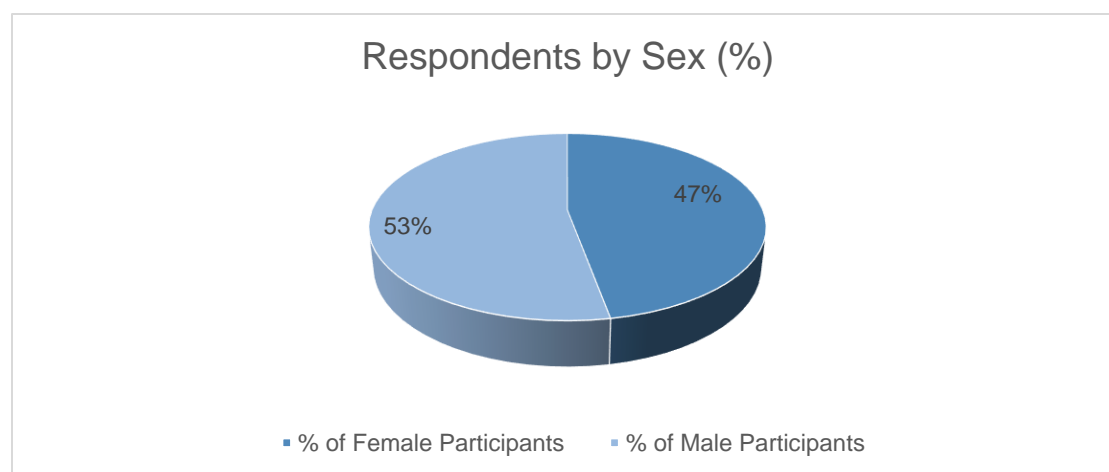


Figure 3 Number of Respondents by Sex (%)

A total of 259 respondents participated in the community score card assessments from the 7 districts. As shown in figure 3, 53% of the respondents were male and 47% were female respondents. The total respondents also included 82 persons with disabilities and 63 youth below the age of 35.

A breakdown of the data collection activities is shown in Table 1:

Districts	Respondents	Tools
1. Itezhi tezhi (ITT)	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 3 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
2. Kafue	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 2 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
3. Kazungula	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (3 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 2 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
4. Monze	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 2 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
5. Mpulungu	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 3 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
6. Mufulira	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 3 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
7. Rufunsa	Community Members (men, women, youth and PWDS) from 2 wards and Local Authorities	CSCs (6 FGDs + 1 GRZ KI) & 3 GRZ KIIs (Semi structured)
8. Lusaka	MoFNP, MLGRD, CPs and CSOs,	2 IDIs and 3 KIIs

Table 1 Number of Interviews at the District and National Level

As shown in Table 1 the Community Score Card was also administered to one of the Key Informants from government at the district to collect some technical insights on some questions from the FGDs.

Data Analysis: For the qualitative data, **Qualitative Analysis** applied thematic coding to identify patterns. The study integrated findings through **triangulation**, **complementarity**, and an **integration framework**, synthesizing data from various sources to produce evidence-based recommendations. Case studies were also condensed into stories of success as part of the qualitative findings and transect observations.

Quantitative Analysis used descriptive statistics for budget data and included the scoring aggregation for the community score card data.

To evaluate the mid-term performance of the WASH targets under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP), a traffic lights outcome rating system was employed as shown in Table 2. This approach provides a simplified, visual representation of progress toward annual output targets, especially in cases where specific outcome indicators are not available. Performance ratings are based on the average annual output achievements from 2022 to mid-2024.

Rating Scale and Interpretation

Rating	Average Annual Performance of output targets for 2022, 2023 and Mid-2024 (%)	Description
On Track (Green Robot)	85-100%	This rating reflects that 85% or more of the output targets have been achieved, indicating strong progress aligned with the planned targets.
Partially on Track (Amber Robot)	65-84%	A 65-84% achievement level signals moderate progress, though not fully on track.
Off Track (Red Robot)	64% or below	Achievement below 65% indicates that the targets are significantly behind schedule.

Table 2 Rating Scale for the Average Annual Output Performance

1. On Track (Green Robot): 85-100% Achievement

- **Description:** This rating reflects that 85% or more of the output targets have been achieved, indicating strong progress aligned with the planned targets.
- **Implication:** The project is advancing effectively, and objectives are being met as expected or exceeded.

2. Partially on Track (Amber Robot): 65-84% Achievement

- **Description:** A 65-84% achievement level signals moderate progress, though not fully on track.
- **Implication:** The cautionary status suggests that some adjustments may be needed to meet the targets by the end of the plan.

3. Off Track (Red Robot): 64% or Below Achievement

- **Description:** Achievement below 65% indicates that the targets are significantly behind schedule.

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- **Implication:** This critical status highlights the need for substantial interventions to improve performance and realign with the planned objectives.

This rating system is widely accepted and was also used for the 7NDP Mid-Term Review by government because it offers a quick, visual method to assess annual output achievements, serving as a proxy for overall performance when detailed data is unavailable.

Reporting and Validation: The draft report was peer reviewed and subjected to validation by the stakeholders who had also participated in the inception and as respondents during the data collection phase. The Validation at the District Level was conducted virtually on 6th November 2024 and at National Level with government officials on 8th November, 2024 for CSOs this was conducted in November. The consensus building on the recommendations was also included as part of the validation process and was held virtually in November, 2024.

Limitations of the Shadow Review

The CSOs' shadow review was only limited to undertaking a detailed quantitative analysis on the secondary data from reported annual programme output indicators and targets. This is because, the main government-led survey which is supposed to assess performance at mid-term had not yet been undertaken at the time of the review.

Due to resource constraints only 7 districts were sampled for the data collection which limited the diversity and generalisation of findings.

The study did not also undertake scientific testing of water samples in the communities as the focus was the community perceptions as well as their understanding of the water quality monitoring procedures in place.

WASH FRAMEWORKS IN ZAMBIA

This section discusses some of the key national policy as well as regional and international frameworks that the WASH programmes in the 8NDP have been aligned to.

Key Global and Regional WASH Commitments

UN Agenda 2030: Sustainable Development Goals

In alignment with international frameworks, Zambia's 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) strategically contributes to global and regional goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, which is part of the broader UN Agenda 2030. Zambia's WASH initiatives under the 8NDP are guided by the SDG Rapid Integrated Assessment, ensuring alignment with SDG 6 targets. However, in the 2020 Voluntary National Review, Zambia could not report on SDG 6 progress due to insufficient data, highlighting a gap in monitoring and evaluation capacity.

African Union WASH Framework

Under Agenda 2063 of the African Union, Zambia aims to contribute to reducing the continental population lacking improved sanitation by 95%, aligning with a long-term continental vision for prosperity. Additionally, Zambia participates in the High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa, which seeks to mobilize \$30 billion annually by 2030 to bridge Africa's water investment gap. Notably, Zambia's launch of a \$5.7 billion Water Investment Programme in 2022 garnered international recognition, including the Global Water Changemaker Award for the Republican President.

Lastly, Zambia's involvement in the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) underscores its commitment to fostering cooperation on water resource management and WASH service provision across the continent.

Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene

Regionally, Zambia is also committed to the Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene (2015), which emphasises universal access to sustainable sanitation and the elimination of open defecation by 2030. This commitment requires Zambia to allocate at least 0.5% of GDP to sanitation and hygiene, improve sanitation in public institutions, address workforce gaps, and foster private-sector involvement to enhance service delivery. Meeting these goals depends on political will, budget consistency, and inter-sectoral collaboration.

Southern African Development Community WASH Strategy

At the Southern African Development Community (SADC) level, other than the overarching SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) Zambia has committed to the SADC Hygiene Strategy, aimed at elevating hygiene standards across various settings, such as schools, healthcare facilities, and public spaces, to enhance quality of life.

These major frameworks collectively underscore Zambia's commitment to advancing improved WASH outcomes in line with international and regional objectives, albeit with persistent challenges in resource mobilization, data availability, and institutional capacity.

National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy Framework

Long and Medium-Term Overarching Policy Frameworks

Vision 2030 (2005-2030)

Zambia's National Long-Term Vision 2030, initiated in 2005, aspires for the nation to become "A Prosperous Middle-Income Nation by 2030." Within this framework, the Vision sets ambitious targets for water and sanitation, including achieving 80% access to clean water by 2015 and



Figure 4 WASH Planning from FNDP to 8NDP

striving for universal access by 2030. In the area of sanitation, the Vision aims for 68% access to adequate services by 2015, with a goal of 90% by 2030. Additionally, the Vision emphasizes the importance of restoring and upgrading sewage treatment infrastructure in urban centres across the country and targets the collection and safe disposal of 80% of waste by 2030. (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2005; Vision 2030).

8th National Development Plan (2022-2026)

The 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) (2022-2026) is the fourth in a series of five-year plans contributing toward Zambia's Vision 2030. The 8NDP encompasses four Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), with the Water Supply and Sanitation development outcome prominently situated under the second SDA, which focuses on Human and Social Development. However, water resource management, climate-resilient WASH services, and sector governance are integrated across the additional three SDAs, reinforcing a holistic and cross-sectoral approach to achieving sustainable WASH outcomes. This framework reflects Zambia's commitment to improving equitable access to water and sanitation while enhancing resilience to climate impacts and strengthening governance in the WASH sector.

As President of Zambia, I am directing that going forward, there shall be no more shallow wells as a source of drinking water in Lusaka and other urban areas.

Hakainde Hichilema

President of the Republic of Zambia (Source Hakainde Hichilema Facebook Page)- 2024

Key WASH Focused Policies

The implementation of programmes under the improved water and sanitation development outcome in the 8th National Development Plan are guided by the following key policies:

The National Water Policy (2024): The 2024 National Water Policy of Zambia builds on the foundational principles of the 2010 policy, advancing a vision for equitable access to safe water and aiming to achieve universal access to water and sanitation by 2050. Key objectives of the revised policy include promoting sustainable management of water resources and sanitation infrastructure, establishing standards and regulations to safeguard water quality, and addressing the impacts of climate change through resilient water infrastructure. The policy also underscores the role of water resources in economic development and poverty reduction while emphasizing gender equity in water access.

The National Gender Policy (2023): This policy, among its other objectives, aims to increase access to clean and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for women and girls. To achieve this, the policy focuses on enhancing equitable access to clean and safe water and improving the availability and accessibility of sanitation and hygiene services. The policy also identifies the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation as a key partner in mainstreaming gender considerations and ensuring that WASH programmes and projects are gender sensitive. Additionally, the ministry is tasked with reporting on the implementation of institutional gender initiatives.

The National Decentralisation Policy (2023): The 2023 National Decentralisation Policy will enhance WASH provision at the local level by empowering local authorities through devolved decision-making, financial resources, and community participation. By promoting inclusive planning and community engagement, the policy ensures that local WASH needs are addressed

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with accountability and responsiveness. Fiscal decentralisation is expected to strengthen local revenue generation to fund WASH infrastructure sustainably, while integrated development planning aligns effectively WASH with broader community priorities. This policy therefore contributes to effective, locally driven WASH service delivery, benefiting communities across Zambia.

National Policy on Climate Change (2016): The 2016 National Climate Change Policy emphasizes Water Resources Management (WRM) and climate change adaptation, with specific provisions addressing water supply. The policy highlights that extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, significantly impair household access to safe and clean drinking water. It also recognises that these conditions elevate the risk of waterborne diseases and intensify the labour burden on women and girls, who are primarily responsible for water collection in rural and peri-urban communities.

Major National WASH Strategies and Programmes

There are several strategies which informed the priorities and means of implementation of the 8NDP development outcome on Water Supply and Sanitation including those listed in Table 3:

Strategy	Duration	Key Focus Priorities	Budget
Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation Strategic Plan	2022-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing water resource management and development. - Expanding access to water supply and improving sanitation and hygiene services. - Strengthening stakeholder engagement, financial management, and operational systems. - Building human resource capacity and upgrading infrastructure. 	Not specified
Zambia Water Investment Programme (ZIP)	2022-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water security and resilient sanitation systems. - Economic transformation, job creation, and gender-sensitive investments. - Climate resilience and governance in the water sector. - Mobilizing innovative financing and bankable projects. 	US\$5.75 billion
National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (NRWSSP II)	2019-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in rural areas. - Achieving 100% improved water access and 90% improved sanitation access in rural Zambia. - Sustainable operations, sector development, and monitoring. 	US\$1.8 billion
Zambia Multisectoral Cholera Elimination Plan (MCEP)	2019-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cholera prevention through WASH services in high-risk areas. - Early detection and response to 	US\$99.3 million

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		outbreaks, with multisectoral support. - Six intervention pillars including WASH, oral cholera vaccine, risk communication.	
National Urban and Peri-Urban Sanitation Strategy	2015-2030	- Achieving 90% sanitation coverage in urban and peri-urban areas. - Expanding sanitation access, promoting hygiene, and safe wastewater disposal. - Addressing menstrual hygiene and environmental degradation.	ZMW 29.55 ¹
National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (NUWSSP)	2011-2030	- Comprehensive urban WASH services. - Health improvement through water supply, sanitation, waste management, drainage. - Policy and capacity building, research, and information management in urban areas.	US\$4.08 billion

Table 3 Key National WASH Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The strategies are critical components of Zambia's commitment to achieving its WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) aspirations by 2030. Each strategy focuses on different areas within the WASH sector to collectively ensure water security, enhanced sanitation, and improved hygiene across the nation. The Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation Strategic Plan (2022-2026) aims to strengthen operational efficiency, service delivery, and resource mobilization for sustainable WASH services.

The Zambia Water Investment Programme (ZIP 2020-2030) seeks to secure funding and build climate resilience while creating job opportunities. The National Rural and Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Programmes (NRWSSP II and NUWSSP) target comprehensive WASH service improvements in both rural and urban areas, addressing accessibility, infrastructure, and public health. The National Urban and Peri-Urban Sanitation Strategy (2015-2030) focuses on urban sanitation and public health through expanded sanitation access and waste management. Lastly, the Zambia Multisectoral Cholera Elimination Plan (MCEP 2019-2025) employs a coordinated response to eradicate cholera in high-risk areas, with a strong emphasis on WASH improvements and health interventions.

Together, these strategies form a cohesive approach toward realizing Zambia's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals on water, sanitation and hygiene.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of WASH in the 8NDP

The 8th National Development Plan has 4 Strategic Development Areas or pillars, and the first one is the Economic Transformation and Job creation, Human and Social Development, Environmental Sustainability and the Good Governance Environment. The Improved Water and Sanitation Development Outcome is aligned clustered is integrated under the second pillar along

¹ The infrastructure investments costs are not included. The budget includes software costs mainly.

with Health, Education and Social Protection, Sports and Arts, Housing and Developmental Inequalities.

Figure 5 illustrates the framework of WASH development strategies, along with their associated programmes in the 8NDP:

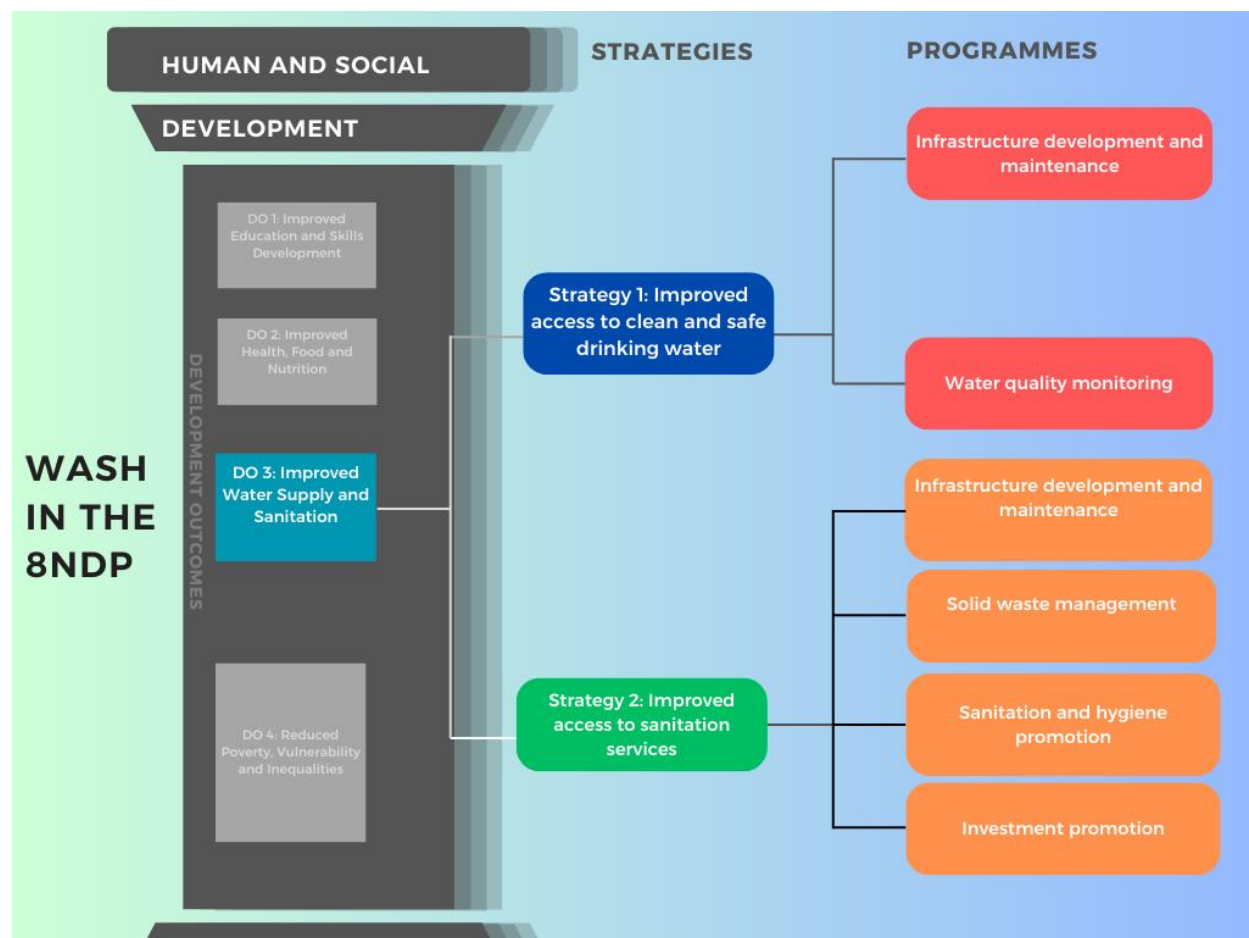


Figure 5 Framework of the Improved Water Supply and Sanitation Development Outcome in the 8NDP

To achieve the WASH development outcome, two main strategies have been employed. The first strategy focuses on improving access to clean and safe water supply, achieved through infrastructure development and maintenance, as well as ongoing water quality monitoring. The second strategy is to improve sanitation services. The strategies will be used to implement the programmes as indicated in figure 5.

In the 8NDP-Implementation plan, performance of the improved water supply and sanitation outcome will be assessed using a total of 3 key performance (impact) indicators, 5 intermediate outcome indicators and 24 programme output indicators.

Baseline Data at Impact Level

The WASH development outcome will be assessed on three (3) impact areas of access to improved water sources and access to improved sanitation facilities for national, rural and urban areas. The third impact indicator is on proportion of budget allocated to WASH.

Table 4 shows the indicators at baseline in 2018 from the Zambia Demographic Health Survey as well as the 2026 planned targets for both rural and urban area as set in the 8NDP-Implementation Plan. The table also shows the recent WASH indicators from the 2022 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey results which were published in 2024 and are expected to be used to update the Baseline indicators in the 8NDP.

From the results of the Living Conditions Monitoring Survey, there is an indication that households' access to improved water sources increased between 2018 and 2022 from 70.7 percent, 57.4 per cent and 91.1 percent to 75.7 percent, 63.9 percent and 92.7 percent at national, rural and urban areas respectively.

The implication is that the 8NDP targets seem to be less ambitious for a 5-year plan, given the progress made pre-2022.

However, household access to sanitation has regressed from the national total of 54.4% in 2018 to 41.7% in 2022 according to the LCMS results². Furthermore, percentage of rural households with access to an improved sanitation facility has also decreased from 37.2 in 2018 to 23.2. Equally, urban household access to improved sanitation facility has also regressed from 37.2 percent in 2018 to 23.2 per cent in 2022.

Access to improved water sources	Baseline	Baseline Year	Actual 2022 (LCMS)	2026 Target
<i>Total</i>	70.7	2018	75.7	78
<i>Rural</i>	57.4	2018	63.9	65
<i>Urban</i>	91.1	2018	92.7	95
Access to improved sanitation facility	Baseline	Baseline Year	Actual 2022 (LCMS)	Target
<i>Total</i>	54.4	2018	41.7	65
<i>Rural</i>	37.2	2018	23.2	45
<i>Urban</i>	77.7	2018	68.4	84
Proportion of Budget allocated to WASH	2.4	2020	N/A	5

Table 4 Water Supply and Sanitation Baseline Indicators in the 8NDP

² In June and July of 2022, the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) conducted the eighth LCMS which will help evaluate the achievements under 7NDP and provide benchmark indicators for the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

KEY FINDINGS

EFFECTIVENESS of the WASH and NDP Coordination Structures

District-Level Committees and Local Coordination Efforts

Respondents noted that district-level committees, particularly the reactivated District Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education Committees (D-WASHE), have played a positive role in local coordination. These committees were praised for aligning WASH planning and implementation with 8NDP goals at the district level.

The presence of District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCCs) was also cited as a mechanism that allows local authorities to ensure a more balanced allocation of WASH resources, addressing needs across various regions or wards in the district.

However, some stakeholders were also concerned that these district coordination structures are not fully integrated with the priorities of the 8NDP- District Implementation Plans and their IDPs or equally active across all districts, suggesting inconsistencies in implementation.

It was also noted by most stakeholders that whereas, guidelines for the WDCs had been revised and improved, there were still capacity and logistical constraints for them to fully take up their role in the NDP coordination structures. This, therefore, limited citizen participation in WASH decision-making.

Cluster Advisory Groups and National Development Coordinating Committee

The CAGs and NDCCs were commended for their improvement in frequency of meetings and presentation of implementation progress. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning has dedicated staff for purposes of CAG and NDCC coordination. The review found that the engagements were consistent from the preparation of the 8NDP Strategic Document, the Implementation Plan and the quarterly CAG and NDCC review Meetings. The platforms were also open to broader participation of non-state actors, even in the WASH sector.

Stakeholders pointed out irregular meetings at the national level, particularly within the human and social development Cluster Advisory Group, which limits effective participation, continuity and follow-through of decisions made at higher administrative levels.

Whereas a calendar of the NDCC and CAG Meetings is circulated for the entire year, there is often lack of adherence and sometimes Meetings are called for within 72 hours; there is also frequent postponements of the NDCC'

CSOs Representative from Lusaka

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Some stakeholders suggested using online platforms to address the challenge in timely holding meetings and improve communication, proposing digital tools to ensure regular updates and information sharing among stakeholders.

The Review also found that while subnational structures meet regularly, issues and challenges identified at these levels are not always effectively communicated up to the national structures. This disconnect between local and national levels restricts the flow of critical information that could improve policy and decision-making.

Furthermore, groups such as women, persons with disabilities, older persons and youth are represented through Civil Society Organisations and associations on the CAG. It was not clear however, the extent to which citizens directly can participate in the 8NDP coordination structures.

Reporting Status of the WASH Development Outcome

Table 1 shows the reporting status of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Development Outcome Annual Output Targets within the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) from 2022 to mid-2024 based on the APRs and NDCC reports. According to the 8NDP-IP the total number of annual output targets between 2022 and Mid-2024 amount to 53. Of these, 39 targets were reported, while 13 remained unreported.

Year	Annual Targets	Reported Targets	Un-Reported Targets
2022	19	13	6
2023	24	23	1
Mid 2024	10	3	7
Cumulative Total	53	39	14

Table 5 WSS Targets and Indicators in the 8NDP

The analysis of WASH Development outcome reporting at mid-point reveals significant variations in the annual output reporting trends across these years.

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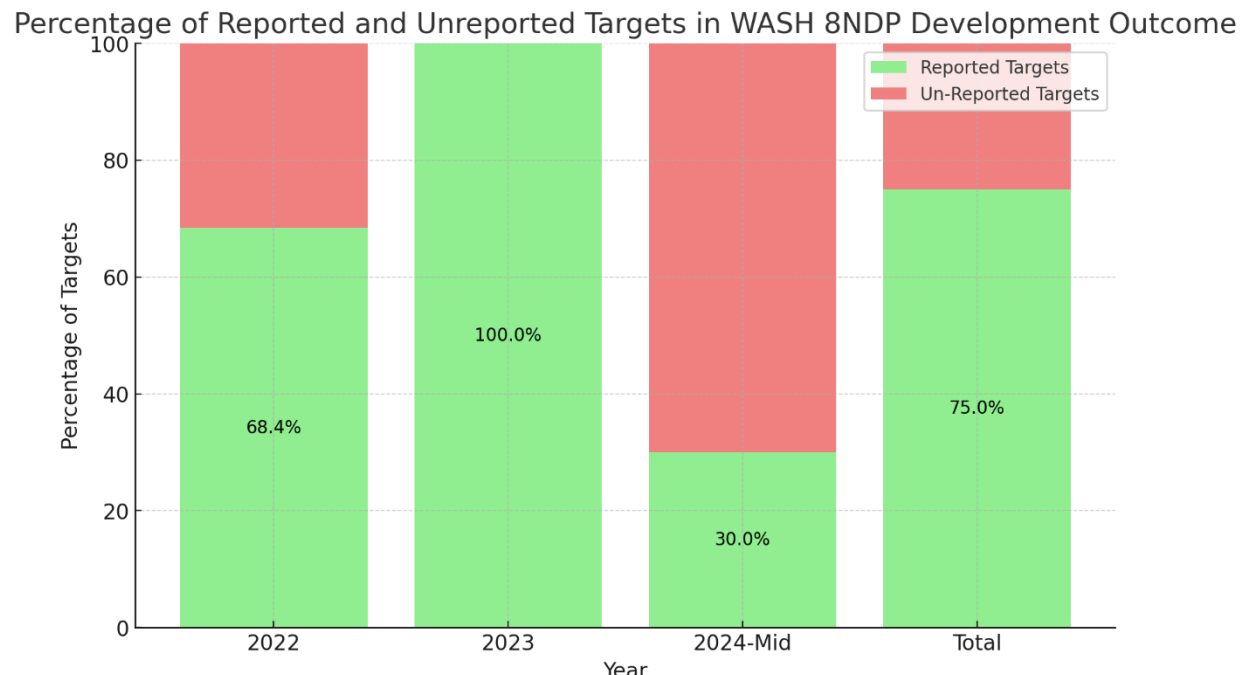


Figure 6 Reported vs. Unreported WASH Targets- Source: Author's own construction from 8NDP-IP, APRs and NDCC Reports

In 2022, out of the 19 WASH outcome targets, 13 were reported, resulting in a reported rate of approximately 68.42%, while 6 targets (31.58%) were left unreported. 2023 showed a substantial improvement, with an impressive 100% of the targets reported. However, mid-2024 data show a decline in reporting, with only 30% of the 10 targets reported and 70% unreported. This significant drop could indicate emerging issues in data tracking or resource constraints in maintaining the high level of reporting observed in 2023.

The 2023 high rate of reporting indicates a strengthened focus or improved capacity for tracking and documenting WASH targets, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and accountability in WASH sector performance for that year especially after a moderate reporting rate in 2022.

Overall, while the WASH sector demonstrated robust reporting in 2023, the fluctuations in 2022 and early 2024 highlight areas where reporting systems and consistency might need reinforcement to ensure reliable data for informed decision-making. Ensuring consistent tracking of WASH outcomes will be crucial for assessing progress towards sector goals, especially as Zambia progresses through the 8th National Development Plan.

EFFECTIVENESS- Performance of the Improved Water Supply and Sanitation Development Outcome Results

Overall Annual Performance Analysis³

This section discusses how the plan performed in meeting its planned targets in the 8NDP-IP for the period 2022 to mid-2024 and the achievements as reported in the APRs and NDCC Reports and summarised in Table 6:

Year	Total Annual Targets	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Unreported
2022	19	11	1	1	6
2023	24 ⁴	16	5	5	0
Mid 2024	10	2	1	<i>Not reported</i>	7

Table 6 Met vs. Unmet WASH Targets of the 8NDP

Over the 2.5-year period, approximately **56%** of the aggregate total of the mid-term WASH output targets in the 8NDP were reported as fully met as shown in figure 7. This suggests that while over half of the planned mid-term targets were met, there is still a significant portion (**around 44%**) that remains partially met and unmet, indicating potential areas for improved resource allocation, strategic planning, or intervention methods to boost target completion at the end of the first implementation phase. From the 44% some targets were also not reported on.

³ The assessment criteria for the targets in APRs were categorised into three groups, namely met, partially met, and not met. Targets classified as met recorded an outturn ranging from **80 percent to 100 percent**, while partially met targets reached an outturn between **50 percent and 79 percent**. Targets that were not met recorded an outturn **of less than 50 percent**.

⁴ The WASH development outcome only has **24** targets in the implementation plan, but the 2023 APR reported **26** indicating that some of the unmet/unreported 2022 targets could have been carried over into 2023.

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Distribution of Met vs. Unmet and Partially Met Targets in WASH (2022 to Mid-2024)

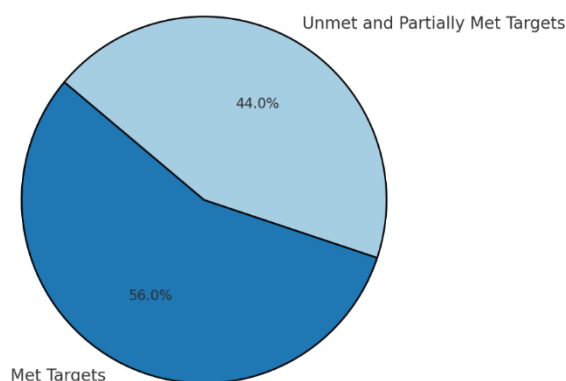


Figure 7 percentage of Met vs. Unmet and Partially Met targets by Mid-2024

In 2022, out of 19 total targets, 11 were fully met (around 58%), while one was partially met, and one was unmet. In 2023, there was an increase in the number of annual targets to 24⁵. Sixteen of these (about 67%) were fully met, five were partially met, and five were unmet. By mid-2024, 10 targets had been set, with two fully met and one partially met. There were no reports of unmet targets for between January and June 2024. However, 70% of the targets for 2024 quarter one and two were unreported by June, 2024.

Achievement Rate of 8NDP WASH Targets (2022 to Mid-2024)

To evaluate the mid-term performance of the WASH targets under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP), a traffic lights outcome rating system was employed. This approach provides a simplified, visual representation of progress toward annual output targets, especially in cases where specific outcome indicators are not available. Performance ratings are based on the average annual output achievements from 2022 to mid-2024 as shown in Table 7.

Rating of Performance of Outcomes in the absence of outcome indicators	% Performance of Annual Output Targets (Average for 2022, 2023 and 2024 June)
On Track (<i>Green Robot</i>)	85- 100%
Partially on Track (<i>Amber Robot</i>)	65- 84%
Off Track (<i>Red Robot</i>)	64% and below

Table 7 Annual Average output target performance rating scale

⁵ The discrepancy between the total number of targets in the IP vs. the total that was reported in the 2023 APR could be as a result of a carry over target from 2022.

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The assessment summary of findings is shown in Table 8.

Milestone	Average Achievement (%)	Status
Strategy 1: Improve access to clean and safe water supply		
1. Number of Boreholes Constructed	57.6%	Off track
2. Number of Piped Water Schemes Constructed	76.4%	Partially on track
3. Number of Boreholes Rehabilitated	104.1%	On track
4. Number of Piped Water Schemes Rehabilitated*	0%	Off track
5. Percentage Increase in Maintenance Ratio in Urban Areas	89.8%	On track
6. Number of Additional SOMAP Shops Equipped and Functional	43.3%	Off track
7. Percentage Increase in Metering Ratio	87.7%	On track
8. Distance (KM) of Water Supply Network System Expanded	211.6%	On track
9. Number of Hours of Water Supply Increased	55.6%	Off track
10. Number of Household Connections to Water Supply Network	202.1%	On track
11. Number of Boreholes Drilled Outside Resettlement Schemes	0%	Off track
12. Number of Boreholes Drilled Inside Resettlement Schemes	100%	On track
13. Water and Sanitation Capacity Development Strategy Developed	0%	Off track
14. Mid-term Review of National Urban Water Supply Programme	0%	Off track
15. Percentage of Commercial Utilities Meeting Water Standards	112.1%	On track
Strategy 2: Improve sanitation services		
1. Number of Inclusive Institutional Waterborne Sanitation Facilities	78.5%	Partially on track
2. Number of Wastewater Treatment Plants Constructed	100%	On track
3. Proportion of Solid Waste Collected and Recycled	70%	Partially on track
4. Proportion of Household Waste Collected and Disposed at Facility	60%	Off track
5. Number of Wastewater Treatment Plants Rehabilitated	100%	On track
6. Distance of Sewer Network System Expanded (KM)	161%	On track
7. Number of Additional Household Connections to Sewer Network	284.5%	On track
8. Number of Villages Attaining ODF Status	71.4%	Partially on track
9. Number of People Reached with Sanitation & Hygiene Promotion	486.2%	On track

Table 8 Results of Annual Average Output Performance Assessment

* The target to rehabilitate two piped water schemes in 2023 was not met as the water schemes were new and did not require any rehabilitation. However, there was no explanation why this was not reported in 2022.

On Track: Twelve targets have an average achievement rate between 85% and above, indicating strong performance towards meeting the planned targets. These include:

- **Number of Boreholes Rehabilitated** (104.1%): This performance surpassed its targets, highlighting significant efforts in maintaining existing water sources.
- **Percentage of Commercial Utilities Meeting Water Quality Standards** (112.1%): This high achievement rate reflects the effective monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards by the relevant authorities.
- **Number of Household Connections to Water Supply Network** (202.1%) and **Number of Additional Household Connections to Sewer Network** (284.5%): The substantial overachievement in these areas suggests accelerated efforts in expanding access to water and sanitation services.
- **Number of People Reached with Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion** (486.2%): This target shows remarkable progress, possibly due to focused awareness campaigns aimed at promoting hygiene in the context of public health challenges like cholera outbreaks.

The success in these targets underscores effective implementation strategies and robust engagement of stakeholders in specific aspects of WASH, particularly in expanding access and improving standards.

Partially On Track: Four targets fell within the range of 65% to 84%, showing moderate progress but highlighting the need for further attention to reach the desired targets. Notable examples include:

- **Number of Inclusive Institutional Waterborne Sanitation Facilities Constructed** (78.5%): Although there has been progress, the pace may need to be increased to meet future demands.
- **Proportion of Solid Waste Collected and Recycled** (70%): This reflects growing efforts in waste management, but achieving the ambitious targets will require addressing gaps such as infrastructure or logistical challenges.

Targets in this category reflect areas where momentum is building, but a continued focus is needed to ensure that goals are fully realised by the end of the 8NDP period.

Off Track: Eight Targets have an average achievement rate below 65%, indicating significant challenges in meeting the planned targets. These include:

- **Number of Boreholes Constructed** (57.6%): This low performance suggests challenges such as funding limitations, logistical constraints, or implementation delays that hinder meeting the targets.
- **Water and Sanitation Capacity Development Strategy Developed** (0%): The lack of progress in developing this strategy highlights critical gaps in building institutional capacity, which could impact long-term sector sustainability.
- **Number of Piped Water Schemes Rehabilitated** (0%) and **Number of Boreholes Drilled Outside Resettlement Schemes** (0%): These are particularly concerning as they may represent missed opportunities for expanding water access in underserved areas. For 2023 it was reported that the piped water schemes could not be rehabilitated because they were new, however, the same target was not reported on in 2022.

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The targets that are off track reveal the most pressing challenges in the WASH sector. Addressing these will require targeted interventions, such as improved resource mobilization, enhanced coordination among implementing agencies, and focused support from development partners.

The overall analysis of the average achievement rates across the indicators reveals a mixed picture of progress in Zambia's WASH sector under the 8NDP. While several indicators demonstrate strong achievements, especially in expanding access and quality, there are critical areas that lag behind. The disparity between indicators suggests that while some programmatic interventions have been successful, others face structural or operational challenges that need to be addressed.

The high performance in indicators related to household connections and people reached through hygiene promotion is encouraging, as it suggests an effective scale-up of services and public engagement. However, the underachievement in constructing and rehabilitating new water sources, especially in rural areas, presents a barrier to equitable access to water services.

Mid-Term Performance Against 2026 Targets

The analysis in this section discusses the progress made on each of the WASH targets in the 8NDP by mid 2024 compared to the planned achievement target by 2026. It shows the gap between the current status of the target versus the expected status by 2026.

Strategy 1: Improved Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

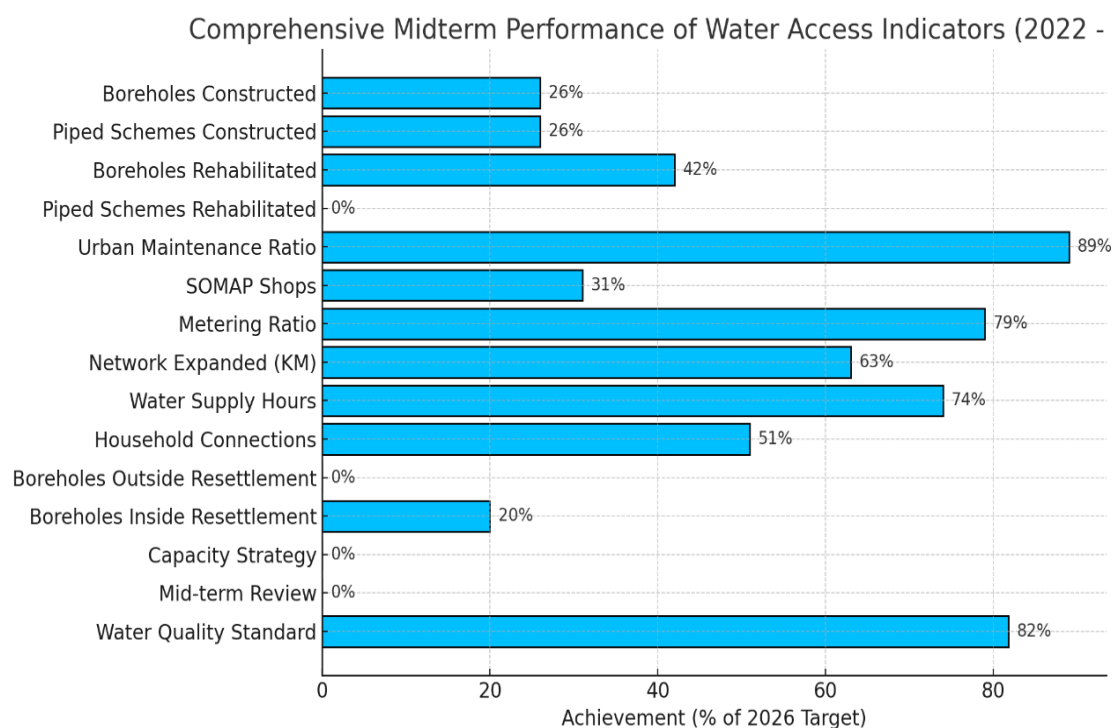


Figure 8 Indicator progress against 2026 Targets (Clean and Safe Drinking Water)

According to Figure 8, among the best-performing indicators is the **percentage increase in the maintenance ratio in urban areas**, which has reached 89% of its 2026 target of 100%. This suggests substantial progress in maintaining urban water infrastructure, ensuring that urban systems remain functional and reliable. Another strong performer is the **percentage increase in the metering ratio**, which has achieved 79% of its target. This reflects effective efforts in monitoring and managing water use, helping to control consumption and reduce water losses. Additionally, the **improvement in water quality standards** is notable, with 82% of commercial utilities now meeting the national drinking water standards, approaching the target of 100%. This achievement indicates that efforts to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water are proving successful, which is critical for public health and well-being.

BOX 1: Snapshot on Infrastructure Development: Dams and Boreholes

Between 2022 and 2024, significant strides were made in the construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure. Key achievements include:

- *Completion of dams such as Kapekesa in Chasesfu (100%) and ongoing works at Kacholola in Nyimba (26%) and Kawawa in Kasenegwa (75%).*
- *Rehabilitation of critical dams such as Nabuyani in Kalomo (100%) and Mitukutuku in Solwezi (100%).*
- *Drilling of 192 exploratory boreholes across the country, with a success rate of 96.9% (186 successful and 6 dry boreholes).*

Despite these achievements, challenges persist, particularly in completing projects like Chagula Dam in Shibuyunji (20%) and maintaining dams in underserved regions.

In contrast, several indicators have shown stagnant progress, failing to keep pace with the 2026 goals. For instance, the **number of piped water schemes rehabilitated** stands at 0% progress, despite a target of 10 schemes by 2026. This indicates challenges in revamping existing infrastructure, which is crucial for maintaining long-term water access. Similarly, the **number of boreholes drilled outside resettlement schemes** also shows no progress, remaining at 0% towards its target of 1,000 boreholes. This shortfall suggests a lack of focus on increasing water access in rural areas, which can hamper efforts to ensure equitable water distribution. Another area with significant underperformance is the **development of a water and sanitation capacity development strategy**, which is essential for guiding improvements in the sector. Its progress remains at 0% toward the goal of having a comprehensive strategy in place by 2026.

Other areas that require attention include the **number of boreholes constructed**, which has only reached 26% of its target of 16,025 boreholes, and the **number of piped water schemes constructed**, which is also at 26% of its plan target of 2,008 schemes. Although these figures represent some progress, they fall far short of what is needed to ensure comprehensive access to water, especially in rural and underserved areas. The **number of additional SOMAP shops equipped** has achieved only 31% of the planned target of 42 shops, which are critical for maintaining and operating water services at the local level.

An important example of both progress and remaining challenges is the **increase in the number of hours of water supply**. The target is to increase supply to 23 hours by 2026, and at the mid-term, 17 hours have been achieved—representing 74% of the goal. This indicates positive

movement towards the target, but more effort is needed to ensure continuous water availability. Similarly, the **expansion of the water supply network** has reached 534 kilometres out of a 1,000-kilometer target, achieving 63% of the goal. This reflects steady progress in extending the reach of water services but underscores the need for sustained efforts to meet the final targets.

BOX 2: Progress on Urban and Peri-Urban Water Supply

Urban and peri-urban water supply projects have shown varied progress:

- *Lusaka Sanitation Programme: 83% completion.*
- *Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation Project: 44% completion, with government funding addressing previous financing challenges.*
- *Integrated Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project: 88% completion.*

These achievements demonstrate a robust commitment to improving urban water systems, although delays in projects such as the Zambia Water Supply and Sanitation Project (80% progress) signal areas needing enhanced coordination and funding.

In summary, while the 8NDP's water access programmes have made significant strides in areas like urban maintenance, metering, and water quality improvements, the overall picture reveals a need for greater focus on infrastructure rehabilitation, strategic planning, and expanding access in underserved regions. Accelerating progress in these lagging areas will be critical to achieving the ambitious 2026 targets, ensuring that all citizens benefit from improved access to clean and safe drinking water.

Strategy 2: Sanitation Performance Review

Figure 9 shows what has been achieved at mid term on each of the access to sanitation services targets against the 2026 targets.

Strong Progress: Milestones such as **Sewer Network Expansion** and **Household Sewer Connections** have exceeded their targets, with 107% and 124% achievement, respectively, indicating successful infrastructure expansion.

Exceeding Targets: The **Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion** indicator has significantly outperformed expectations, reaching 483% of its target. This suggests effective community engagement and outreach in sanitation awareness. The performance was attributed to close monitoring and supervision as well as support from Cooperating Partners.

Lagging Targets: Targets related to **Solid Waste Collection and Recycling** (23%) and **Wastewater Treatment Plant Construction** (25%) are considerably behind. This calls for additional focus and potentially more resources in the upcoming years.

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Overall, the sanitation programme's mid-term results show areas of commendable progress, particularly in outreach and sewer infrastructure expansion. However, key infrastructure projects

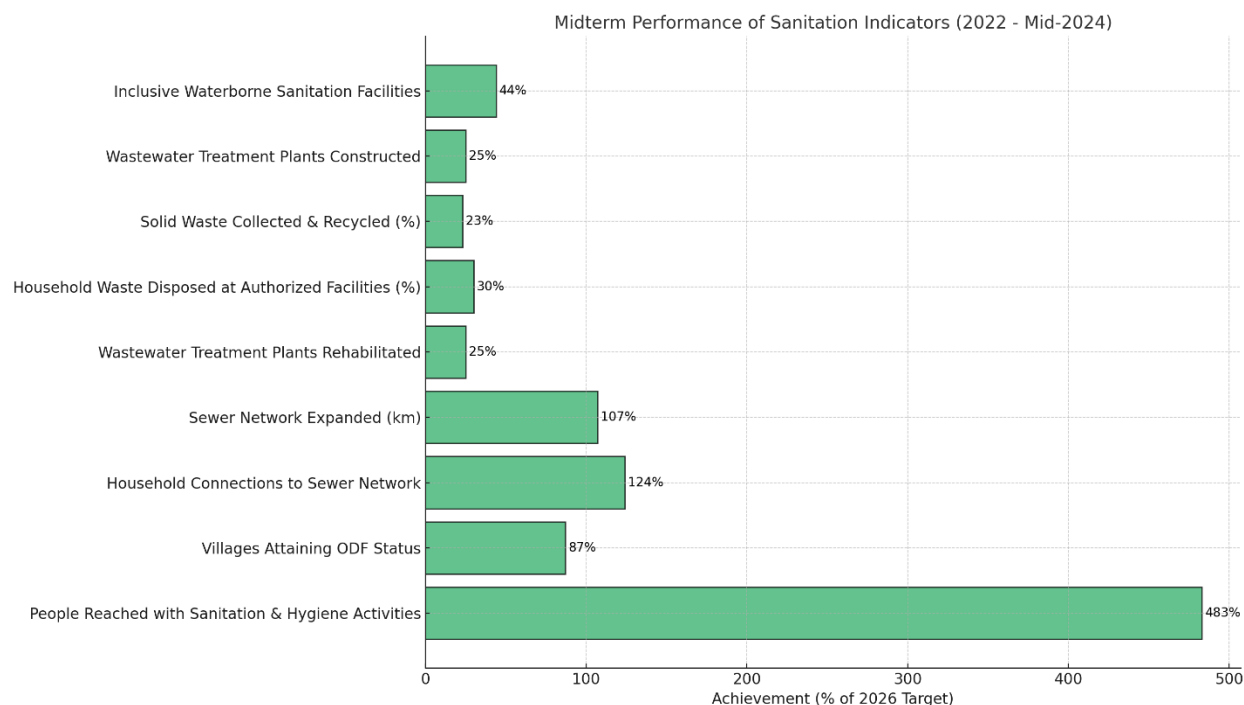


Figure 9 Indicator Progress against 2026 Targets (Access to sanitation services)

like wastewater treatment plant construction and solid waste management need greater emphasis to ensure the 2026 targets are met. Addressing these gaps will be essential for achieving the broader goals of improved sanitation services by the end of the 8NDP period.

Major WASH Projects in the 8th National Development Plan

The Government of the Republic Zambia is implementing several Water Supply and Sanitation Projects to achieve the objectives of the 8th National Development Plan. Most of the projects focus on improving water supply, sanitation, and infrastructure development across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. Notably, most of these projects commenced before 2022, showcasing the country's long-term commitment to achieving sustainable water and sanitation solutions. The combined investment exceeds several hundred million USD, targeting a diverse population that includes small towns, rural districts, and urban centers. However, at the time of assessment most these projects were behind schedule in terms of their completion dates.

Project Description	Implementing Utility	Target Population
1. Zambia Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Cost: €150 million)- 2013–2025	MWSC	Over 500,000 people
2. Lusaka Sanitation Programme (Cost: \$300 million)- 2015–2025	LWSC	Over 1 million people
3. Kafulafuta Water Supply System Project (Cost: \$449 million)- 2016–2024	KWSC	Over 1 million people

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4. Integrated Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation Program (Cost: \$41.8 million)- 2016–2023	WWSC	Over 400,000 people
5. Chambeshi Integrated Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (Cost: \$45.6 million)- 2016–2024	CHWSC	450,000 people
6. Eastern Province Integrated Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Cost: \$15.46 million)- 2017–2024	EWSC	Over 300,000 people
7. Luapula Water Supply System Rehabilitation (Cost: \$33.85 million)- 2019–2024	LPWSC	Over 200,000 people
8. Chibila Dam Rehabilitation (Cost: K7.27 million)- 2020–2023	LGWSC	Over 100,000 people
9. Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation Projects (Cost: \$60 million)- 2023–2026	NWSC	750,000 people
10. Kazungula Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Cost: €5.99 million)- 2022–2024	SWSC	50,000 people
11. Sinda Urban Project (Cost: K15.46 million)- 2022–2024	EWSC	70,000 people

Table 9 Summary of GRZ WSS Projects during the 8NDP; Source, NWASCO Sector Reports

Stakeholders' Perspective on the Performance of the 8NDP WASH Programmes

There was consensus among stakeholders that WASH programme performance has shown measurable progress, especially in rural water access and sanitation infrastructure. Improvements in borehole drilling, facility construction, and waste management were cited as notable successes. Primarily, government stakeholders observed that there had been an increase in the number of boreholes constructed and rehabilitated between 2022 and mid-2024 mainly through the CDF and in response to the drought situation.

The Keep Zambia Clean Campaign was also cited as one of the consistent hygiene promotion activities that the local authorities have consistently implemented and effectively in some districts.

Despite these achievements, according to most stakeholder, data reliability and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems were cited as ongoing concerns. Stakeholders emphasised that robust data collection is essential to capture accurate performance metrics, especially to reflect the actual impact on underserved areas. Continued infrastructure investments, paired with improved monitoring practices, are seen as critical to maintaining these gains.

Success and Challenges in Meeting Targets

Stakeholders attributed the achievement of some WASH targets to increased financial and technical resources from both the Constituency Development Fund and the Cooperating Partners' contributions.

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Furthermore, positive behavioural change and response to interventions such as water connection and hygiene promotion was also a success factor. The cholera outbreaks between 2022 and Mid- 2024 also provided an opportunity for increased sensitisation hence reaching more people with hygiene promotion messages.

While stakeholders acknowledged major milestones in the policy and regulatory frameworks, such as the reinforcement of the regulatory framework for On Site Sanitation (OSS) and Faecal Sludge Management (FSM), Launch of the Zambia Water Investment Plan, the 2024 National Water Policy and the 2023 National Gender Policy, they also identified community engagement and awareness as vital for the continued success of WASH initiatives. Encouraging community-led decision-making and sensitisation programmes could improve alignment with public health priorities and strengthen the long-term impact of WASH projects.

However, challenges remain, particularly at the community level, where prioritisation of sanitation services or projects through the CDF is sometimes limited by awareness gaps.

There was also a general concern on the reduced funding to the WASH sector between 2022 and 2024. This is both in terms of budget allocations and actual disbursements, which have persistently fallen short of the annual financing needs and most of the major WASH projects are either donor funded, or grant supported.

Some non-state actors highlighted that political interference hinders evidence-based decision-making on water tariffs in Zambia, which in turn affects the performance of Commercial Utilities (CUs). They pointed out that although reports consistently identify tariffs as a major issue, actions to address it remain misaligned with the data, compromising the CUs' efficiency and financial sustainability.

Community Perceptions on WASH Services

This section discusses the findings from the community-led assessments of the water supply and sanitation services. The assessment focused on access to water supply and sanitation services including infrastructure, and water quality. Community members rated in their responses using a community score card. Where they rated '1', to mean the situation was not happening; '2' to mean the situation was happening or in place to a lesser extent and '3' meant this was taking place to a large extent.

Access to Basic drinking water services

Community members rated the provision of water and sanitation services by the duty bearers after they were asked the extent to which most households had easy access to clean and safe drinking water.

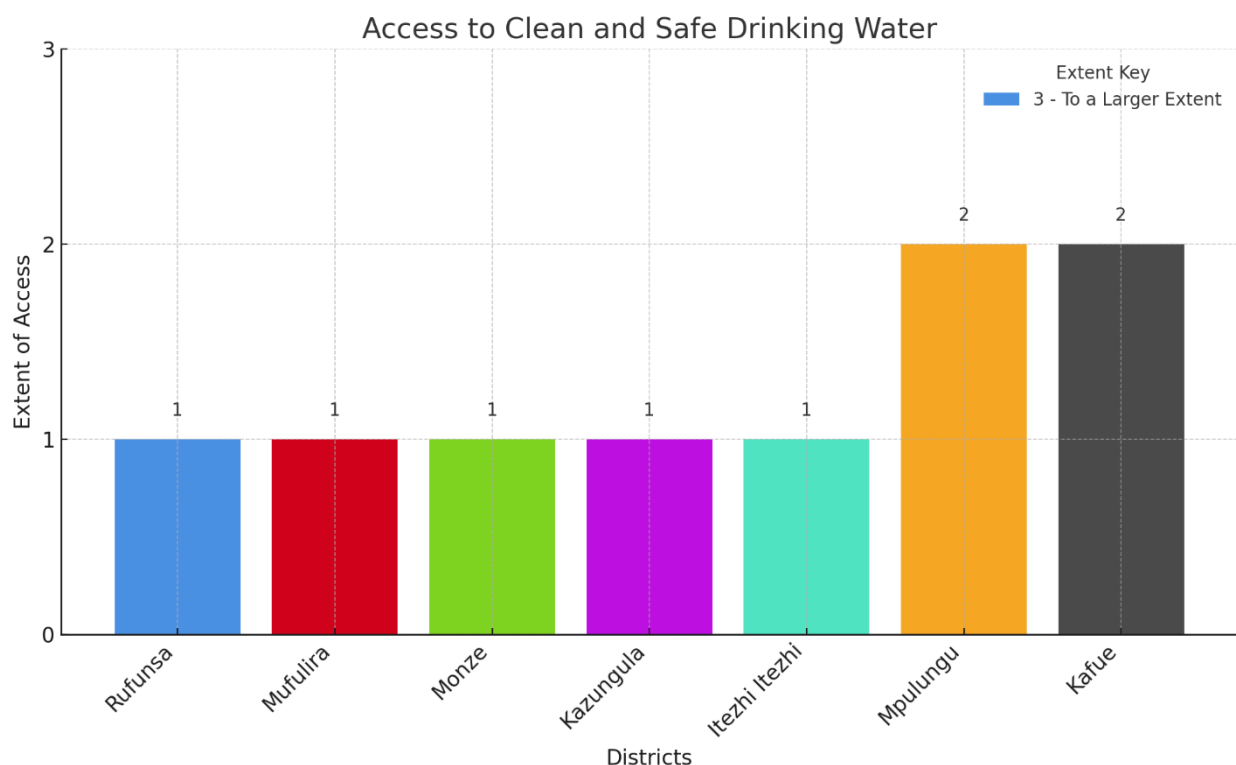


Figure 10 Community rating on access to clean and safe drinking water by district

Majority of the community members from 5 (Rufunsa, Mufulira, Monze, Kazungula and Mpulungu) out of the 7 districts sampled, indicated that they had no access to clean and safe drinking water, indicating a very limited provision of these services as shown in figure 10. However, the community members from Mpulungu and Kafue, reported access to clean and safe drinking water to a lesser extent, indicating some areas have better access than others. For Mpulungu district, most community members had a positive perception on water availability due to adequate rains and a huge lake in the region, however, they also cited distance challenges. Kafue attributed improved access to some of the major projects embarked on by the local authorities as well as its proximity to some urban communities with better water infrastructure.

BOX 3: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON DISTANCE AND ACCESS TO WATER SERVICES

Long distances to water sources remain a significant barrier for many community members. Most residents, particularly in rural areas, must travel substantial distances often 1 to 10 kilometres to access water, with some reporting walking for 30 to 45 minutes one way.

In regions with limited boreholes, such as Mulendema and Kasankwa, community members rely on distant water points or travel to neighbouring villages to fetch water.

Persons With Disabilities encounter additional challenges, often needing to pay others to collect water on their behalf.

Factors such as scattered and linear settlement patterns, agricultural land usage, and inadequate local infrastructure contribute to these extended distances.

Community members who have access to piped water, albeit few, report significantly shorter distances, underscoring the disparity between households with infrastructure and those without.

Other recurring concerns on access identified by community members during focus group discussions included:

- **Erratic Water supply:** Even in pre-dominantly urban areas such as Kafue and Mufulira with tap connections, water is supplied inconsistently. Due to increased electricity shortages the number of hours of water supply availability have reduced. This has led to water rationing, and residents must sometimes resort to alternative, unsafe water sources.
- **Shared Water Sources with Livestock:** Many rural residents from Rufunsa and IthezhiTezhi district who participated in the Focus Group Discussions share water sources with livestock, further contaminating the water supply, especially during this drought situation.
- **Natural Water Sources:** With limited functional infrastructure in areas such as Rufunsa, IthezhiThezi and Kazungula many communities rely on natural resources like rivers, dams, and wells, which are often unsafe for drinking without treatment.

Water Infrastructure

Borehole Construction and Rehabilitation

Community members in all the districts acknowledged that to a lesser extent, the Constituency Development Fund was increasing the number of boreholes installed in their communities. Furthermore, the some of the old boreholes are also being rehabilitated.

On rehabilitation, most community members reported that borehole sustainability is challenged by inconsistent community adherence to maintenance and security protocols, leading to issues like vandalism and theft. Local authorities typically do not handle repairs, leaving maintenance to community-elected committees.

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The effectiveness of these committees varies; active ones successfully mobilise resources and maintain functionality, while less active committees struggle, resulting in non-operational boreholes.

Financial constraints further exacerbate maintenance challenges, as some communities find repair costs prohibitive, leading to prolonged periods without access to clean water. Community members also cited the lack of readily available spare parts and maintenance tools in local markets compounds these challenges, forcing communities to rely on distant suppliers or local authorities for spares, which can take long to be delivered.

BOX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON PIPED WATER SYSTEMS

The community members reported that piped water systems are primarily limited to schools, clinics, and a few communal kiosks, with minimal access at the household level. Many respondents noted that existing piped systems are outdated, often installed before 2022, and that these systems are frequently in disrepair or non-functional due to irregular water supply. In several communities, pipes were laid for distribution but remain unconnected or lack water flow, as observed in areas reliant on Mulonga's infrastructure.

Although new water projects are underway such as a government-supported smart water treatment plant and upgrades in select schools and health facilities these initiatives are not yet operational. Respondents in some areas reported that private boreholes are connected to limited piped systems, often serving middle- to high-income households, while most community members continue to rely on communal water points or unconnected piping systems.

Water Quality

Community members were asked on the extent to which the water provided by the commercial utilities is clean and safe for drinking (smell, appearance and taste). Communities like Mulendema and Mwando reported rusty, scented water that taints containers. In other areas, water has been tested and found to contain bacteria. However, most of the community members were not fully aware on some of the water testing results or procedure followed to have their water tested by relevant authorities.

In some mining communities, community members reported that water was very contaminated such that it often tasted acidic, and this had affected access even when water is available for fear of getting sick.

The current state of water access and quality in these communities reveals a critical need for sustainable water infrastructure, especially in rural areas severely affected by climate and logistical challenges. Ensuring regular maintenance, treatment facilities, and increased water points can improve accessibility and health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Access to Basic Sanitation Services

Sanitation Infrastructure

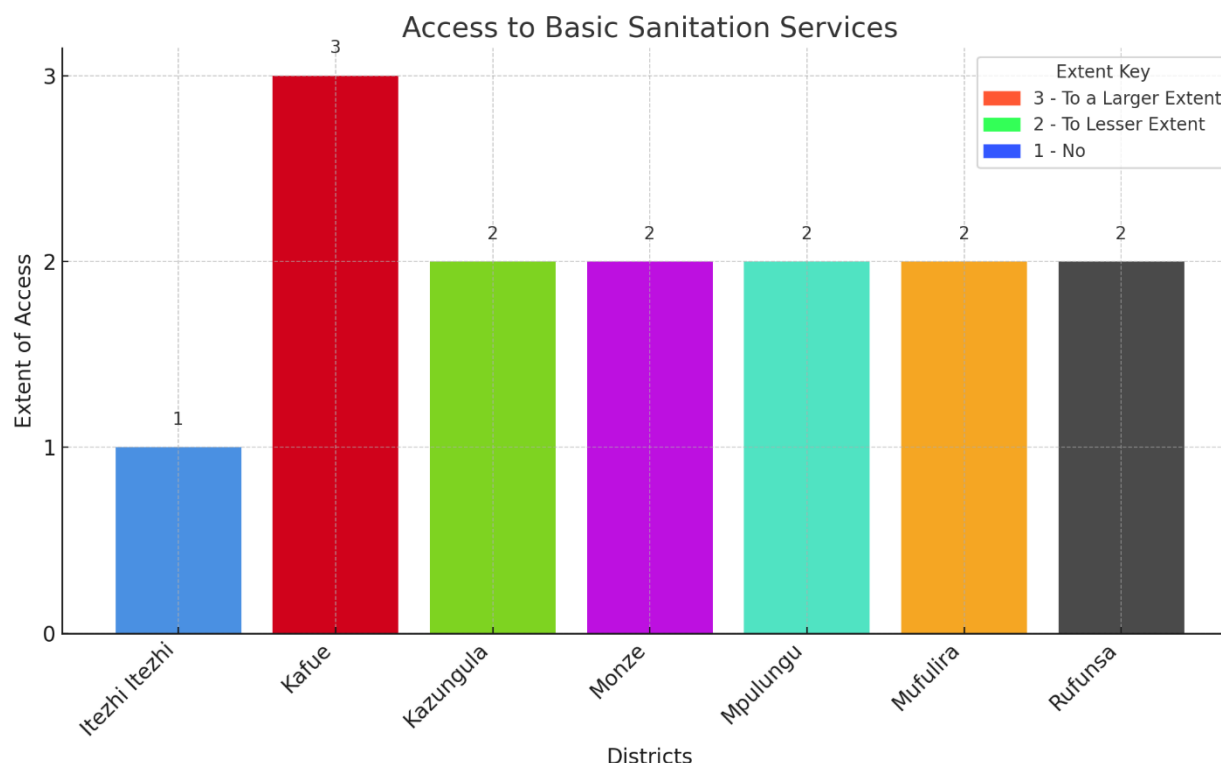


Figure 11 Community ratings on access to basic sanitation services

The review also assessed the extent to which most people in the sampled communities do not share their sanitation facilities such as flushable toilets or ventilated improved pit latrines with other households. Apart from Kafue which reported that to a larger extent they do not share their basic sanitation facilities, most of the districts reported that they were sharing their facilities. The situation in Itezhi thezhi based on the score of 1 is interpreted that almost all the sampled communities were sharing their sanitation facilities.

The Focus Group Discussions revealed that most communities rely on traditional pit latrines with basic grass or mud structures, lacking adequate ventilation and stability. Household-level latrines are widespread but unimproved, often shared among multiple households, particularly in high-density rental areas. Flushable toilets are largely limited to public institutions like schools and hospitals, while Ventilated Improved Pit-latrines (VIPs) are rare, with minimal presence in districts such as Rufunsa and Itezhi thezi.

Where flushable toilets exist, they are often rendered ineffective by chronic water shortages, leading users to default to pit latrines or open defecation. Notably, in donor-supported project areas like Yawa Ward in Kazungula District, sanitation improvements are evident, although monitoring and resource allocation remain limited. The lack of durable and accessible sanitation structures continues to pose significant public health risks, particularly for persons with disabilities.

Open Defecation

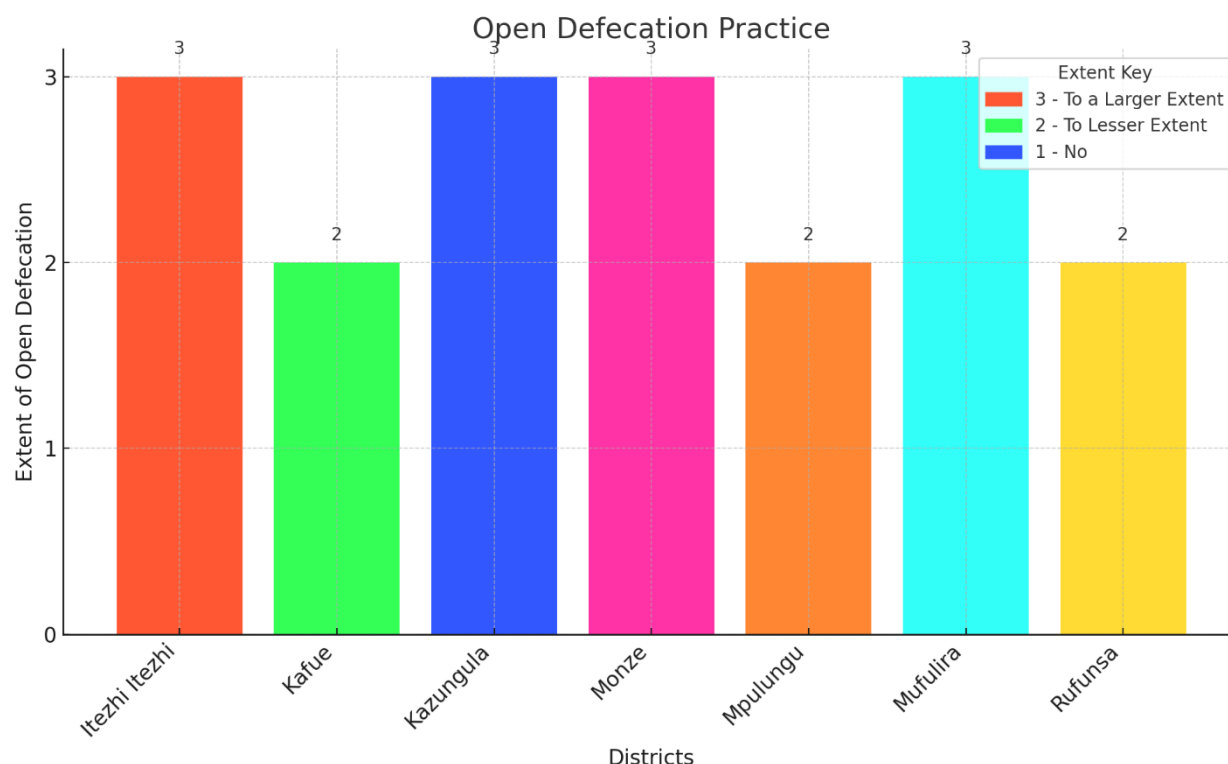


Figure 12 Community rating on Open Defecation practice by district

In four of the 7 districts community members reported that on average, people were still practicing open defecation to a larger extent. However, community members from districts such as Kafue, Mpulungu and Rufunsa observed that although open defecation was still practiced, it was to a lesser extent.

The survey revealed that open defecation remains a major challenge in 3 of the surveyed districts, especially in temporal settlements and areas with inadequate toilet facilities. Many rural households lack stable, permanent latrines due to geographic and economic limitations, with unstable latrine structures often collapsing, leading people to use open spaces like hills or bushes.

Some of the respondents indicated that even although they have their own pit latrines at home, they must dig more pits once the ones being used are filled up, hence their homesteads had a number of buried pit latrines which had become dysfunctional.

In urban markets and public places, inadequate sanitation facilities or high user fees result in widespread open defecation. Seasonal water scarcity further exacerbates the issue, rendering flushable toilets unusable and forcing people to resort to unsanitary alternative methods.

It was also revealed that despite efforts from Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiatives, limited monitoring has led some communities to revert to open defecation practices. Sensitisation efforts by local leaders have achieved some progress, but persistent gaps in sanitation infrastructure and water availability continue to hinder sustained eradication of open defecation practices.

Handwashing Facilities and Hygienic Practices

Community members in all the districts indicated that on average handwashing facilities were available to a lesser extent because they were primarily accessible in public institutions, including schools, health clinics, and market centres, with minimal availability at the household level. Hand

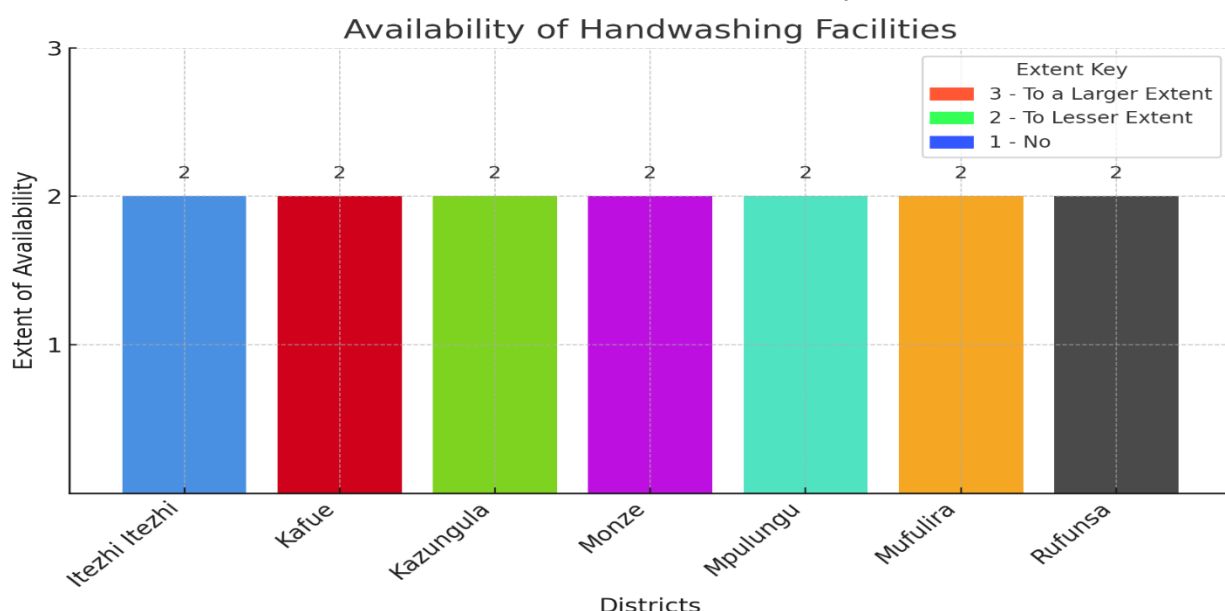


Figure 13 Community rating on availability of handwashing facilities by district

hygiene practices among community members increase temporarily in response to public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or cholera outbreaks, but decline significantly when these crises abate.

‘Due to water scarcity, whenever we draw water from a long distance, we prioritise it for cooking and things like washing of hands is not so important to us given the situation’

Female FGD participant from Rufunsa

Persistent barriers, including limited access to water and the prohibitive cost of soap, constrain consistent handwashing behaviour at household level. Despite targeted public health interventions and sensitization efforts from organisations like Water Aid and World Vision, which have enhanced hygiene infrastructure in some areas, sustainable adoption of handwashing practices remains low, particularly in households facing water scarcity.

Waste Management

On average, most of the community members in 5 of the surveyed districts reported that garbage is properly managed to a lesser extent, with Mpulungu and Rufunsa community members however, indicating that there wasn't any significant intervention when it comes to the management of waste in their areas.

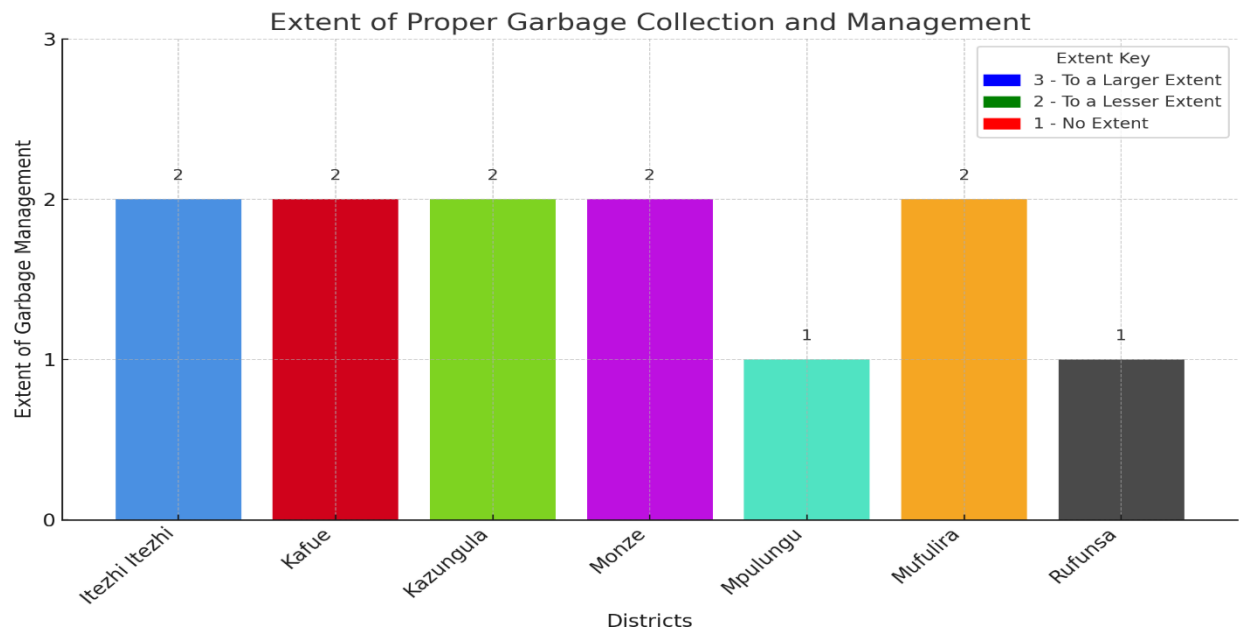


Figure 14 Community rating on proper collection and management of waste by district

The community feedback highlights significant limitations in formal waste management services across various communities, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. Most of the households resort to self-managed disposal methods, primarily by digging individual rubbish pits where waste is discarded, burned, or buried once full. This decentralized approach, prevalent in rural communities, reflects the absence of structured waste collection systems facilitated by local authorities. Consequently, waste disposal remains largely unregulated, raising concerns about environmental health and sanitation.

In contrast, districts with predominantly urban population benefit from periodic waste collection by municipal councils, although this service is typically restricted to designated collection points, predominantly in public spaces such as markets. However, the lack of reliable infrastructure, such as waste collection vehicles and adequate disposal facilities, has led to waste accumulation in certain areas, exacerbating public health risks.

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Respondents from peri-urban and rural locations expressed dissatisfaction with the irregularity of waste collection services, especially in instances where fees are collected but services are infrequent or entirely absent.

In some cases, improvised waste management strategies have emerged, including communal pits and the repurposing of biodegradable waste as compost for local agriculture.

The findings underscore the need for a cohesive waste management strategy, prioritizing resource allocation, infrastructure development, and routine collection services to address the sanitation gaps in underserved communities.

EFFICIENCY: BUDGET PERFORMANCE OF WASH PROGRAMMES (2022-2024)

Budget Allocations

BOX 3: WASH FINANCING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY

The water and sanitation sector requires not only huge capital investments but also financial resources for operation and maintenance. The Zambia Water Investment Programme which was launched in July 2022 has estimated an investment requirement of ZMW103.5billion (US\$5.75billion) in the next 8 years (2022 -2030) if the vision 2030 is to be realised. This translates into an average annual investment requirement of ZMW12.94billion (US\$718.8million) with government contribution of ZMW2.43billion (US\$135mil). The 2022 national budget only covered 20% of the investment required. Similarly, the 2023 national budget, has only allocated K2.41billion (about US\$134million). This means that there is a backlog in investments.

2022 Annual WSS Sector Report- National Water Supply and Sanitation Council

The 2024 WASH Budget declined from K2.5 billion in 2022 to K2.4 billion in 2024 in nominal terms as seen in **Error! Reference source not found.** As a share of the total budget, WASH allocations have remained relatively stagnant at around 1.3%, reflecting a lack of prioritization or commitment. This is in contrast to President Hakainde Hichilema's promise in his maiden speech to the 13th session of the National Assembly in September 2021, where he committed to increasing WASH allocations. However, the period between 2022 and 2024 has instead seen a decline in funding.

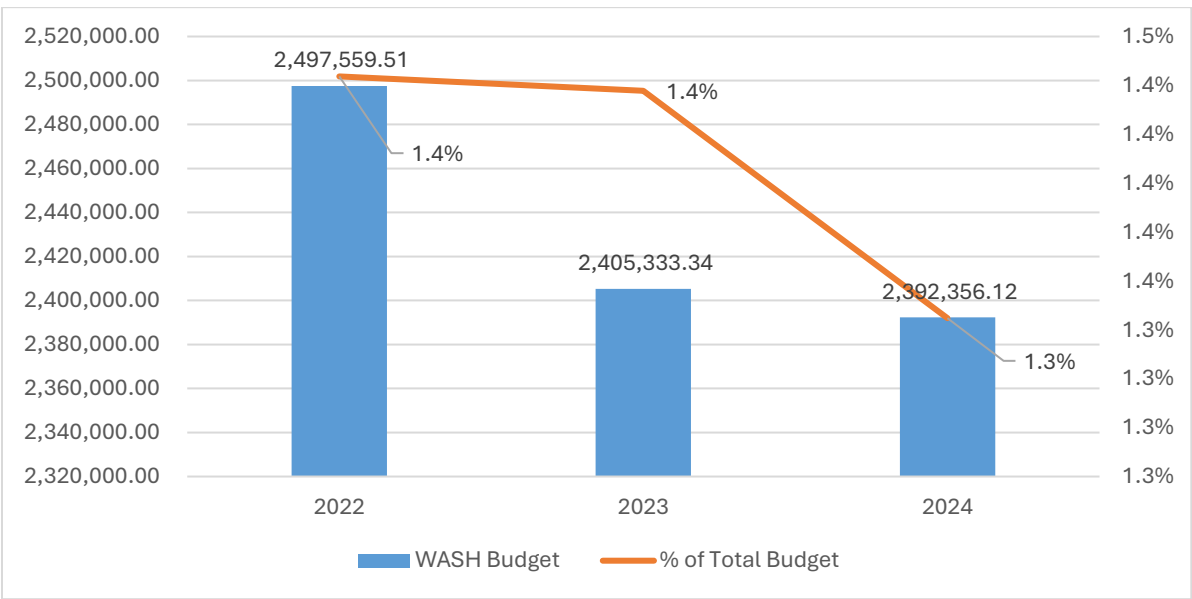


Figure 15 WASH Budget allocations: 2022-2024 (ZMW)- Source; Author’s own Construction from Budget Speeches

Furthermore, the World Bank has estimated that Zambia needs to spend at least US\$25 per person annually from now until 2030 to achieve the WASH-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, current budgetary allocations amount to an average of just US\$5 per person annually, which is far below the required level of investment. This shortfall indicates that current funding is insufficient to make a significant impact on the sector. Additionally, Zambia is a signatory to the 2008 eThekweni and Ngor Declaration, where 32 African heads of state and delegation leaders committed to allocating 0.5% of their GDP to sanitation.⁶ However, this commitment has seen a decline as WASH budgets have declined from 0.5% in 2022 to 0.3% in 2024.

WASH vs. Social Sector Budget Allocations

Comparing the WASH budget allocations to other social sector allocations, shows a worrying trend. While budgetary allocations to Health, Education and Social Protection haven't seen an increase over the period 2022 and 2024, the allocation to WASH has seen a decline as seen in Table 9. For instance, the social protection has grown from 3.6% in 2022 to 5.4% in 2024, but the WASH budget has a decline from 1.4% to 1.3%.

	2022	2023	2024
Health % of total budget	11.5%	10.4%	11.8%
Education % of total budget	10.4%	13.9%	15.4%
Social protection % of total budget	3.6%	4.9%	5.4%
WASH % Total Budget	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%

Table 10 Social Sector Budget Allocation 2022-2024 (% share of the National Budget)- Source: Author's construction from Budget Speeches

WASH Budget Performance

The budget performance of WASH programmes under the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation from 2022 to mid-2024 reveals notable challenges in achieving consistent funding levels, particularly in donor contributions. In 2022, the government (GRZ) performed relatively well, with 93% of the approved budget of K735.8 million released. However, donor funding was considerably lower, with only 28% of the allocated K1.46 billion disbursed. This discrepancy resulted in a consolidated performance of 49.6%, suggesting moderate success but also pointing to a reliance on external funding sources that did not meet expectations.

⁶ WHO (2012)

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In 2023, the overall budget performance declined significantly, with consolidated performance dropping to 22.5%. Government releases decreased to 30% of the approved K1 billion budget,

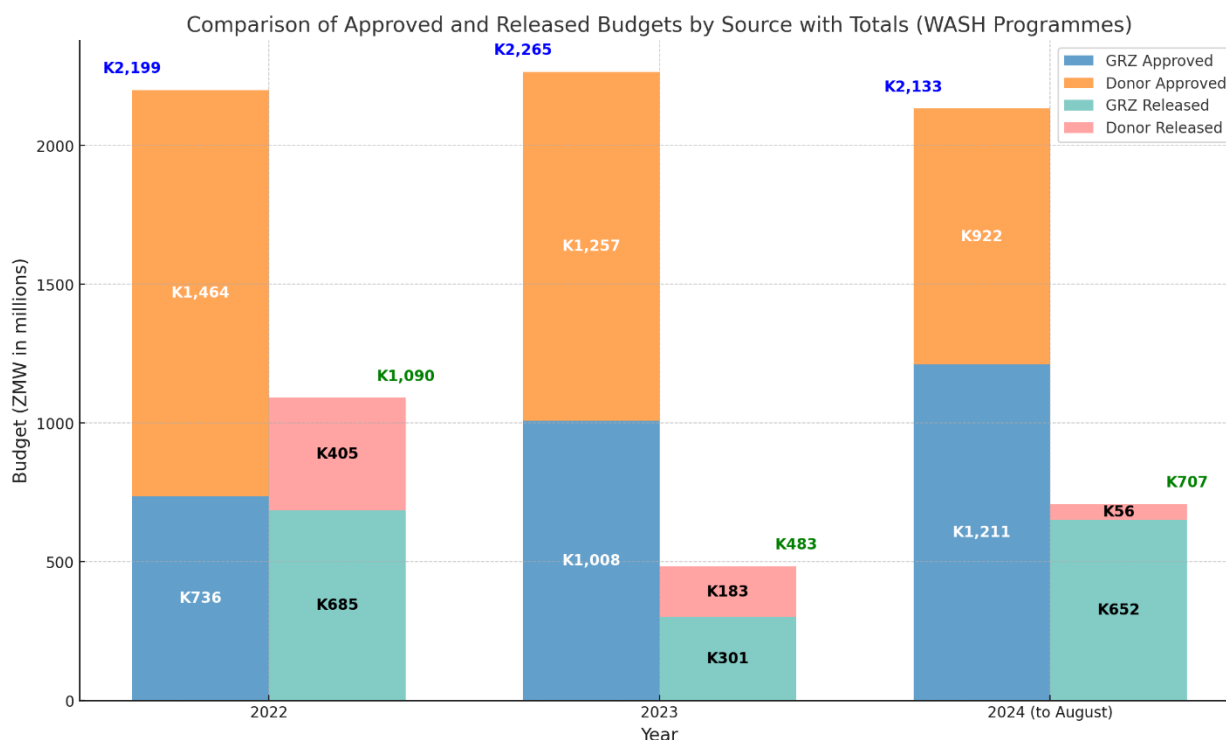


Figure 16 Approved budgets vs. releases from GRZ and Donors; Source; MWSD NAZ Submission

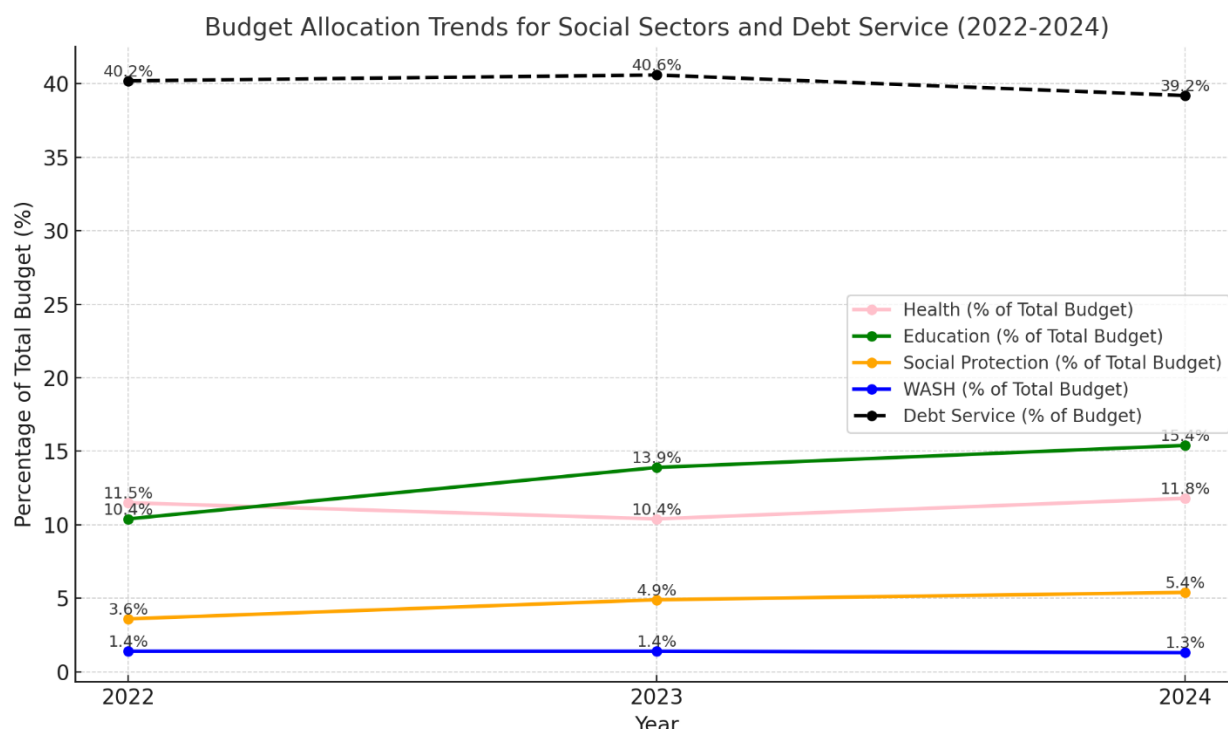
and donor contributions fell further to 15%, with only K182.5 million of the allocated K1.26 billion released. This decline indicates growing challenges in resource mobilization and donor funding reliability, potentially hindering the implementation of WASH programmes and delaying critical interventions.

By mid-2024, there were some signs of recovery in government funding, as GRZ achieved 84% performance, releasing K651.8 million out of the approved K1.21 billion. However, donor funding continued its downward trend, with only 6% of the K922.3 million budget disbursed. This left the consolidated performance at 31%, reflecting a slight improvement from 2023 but still considerably below 2021 and 2022 levels. These improvements were attributed to the accelerated emergency response to the drought situation in 2024.

These findings suggest the need for sustained efforts to strengthen donor partnerships, improve domestic resource mobilization, and address systemic issues to ensure the long-term viability of WASH programmes.

Debt Impact on WASH

Debt Service and WASH Allocations



Between 2022 and 2024 debt service has remained relatively stable in terms of budget allocations. This stability is largely due to the debt standstill Zambia benefited from during the debt restructuring process. As a share of the total budget, debt service accounted for 40.2%, 40.6%, and 39.2% in 2022, 2023, and 2024, respectively, showing only minor fluctuations.

WASH allocation does not exhibit notable changes year-over-year, even as debt servicing percentages vary. This suggests a lack of direct relationship or correlation between these two factors. The constancy of WASH allocation might be attributed to pre-determined budgeting priorities that are less influenced by fluctuations in debt servicing.

There appears to be no significant correlation between debt servicing allocation and WASH sector allocation. The trends suggest that WASH funding is not dynamically adjusted in response to changes in debt servicing percentages. Instead, WASH funding might be guided by separate policy decisions or priorities.

Debt Restructuring and WASH Projects

The Zambian government's measures to address debt challenges, including the cancellation and rescoping of loan-financed projects, have affected a limited number of WASH projects. While necessary to reduce financial obligations, these actions have delayed or limited the implementation of critical water and sanitation infrastructure projects in provinces like Copperbelt. For instance, the rescoping of the Nkana Water and Sanitation Project to focus on 'critical works' and the Kafulafuta Dam has ensured some progress but reduced the scope and pace of these

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interventions. Similarly, the cancellation of certain projects has constrained the expansion of services, particularly in rural and underserved areas, slowing Zambia's progress toward achieving its 8NDP WASH targets and SDG 6.

Continuing projects like the Lusaka Sanitation Programme and the Small Towns Water Supply Project, financed through concessional loans, demonstrate the government's focus on high-impact interventions. However, the reliance on domestic revenues for many rescope projects has strained budgets, risking delays in execution and reduced maintenance of existing infrastructure. For example, in 2025 the Integrated Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Program has been allocated K150 million in the National Budget, but still has a shortfall of K95 million to be completed.

To mitigate these impacts, the government must prioritize timely funding for critical projects, strengthen public-private partnerships, and incorporate climate-resilient designs to sustain progress. Balancing fiscal responsibility with service delivery remains a key challenge as the government strives to meet its WASH and broader development goals.

Constituency Development Fund

CDF financing for WASH at District Level

"The MLGRD has noted a significant increase in budget allocations for WASH, mainly through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The allocation prioritizes community projects, particularly in public places such as schools, hospitals, markets, and bus stations. Approximately 60% of CDF funding for WASH projects has been focused on rural sanitation infrastructure, enhancing community access to essential WASH services.

The increased CDF allocation for WASH infrastructure demonstrates an effort to boost WASH services. However, there may be a need for further alignment to ensure equitable distribution of funds across various WASH needs, particularly for underserved areas"

Official from Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Stakeholders identified budget constraints as a persistent barrier to WASH progress in the 8NDP. While recent increases in budget allocations—particularly through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)—were acknowledged as positive steps toward meeting WASH needs, stakeholders also noted that financial resources remain insufficient relative to the sector's ambitions.

Some viewed the increased allocations as a demonstration of political commitment, specifically targeting rural sanitation infrastructure, while others expressed concerns over the dependency on external funding, which can hinder long-term sustainability. The consensus was that while budget allocations have improved, further investment is essential for WASH to reach all intended beneficiaries effectively.

Cooperating Partner's Contribution

All stakeholders underscored the importance of partnerships with international and local cooperating partners. These collaborations have been instrumental in bridging resource and

capacity gaps at various implementation levels. Stakeholders noted that the involvement of partners has been especially beneficial in enhancing local authority capacities and extending WASH services to underserved communities.

Role of NGOs: It was also observed that most of the infrastructure gaps were being filled by NGOs such as World Vision, Norwegian Church Aid, Water Aid Zambia and Care International. However, even these had limited areas where they were installed depending on their project scope. Some community members from neighbouring wards where there were no NGO interventions had negative sentiments on the results of these WASH interventions. They felt discriminated and left out.

However, some stakeholders raised concerns about fragmented coordination efforts between government and cooperating partners and CSOs, which they believe weaken the effectiveness of partnerships. Regular and coordinated engagements between government bodies and partners were suggested as essential to maximize resource mobilisation and ensure cohesive WASH programme implementation across all regions.

Increased investment in WASH could greatly enhance resilience against water insecurity and disease outbreaks, especially as these challenges become more pressing. Without focused investment, Zambia risks falling short of its national development goals and may struggle to adequately prepare for both immediate and long-term water-related crises.

BOX 3: SAFEGUARDING THE CDF AS A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR IMPROVING WASH SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2022

The FY 2022 CDF Audit Report by the Office of the Auditor General highlights significant inefficiencies in water and sanitation (WASH) projects, amidst limited funding availability from central government. Key findings include:

1. **Incomplete Boreholes and Installations:** Many borehole drilling and water supply projects were left unfinished. For example, 13 boreholes were drilled, but two were found dry and simply buried without replacements, leaving targeted communities underserved.
2. **Missing Documentation:** Numerous projects lacked essential documentation, such as delivery notes and performance bonds. In some cases, borehole parts were procured without receipts, raising concerns over fund utilisation. Advance payments were made without bank guarantees, increasing financial risk and violating contractual requirements.
3. **Delays and Site Abandonment:** Contractors frequently delayed or abandoned projects, causing substantial backlogs. For instance, delays in installing pipes extended project completion by up to 36 weeks, slowing access to essential services.
4. **Questionable Financial Practices:** Overpayments and advance payments without performance bonds were noted, indicating poor financial control. Such mismanagement drains limited WASH resources, reducing available funds for other critical projects.
5. **Non-Functional Installations and Poor Quality:** Several completed projects were non-functional or poorly executed. A water reticulation project in Katombola Constituency, for example, had kiosks and tap stands without running water, representing wasted investments and unfulfilled service expectations.

Conclusion and Impact

These issues highlight critical inefficiencies, impacting public access to clean water and sanitation services. Consequences include:

- **Reduced Effectiveness:** Incomplete and non-functional projects fail to provide essential services, especially in underserved areas, affecting public health.
- **Resource Drain:** Overpayments and delays misallocate funds, limiting government capacity to expand WASH services effectively.
- **Accountability Erosion:** Poor documentation and transparency reduce public trust in government fund management.

Addressing these gaps requires stricter contract enforcement, regular audits, and improved monitoring to ensure WASH funds deliver tangible results in vulnerable communities.

Cross-Cutting Issues: Gender and Disability

Inclusion of Gender Equality WASH Services

Gender Sensitive Facilities

The survey data suggests that while some sanitation facilities are being constructed with attention to privacy and safety, many existing facilities remain inadequate for women and girls. Most toilets at household level are rudimentary, often lacking essential elements like running water and privacy features. These facilities are typically constructed with basic materials, such as thatched grass or sacks, which are not durable and pose safety risks, especially during adverse weather conditions. There is a lack of provision for menstrual health needs, such as disposal bins and water access, exacerbating the challenges for women and girls in maintaining hygiene.

Limited accessibility to gender-sensitive facilities in schools, health centres, and households continues to compromise privacy, with some facilities requiring women to wait until dark for bathing due to privacy concerns.

Women's Participation in WASH Decision Making at Local Level

Regarding women's involvement in WASH programmes, the community members from 2 districts reported that this was happening to larger extent and 4 districts also reported that participation taking place, to a lesser extent. The review found that women were actively participating in community-level WASH committees and decision-making processes, often as caregivers or community champions. In certain committees, such as V-WASH, there is a mandated 50% female representation, acknowledging that WASH issues disproportionately affect women.

However, traditional norms and limited empowerment still restrict women's voices in some areas, particularly in rural communities where cultural barriers persist. Although progress has been made, there is a need for more structured gender inclusion policies in WASH to ensure that women's needs and perspectives are adequately addressed across all community development initiatives.

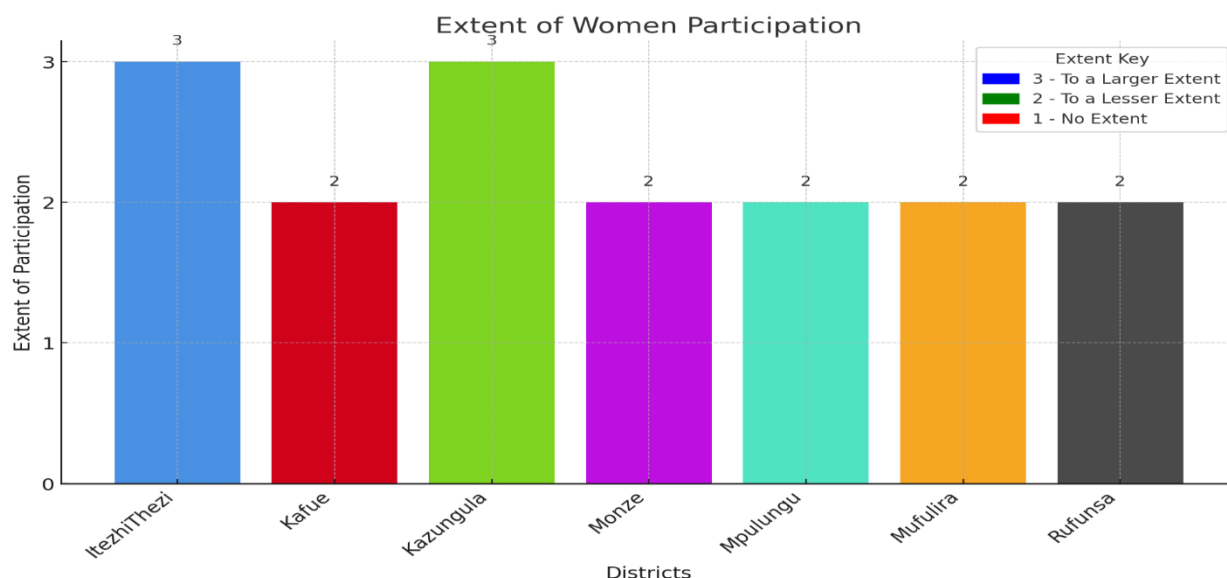


Figure 17 Community rating on women's participation in WASH structures

Disability Inclusion

'I have to ask my grandchild or pay someone a K5 to draw 20 litres of water for me which I will use for 3 to 5 days until I find another K5'

PWD FGD Participant in Rufunsa

Stakeholder Perspectives on Gender and Disability Inclusion in WASH

Gender and disability inclusion were acknowledged as priorities in recent WASH planning efforts. Stakeholders acknowledged the integration of gender-sensitive and disability-accessible design elements into WASH facilities, ensuring equitable access. The 2023 National Gender Policy was noted as a progressive step toward inclusivity as it has a specific policy objective on WASH inclusion.

In terms of Disability Inclusion in WASH Infrastructure, it was recognised that new CDF projects were responsive to this need by ensuring that all WASH Infrastructure for example have adequate provisions for them to be accessed by persons with disabilities.

However, on social inclusion, some stakeholders expressed concerns about the uneven allocation of resources between urban and rural areas, with vulnerable populations in rural regions sometimes lacking sufficient support. They cited the Budget allocations and how most of the resources are concentrated in the urban areas, where the service gap is not as wide as the rural areas.

Continued focus on inclusivity, with regular assessments to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, was recommended to address these disparities and improve equity in WASH service deliver

WASH Coordination in Humanitarian Situations

Stakeholders commended the effectiveness of inter-sectoral coordination during recent humanitarian situations, such as the 2023 cholera outbreak and the 2024 drought.

" During the 2023/2024 cholera outbreak and the 2024 drought, coordination between sectors, facilitated by the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), was deemed highly effective. The active engagement of key sectors ensured that resources were efficiently mobilized to address these crises.

The efficient coordination during humanitarian crises highlights the responsiveness of the WASH sector and its capacity to adapt to emergent needs. This adaptability is crucial in mitigating health risks associated with waterborne diseases during crises.."

Government Official at National Level

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The quick mobilization of resources through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) was highlighted as a positive example of crisis coordination.

"Since I started working here in 2023, the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) have been involved in water supply projects. This includes drilling boreholes (both solar-powered and standard) in areas that need them. DDMC members are also part of the DDCC, which is a larger development group handling projects like building dams, creating water reservoirs, and protecting wetlands.

Although I can't pinpoint all exact locations, I know that our work to protect wetlands focuses on areas along the Kafue River. Training is provided to prevent damage to these areas and to ensure the water stays clean for communities that rely on it for drinking. While I'm not entirely sure about the full training content, it's essential that people learn how to take care of water sources like the wetlands and the Kafue River to reduce problems caused by issues like the drought we're currently experiencing in the district."

Member of the Kafue District Disaster Management Committee

Despite the successful coordination of the WASH cholera response and ongoing drought response, stakeholders urged the adoption of a more proactive WASH resilience strategy to manage recurring climate-related challenges. Moving from reactive crisis management to proactive resilience planning would better safeguard WASH infrastructure and reduce vulnerabilities to climate-induced risks.

WASH DROUGHT RESPONSE COORDINATION

The Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation's 2024 drought response focuses heavily on Water Supply and Sanitation, requiring **2.11 billion ZMW** to address critical needs. Key planned activities include:

1. Rehabilitation of 500 boreholes to mechanized solar-powered systems, partially funded with **114.89 million ZMW**, leaving a **135 million ZMW** gap.
2. Construction of 1,500 piped water schemes with solar systems, completely unfunded and requiring **1.125 billion ZMW**.
3. 110 new commercial boreholes and public sanitation facilities in 250 institutions, also unfunded and needing **165 million ZMW** and **500 million ZMW**, respectively.
4. Non-revenue water reduction, water treatment chemicals, and standby water pumps, all currently unfunded.

Only **114.89 million ZMW** has been secured, leaving a **1.998 billion ZMW** gap. Additional support is urgently needed to meet the water and sanitation needs of drought-affected communities, ensuring both immediate relief and resilience.

MINISTRY OF WATER DEVELOPMENT AND SANITATION, APRIL, 2024

SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES FOR WASH INTERVENTIONS

Sustainability at Community Level

According to community feedback, sustainability in WASH programmes is significantly influenced by the degree of community engagement and empowerment throughout the project lifecycle. Communities that were involved in decision-making, planning, and monitoring of WASH interventions reported higher levels of satisfaction and ownership, which directly correlated with the longevity of the infrastructure and services.

Community members highlighted that their involvement not only helped in adapting the solutions to fit local preferences but also motivated them to take responsibility for the maintenance of the facilities. Such ownership ensured that WASH facilities continued to function effectively beyond the initial project period.

Community feedback also emphasised the importance of developing locally managed financing mechanisms for sustainability. For instance, the introduction of user fees for water points or the establishment of community savings groups were seen as effective strategies to ensure that there were funds available for repair and maintenance.

Additionally, community members noted that frequent training and refresher sessions, aimed at building technical skills for local WASH committees, were essential for tackling minor repairs and ensuring continuous functionality of services. The table below shows a summary of some of the sustainability strategies that are being adopted at the community level:

Sustainability Strategies at the Community-Level for WASH Services

Sustainability Strategy	Key Findings
Community Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities demonstrate significant engagement in the planning, budgeting, and implementation phases of WASH programs, fostering a sense of responsibility and accountability. Local WASH Committees, including Village-WASH (V-WASH), Area Pump Minders (APMs), and District-WASH (D-WASH), are actively involved in overseeing maintenance and managing WASH-related projects. Financial contributions are made by community members, who also participate in operational oversight, enhancing the community's investment in these services.
Financial Contributions (Community Ownership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In certain districts, such as Kafue, communities pay a specified fee (e.g., 1,500 ZMW for water pumps), which strengthens ownership and accountability for WASH facilities. In Mpulungu, local funds are consolidated to cover ongoing maintenance needs, further supporting the community's role in the sustainability of WASH services.
Community-Driven Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WASH projects are demand-driven, with design and implementation shaped by direct community input. Budgetary activities are structured to include community engagement, allowing communities to identify and prioritize needs for water points or boreholes. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes incorporate community feedback, ensuring alignment with local needs and priorities.
Training for Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programs focus on capacity building for community members in areas such as facility maintenance, with entities like the V-WASH committees and Area Pump Minders providing necessary skills. Asset management training for V-WASH committees promotes effective handling of both facilities and funds, which is essential for the sustainability of WASH services.

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Support Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trained volunteers, including Area Pump Minders, play a crucial role in handling repairs, maintenance, and monitoring of water systems, ensuring that issues are addressed promptly.• The Sustainable Operation and Maintenance Program (SOMAP) supports this by providing accessible spare parts for hand pumps, facilitating continuous maintenance and extending the lifespan of WASH infrastructure.
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Service Feedback Mechanisms

The review found that there are several feedback mechanisms available for reporting WASH-related issues, but their effectiveness is limited. Various channels such as SWASCO, area councilors, Ward Development Committees (WDCs), area pump minders, radio programmes, and suggestion boxes are commonly used to voice concerns.

In some areas, additional platforms like Annual General Meetings (AGMs), zonal meetings, and WhatsApp groups are also utilised.

However, the review found that despite the availability of these channels, there is often a lack of response or follow-up from authorities, leading to a disconnect between reporting problems and achieving actual solutions.

Many community members feel discouraged, believing that their efforts to report issues lead to fewer meaningful changes. This lack of responsiveness undermines trust in the system and results in fewer people using the mechanisms.

Challenges such as limited awareness of available feedback options and literacy barriers, and addressing these challenges is crucial for improving community engagement and ensuring that WASH services meet the needs of the population.

Other Challenges to Community-Sustainability of WASH Services

The implementation of sustainability measures in community-level WASH services faces significant challenges, particularly in terms of budgeting and logistical limitations. Budget constraints in some districts restrict the involvement of Ward Development Committees (WDCs), limiting their ability to contribute effectively to decision-making and oversight of WASH activities. This constraint undermines a critical aspect of community engagement, as WDCs play a pivotal role in representing local needs and ensuring that community priorities are addressed.

Additionally, logistical issues encountered by WASH coordinators impede the consistent monitoring and support needed for sustainable WASH service delivery. These logistical challenges, which may include limited transportation, inadequate staffing, and insufficient resources, disrupt the maintenance and oversight of water systems, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of sustainability measures.

Addressing these financial and logistical constraints is crucial to strengthening the long-term resilience and functionality of WASH services at the community level.

Stakeholder's Perspective on Sustainability of WASH Interventions

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Sustainability emerged as a central theme, with stakeholders pointing to various strategies aimed at ensuring the durability of WASH interventions. Community ownership and involvement, especially in rural areas, were cited as effective approaches to enhance sustainability. Local authorities have made strides in building specialised teams (engineers, planners, health inspectors) to support WASH efforts at the district level.

However, stakeholders also observed that WASH achievements in the 8NDP are susceptible to being eroded due to several factors, including natural hazards and lack of maintenance and robust monitoring.

The stakeholders also cautioned that the lack of comprehensive maintenance plans and

‘Because we have so many chiefdoms even districts declared ODF but then you go back there two or three years later, and that situation is not true anymore. Yes. So that serious sustainability problem’

Member of the 8NDP Cooperating Partners Group

implementation poses a risk to infrastructure longevity. Some suggested that future WASH interventions should be more integrated into the national financial structure, reducing dependency on external funding and ensuring long-term project viability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the challenges and gaps identified in the draft shadow report for Zambia's 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), here are detailed recommendations for adoption by the Zambian government. These recommendations address structural, operational, and policy enhancements to support the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the WASH sector in Zambia.

1. Strengthen Funding and Budget Allocation Mechanisms

The shadow report highlighted significant funding shortfalls, with actual releases averaging only 20% of allocated funds and a decline in WASH allocations as a percentage of the national budget.

- Recommendation: Increase the WASH budget allocation to meet Zambia's commitments under the Ngor Declaration and SDG 6, setting a target of at least 0.5% of GDP. Regularly review allocations and align them with annual needs to prevent funding gaps that disrupt programme implementation.
- Recommendation: Establish a dedicated WASH fund within the national budget that is protected from reallocation, ensuring stable funding for critical infrastructure projects in underserved regions, particularly rural areas.

2. Enhance Data Collection and Monitoring Systems

There were inconsistencies in data reporting across years, with a notable decline in reporting by mid-2024, indicating issues with tracking and monitoring.

- Recommendation: Develop a robust Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework with real-time data tracking capabilities for WASH outcomes, accessible at national and district levels. This framework should standardize data collection methods to improve consistency across all districts.
- Recommendation: Integrate digital tools for real-time reporting to increase transparency and responsiveness. Engage local committees in data collection efforts by providing training on monitoring practices and data reliability.

3. Improve Rural Access to Water and Sanitation

Significant gaps persist in rural water access, with limited infrastructure maintenance and boreholes often shared with livestock, which increases contamination risks.

- Recommendation: Prioritize borehole construction and rehabilitation projects in rural areas, targeting underserved districts with limited infrastructure. A specific target for annual borehole construction should be established, focusing on both quantity and quality.
- Recommendation: Introduce community-managed water points with maintenance training and regular inspections to prevent contamination from livestock. Support communities with user-friendly tools and resources to manage water quality testing independently.

4. Address Sanitation and Waste Management Shortfalls

There are critical delays in wastewater treatment and low solid waste collection rates, particularly in urban areas, which impact sanitation progress.

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- Recommendation: Increase investment in waste treatment plants and expand the sewer network in urban areas. Focus on constructing modular, decentralized waste treatment facilities for quick deployment in high-need districts.
- Recommendation: Strengthen community engagement in solid waste management programmes. This includes promoting recycling initiatives at the community level and providing accessible waste collection points, especially in high-density urban areas.

5. Advance Climate Resilience in WASH Infrastructure

The reactive nature of WASH sector responses to droughts and cholera outbreaks highlights the need for a proactive approach to climate resilience.

- Recommendation: Develop and implement a climate resilience strategy for the WASH sector, with specific measures for drought mitigation and infrastructure protection against extreme weather. This strategy should integrate water conservation practices, rainwater harvesting systems, and flood-resilient infrastructure in high-risk areas.
- Recommendation: Collaborate with the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) to create a proactive emergency response plan, ensuring that WASH services are resilient to climate-related shocks and are available during crises.

6. Strengthen Community Ownership and Local Governance

The report noted that local committees play a crucial role but face logistical and capacity constraints that limit their effectiveness.

- Recommendation: Strengthen the capacity of District Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education Committees (D-WASHE) through ongoing training, funding for logistical support, and regular monitoring to ensure active participation across all districts.
- Recommendation: Implement community-driven WASH projects that involve local leaders in decision-making. Establish a transparent mechanism where community members can report issues and track project progress to improve accountability and increase community investment in maintaining facilities.

7. Integrate Gender and Disability-Inclusive WASH Services

The report highlighted that WASH services often lack accessibility for women and persons with disabilities.

- Recommendation: Adopt a gender and disability mainstreaming strategy within WASH programmes, ensuring that all new sanitation facilities and water access points are accessible to persons with disabilities. Regularly audit facilities to verify compliance with accessibility standards.
- Recommendation: Increase PWDs, women and youth representation in local WASH committees to ensure gender-sensitive planning. Launch awareness campaigns focused on inclusive WASH services to reduce stigma and encourage community-wide support.

8. Improve Coordination and Communication Among WASH Stakeholders

Irregular meetings and communication barriers among stakeholders at national and district levels hinder coordination and timely decision-making.

- Recommendation: Schedule regular Cluster Advisory Group and National Development Coordinating Committee meetings with fixed dates and avoid last-minute changes to improve consistency and participation. Digital platforms for virtual participation should be institutionalized to reduce logistical delays.
- Recommendation: Establish an effective centralised digital platform accessible to all WASH stakeholders to share updates, best practices, and ongoing project status. This platform can serve as a resource hub and communication channel, promoting transparency and better coordination.

9. Secure Political Commitment for Evidence-Based Policy

Political interference, especially in tariff setting, affects the sustainability of Commercial Utilities (CUs), limiting their financial viability.

- Recommendation: Institutionalize evidence-based decision-making in setting water tariffs by empowering the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA) and Commercial Utilities (CUs) with independent tariff-setting authority. This should be accompanied by policies that shield CUs from political influence, ensuring tariffs are based on operational costs and sustainability.

Conclusion

The mid-term review of Zambia's 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) reveals a sector marked by substantial achievements yet hindered by critical challenges that threaten the realisation of national and international WASH commitments. Despite notable progress in expanding urban water access and sanitation infrastructure, a persistent urban-rural divide remains, with rural areas facing disproportionately limited access to safe water and sanitation facilities. The recurring issues of inadequate budget allocations, inconsistent data monitoring, and delays in reporting underscore systemic barriers that constrain programme implementation and diminish accountability.

The data triangulated from district and community-level assessments reveals a critical need for stronger coordination, both vertically and horizontally, within WASH governance. District Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education Committees (D-WASHE) demonstrate potential as catalysts for local WASH initiatives, yet their limited resources and capacity gaps diminish their ability to sustain improvements. Similarly, inconsistent engagement and frequent rescheduling of national Cluster Advisory Group (CAG) and National Development Coordinating Committee (NDCC) meetings highlight inefficiencies in central oversight and coordination, impacting timely decision-making and effective resource allocation across regions.

Zambia's reliance on external funding and grants for major WASH initiatives, compounded by insufficient domestic financing, creates a precarious situation where the sector's sustainability is at risk. Without increased, reliable budgetary support, infrastructure projects—especially those critical for underserved rural areas—are likely to fall short of their 2026 targets. Furthermore, the reactive approach to climate-related crises such as droughts and cholera outbreaks demonstrates

the urgent need for a proactive climate resilience strategy within the WASH sector. A shift from crisis response to resilience-building, particularly through investments in drought-resistant infrastructure and water conservation, will be essential in safeguarding the sector's progress against future climate shocks.

Achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, as outlined in the Ngor Declaration, presents an opportunity for transformative impact on public health; however, this requires comprehensive behaviour change campaigns, reinforced monitoring, and sustained community engagement. While Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiatives have achieved incremental success, gaps in inclusive sanitation access and facility maintenance indicate a need for a more structured and community-owned approach to sustaining ODF achievements.

In light of these findings, it is imperative that the Zambian Government commit to strategic reforms that address these critical gaps. By bolstering funding, strengthening data and monitoring frameworks, enhancing rural infrastructure, and building climate resilience, Zambia can progress towards equitable WASH outcomes that honour its Vision 2030 and SDG commitments. The time to act decisively is now, ensuring that all Zambians benefit from safe water, improved sanitation, and a healthier environment, ultimately fostering a foundation for sustainable development and resilience in the years to come.

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Appendices

- **Interview guides and tools:** 8NDP WASH Success Stories, data collection instruments, and additional resources.