



Performance of WASH in the 8th National Development Plan

A Mid-Term Shadow Review



Executive Summary

The CSOs Shadow Review evaluated the performance of the Improving Water Sanitation and Supply Development Outcome under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) between 2022 to mid-2024. The findings from report reviews and interviews with policymakers, CSOs, Cooperating Partners, and community members offer actionable insights and recommendations for stakeholders to accelerate WASH outcomes in the next NDP and with Zambia's Vision 2030.

Overall Recommendation

The government should prioritise increased and sustained public financing for climate resilient Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and strengthening of data management systems to improve transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making within the WASH sector.

Key Findings

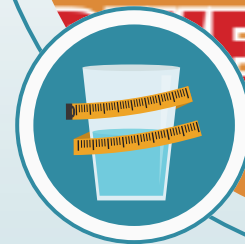
Of the 24 total WASH indicators, 12 are on track (annual average achievement rates of 85-100%). These include borehole rehabilitation (104%) and household sewer connections (284%).

8 indicators, including borehole construction (57.6%) and piped water scheme rehabilitation (0%), have not achieved at least 50% of their 2026 targets.

WASH allocations averaged 1.3% of the national budget, below the 2026 target of 5% and the Ngor Declaration benchmark of 0.5% of GDP. On average, less than 40% of the approved WASH Budget was released annually between 2022 and mid-2024

Are we on Track?

**EIGHTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2022-2027**



At the midpoint of the 8NDP (2022 to mid-2024), the average annual achievement of WASH targets shows mixed results (Figure 1). Twelve milestones, including borehole rehabilitation (104.1%) and household connections (202.1%), were on track. Four milestones, like institutional sanitation facilities (78.5%), were partially on track, while eight, including borehole construction (57.6%) and capacity strategy development (0%), were off track, requiring urgent attention to address delays.

Figure 1: WASH Average output performance for 2022, 2023 and 2024 (June); Source; Rating scale adapted from 7NDP MTR

	% Performance of Annual Output Targets Average for 2022, 2023, and 2024 (June)		
	ON TRACK (85-100%)	PARTIALLY ON TRACK (65-84%)	OFF TRACK (64% AND BELOW)
IMPROVE ACCESS TO CLEAN AND SAFE WATER SUPPLY MILESTONES	1. Borehole Rehabilitation 2. Maintenance Ratio 3. Metering Ratio 4. Water Supply Network Expansion 5. Household Connections 6. Boreholes in Resettlement Schemes 7. Compliance with Water Standards	1. Piped Water Scheme construction	1. Borehole Construction 2. Piped Water Scheme Rehabilitation 3. SOMAP Shops 4. Hours of Water Supply 5. Boreholes Outside Resettlement 6. Capacity Development Strategy 7. National Water Programme Review
IMPROVE SANITATION SERVICES MILESTONES	1. Wastewater Treatment Plant Construction 2. Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation 3. Sewer Network Expansion 4. Household Sewer Connections 5. Sanitation & Hygiene Promotion	1. Institutional Sanitation Facilities 2. Solid Waste Recycling 3. Villages Achieving ODF Status	1. Household Waste Collection and Disposal
TOTAL	12	4	8

How far from 2026?

Annual Performance Status

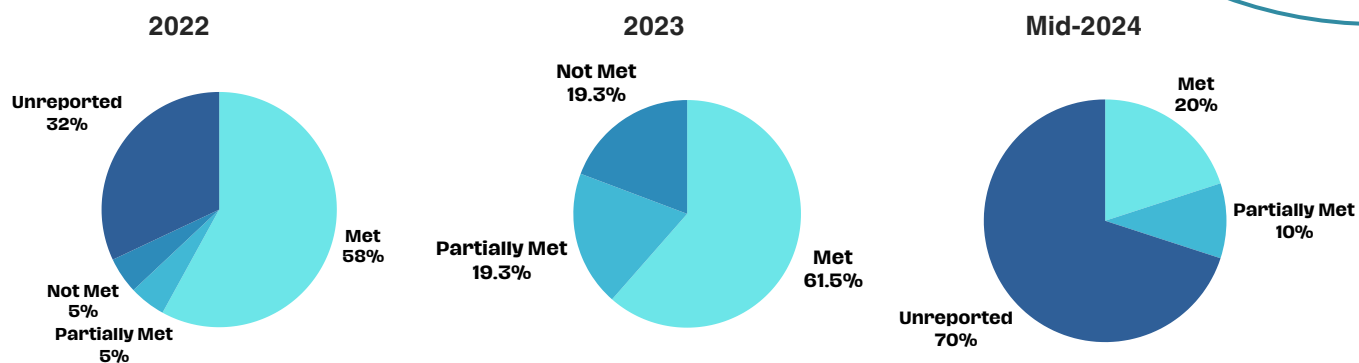


Figure 2: Percentage of WASH milestones achieved from 2022 to mid-2024

The performance of WASH targets under the 8NDP shows that 58% of indicators were met in 2022, 67% in 2023, and only 20% by mid-2024, with the remaining percentages—**42%, 33%, and 80%, respectively—reflecting partially met, unmet, or unreported targets (Figure 2). The high and growing proportion of unreported targets, especially 70% by mid-2024, raises serious concerns about accountability and effective monitoring.

Access to Water progress towards 2026

Comprehensive Midterm Performance of Water Access Indicators (2022 - Mid-2024)

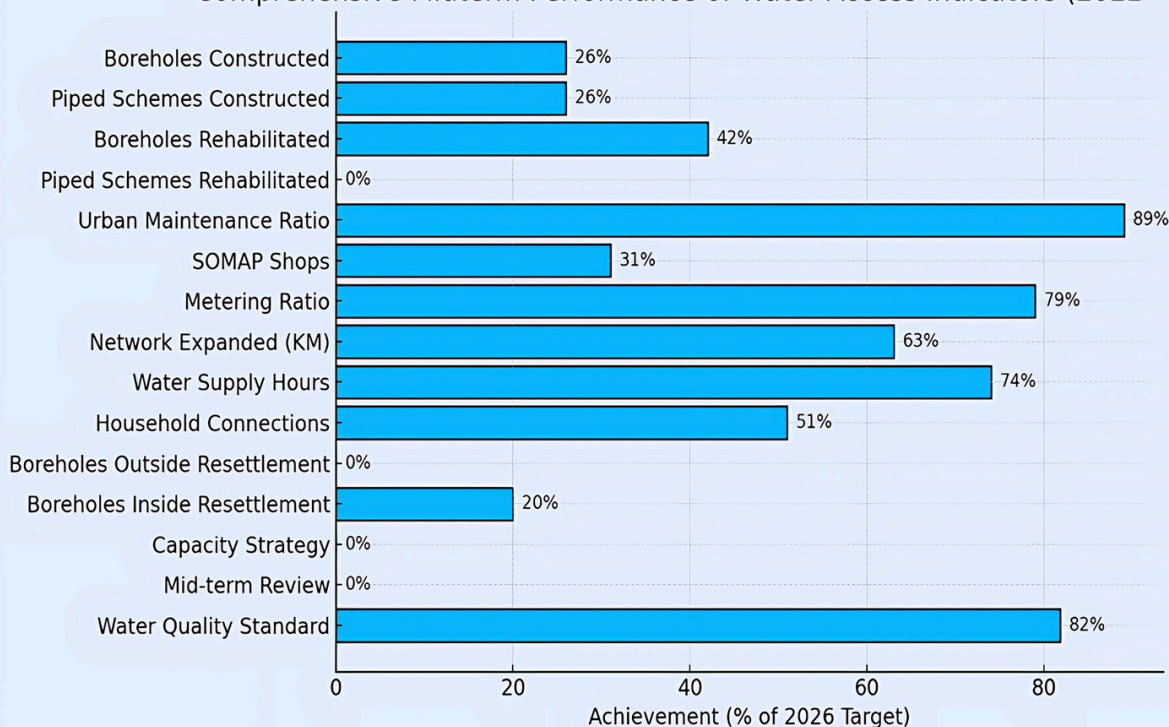


Figure 3: 2026 milestones for improved access to clean drinking water by mid-2024; Source: Author's construction from APRs.



How far from 2026?

According to Figure 3, at the midpoint to 2026, notable progress has been made, with 89% of the urban maintenance ratio target, 79% of the metering ratio target, and 82% of the water quality standards target already achieved. However, significant gaps remain, as 0% of the targets for piped water scheme rehabilitation, boreholes outside resettlement schemes, and capacity strategy development have been achieved. Borehole construction and piped schemes are only at 26% of their targets, while SOMAP shop equipping is at 31%. Moderate progress has been made in achieving 74% of the target for water supply hours and 63% for network expansion. Closing these gaps is essential to meeting the 2026 WASH milestones.

Sanitation progress towards 2026

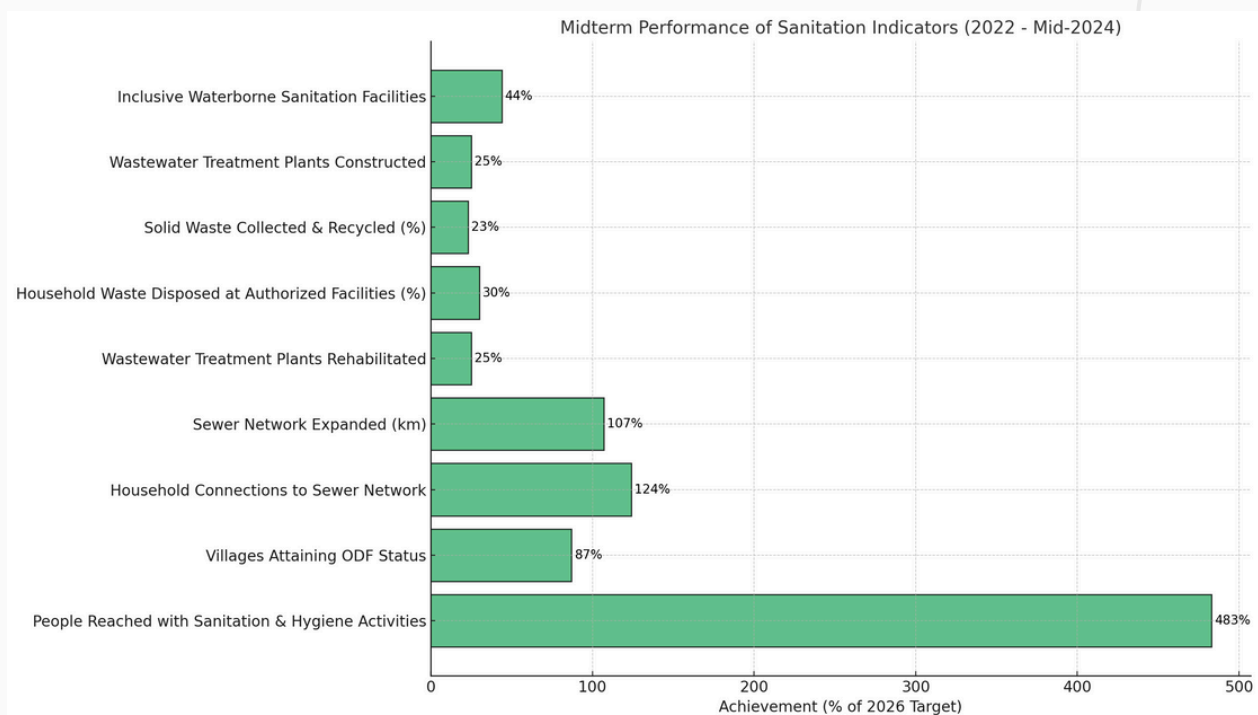
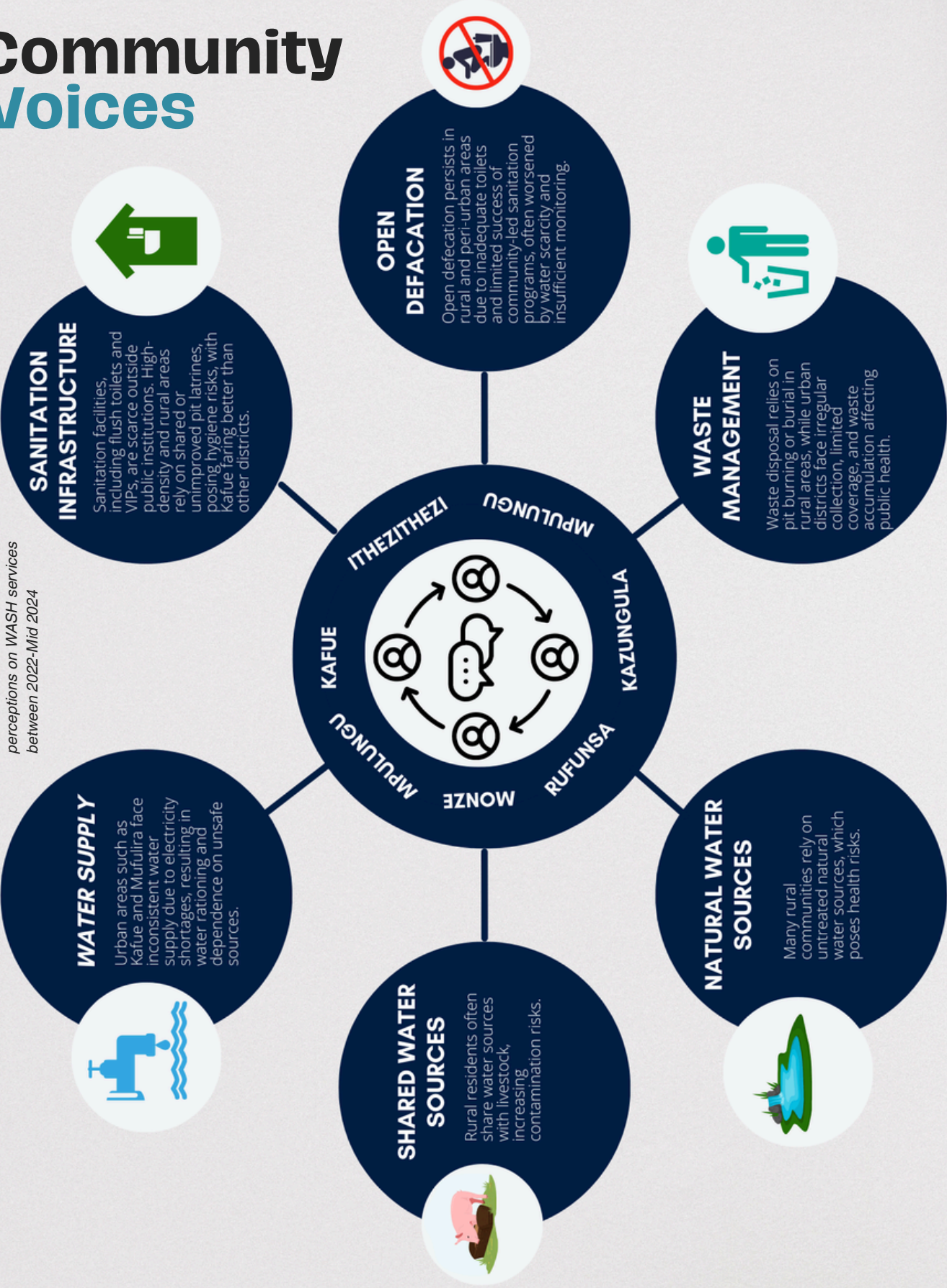


Figure 4: 2026 Milestones for improved sanitation access by mid-2024; Source: Author's construction from APRs.

Sanitation milestones such as sewer network expansion (107%) and household sewer connections (124%) are well ahead of schedule, underscoring strong infrastructure development efforts as shown in Figure 4. 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 targets by 2026.

Community Voices

Figure 5: Community perceptions on WASH services between 2022-Mid 2024



Accroding to community members who participated in the assessment, Midterm findings show significant challenges in water and sanitation services under the 8th NDP. Communities face limited access to clean water, inadequate sanitation infrastructure, and poor hygiene practices, with rural areas being most affected. While some progress has been made through borehole installations, sustainability issues and insufficient behavioral change hinder long-term improvements.

Is the Budget on Track?

The 2024 WASH Budget allocation declined from K2.5 billion in 2022 to K2.4 billion in 2024 in nominal terms as seen in Figure 6. As a share of the total budget, WASH allocations have remained relatively stagnant at around 1.3%, reflecting a lack of prioritisation or commitment.

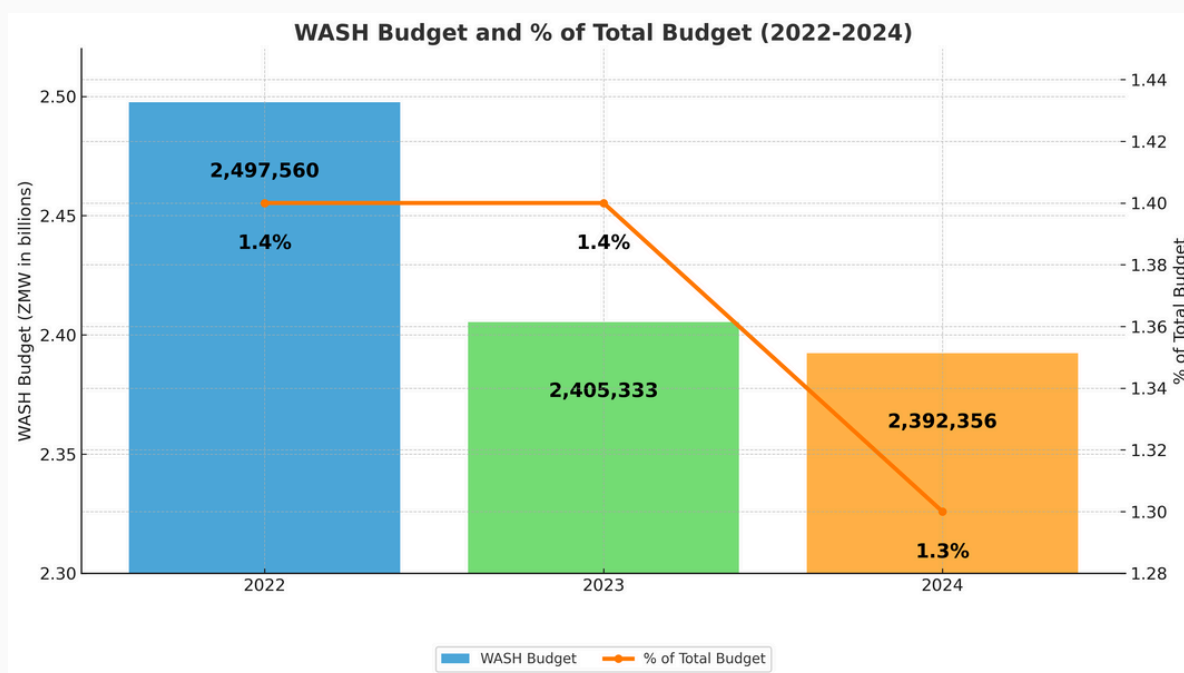


Figure 6: WASH Budget allocations and % of the National Budget; Source: Author's construction from Budget Speeches

WASH vs. Social Sector Budget Allocations

Sector	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)
Health	11.5	10.4	11.8
Education	10.4	13.9	15.4
Social Protection	3.6	4.9	5.4
WASH	1.4	1.4	1.3

Table 1: Budget allocations to social sectors between 2022 and 2024

Comparing WASH budget allocations with other social sectors reveals a concerning trend. Between 2022 and 2024, while Health, Education, and Social Protection budgets increased, WASH allocations declined (Table 1). For example, Social Protection rose from 3.6% in 2022 to 5.4% in 2024, **whereas WASH decreased from 1.4% to 1.3% in nominal terms.**

Is the Budget on Track?

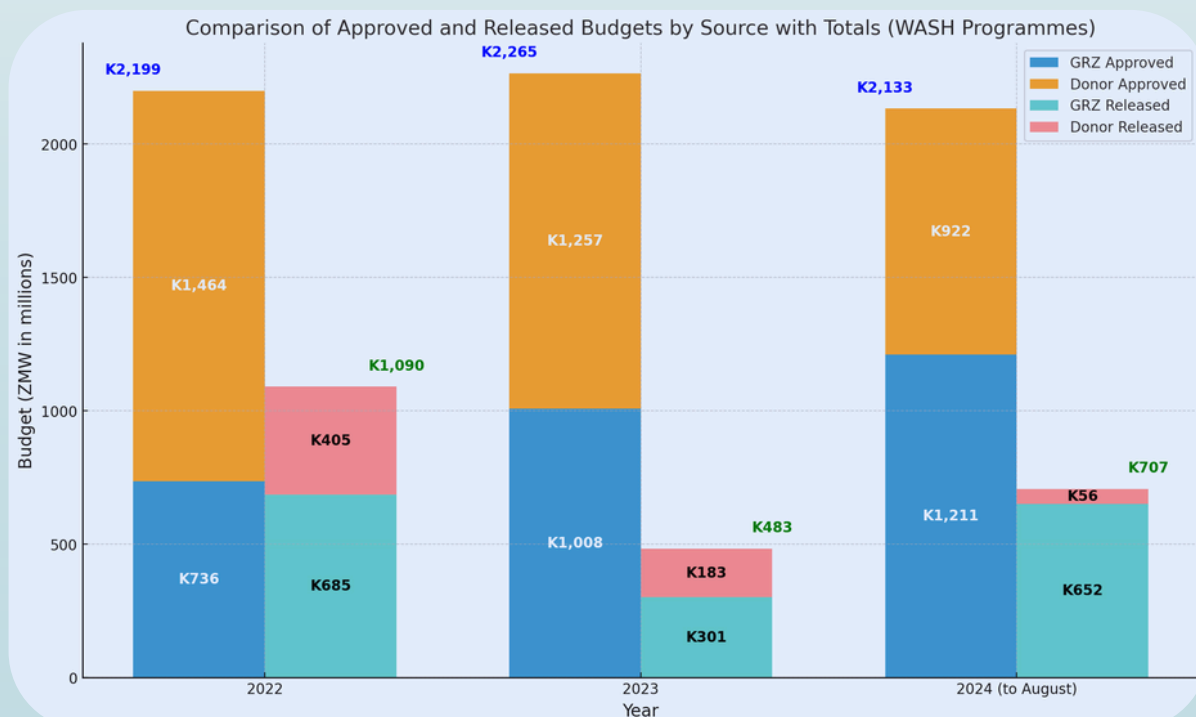


Figure 7: GRZ and donor WASH budget allocation (approved) vs released; Source: NAZ 2025 Budget Committee Report

As shown in Figure 7, the budget performance of WASH programs under the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation from 2022 to mid-2024 highlights severe funding gaps, particularly with donor contributions. In 2022, the government utilised 93% of its K735.8 million budget, while donor funding was only 28% of the K1.46 billion allocated, leading to a consolidated performance of 49.6%. By 2023, overall performance plummeted to 22.5%, with government releases at 30% of K1 billion and donor disbursements at just 15%. Mid-2024 showed some recovery in government funding at 84% of K1.21 billion due to drought responses, but donor disbursement reduced to 6% of allocation, resulting in a consolidated performance of 31%.

Constituency Development Fund and Improved WASH Services?

According to government officials, approximately 60% of CDF funding for WASH has focused on rural sanitation, improving access to essential services. While increased allocations are a positive step toward meeting WASH needs, stakeholders also note that funding remains insufficient for the sector's goals. However, mismanagement of the program, **which has also been flagged in audit queries, has led to delays, poor-quality work, and stalled projects, undermining the impact of these investments.**

Did Debt affect WASH?



Debt Service

Debt service constituted 40.2%, 40.6%, and 39.2% of the total budget in 2022, 2023, and 2024, showing minor fluctuations. Meanwhile, WASH allocations remained low and stable year-over-year, indicating it is less affected by changes in debt servicing compared to other social sectors, as shown in figure 8. This suggests that WASH funding follows separate policy decisions rather than being dynamically adjusted based on debt servicing (allocation) variations.

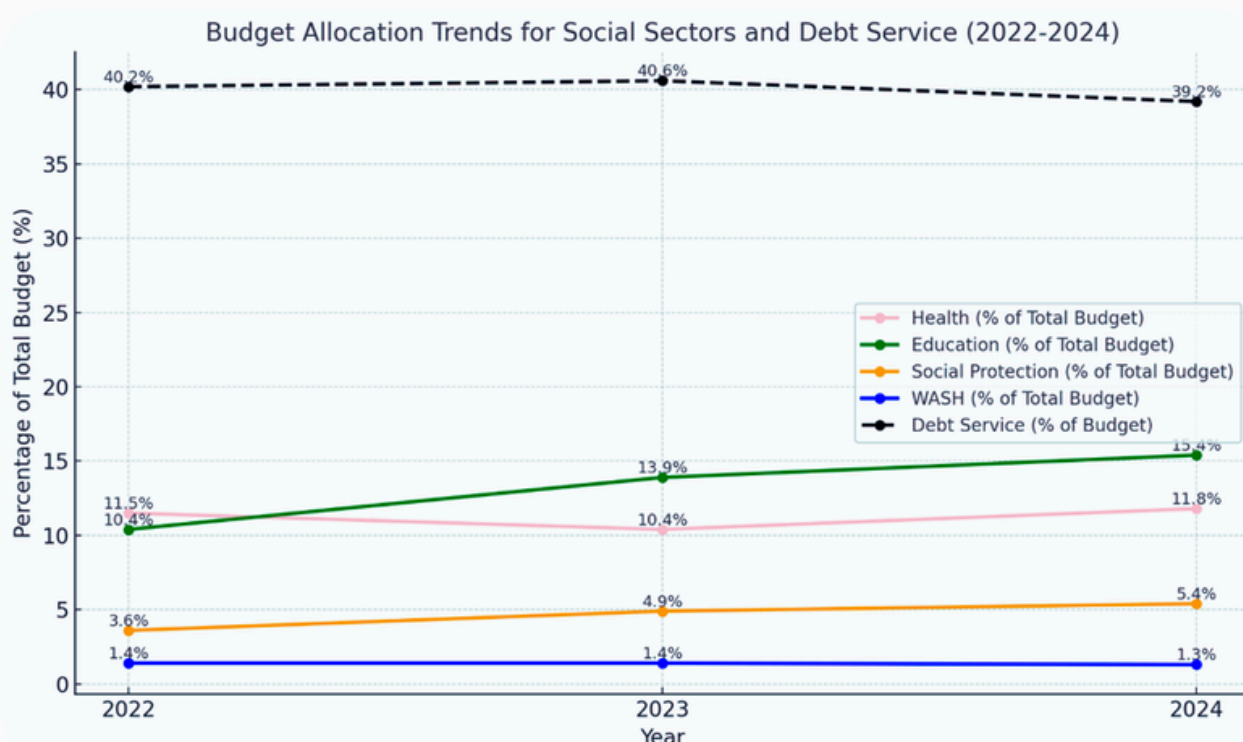


Figure 8: Debt service allocation vs. Social sector allocation % of national budget; Source author's construction from GRZ Budget Speeches

Debt Restructuring Measures

The Zambian government's debt management measures has resulted in delayed essential WASH infrastructure projects, particularly in underserved areas, due to measures like rescoping and cancelling loan-financed initiatives. Projects such as the Nkana Water and Sanitation Project have been affected, impacting 8NDP and SDG 6 targets. While the Lusaka Sanitation Programme continues with concessional loans, projects like the Integrated Small Towns Program face funding gaps. To overcome these issues, timely funding, public-private partnerships, and climate resilient designs are crucial. Despite the IMF's Extended Credit Facility prioritising social spending, the WASH sector remains excluded from this support.



Cross-cutting Issues

Climate Resilience and Humanitarian Coordination: While cholera and drought responses were effective, stakeholders emphasised a shift from reactive crisis management to proactive climate resilience planning to address water scarcity and infrastructure vulnerabilities.



Coordination: Local committees like D-WASHE improved community-level coordination, but late reporting, irregular DDCCs, PDCCs, NDCCs, and CAG meetings and resource constraints hinder consistency. Enhancing the use of digital platforms could improve communication and accountability.



Monitoring and Reporting Gaps: Reporting inconsistencies, with a drop in the reporting rate from 100% in 2023 to 30% in mid-2024, highlight the need for a robust, real-time or routine monitoring and information system to address missing data. Targets are also not aligned with the actual baseline data from the 2022 LCMS.



Inclusion: Gender and disability gaps in infrastructure persist, with limited accessibility for PWDs and cultural norms restricting women and youth in decision-making, despite improved representation.



Sustainability: Community-driven approaches, financial mechanisms, and training have improved sustainability, but resource limitations and climate risks to infrastructure remain challenges. Sanitation results such as ODF remain unsustainable.





Looking Ahead to Achieve WASH Targets in the 8NDP

● Increase Funding

Raise and ringfence WASH budget allocations to ensure stable financing, especially for rural areas and streamline WASH financing reporting for enhanced transparency

● Improve Data and Monitoring

Implement a real-time M&E system and publication of a comprehensive sector-wide WASH statistical bulletins. Implementing agencies at the local level must also align with the district implementation Plans of the 8NDP.

● Expand Rural Access

Prioritise borehole construction and community-managed water points to boost coverage in underserved areas.

● Enhance Sanitation and Waste Management

Adopt and implement a pro-active climate resilience strategy for WASH infrastructure to protect against future droughts and floods.

● Build Climate Resilience

Adopt and implement a pro-active climate resilience strategy for WASH infrastructure to protect against future droughts and floods.

● Promote Inclusive WASH Sector Governance

Strengthen local WASH committees and ensure gender and disability inclusivity in services. Community participation and awareness on water quality monitoring will be cardinal in improving perception.

● Support Evidence-Based Policies

Establish independent, evidence-based tariff setting to ensure utility sustainability.



Conclusion

At the midpoint of the 8NDP, Zambia's WASH sector shows mixed results. While 12 indicators, such as borehole rehabilitation and sewer connections, exceeded targets, eight critical areas remain off track, including piped water scheme rehabilitation and borehole construction. Insufficient budget allocations, underfunded programs, and reporting gaps undermine progress, with WASH funding averaging only 1.3% of the national budget with only 2 financial years remaining before the end of the 8NDP. Enhanced public financing, proactive climate resilience, and inclusive governance are imperative to meet Zambia's Vision 2030 and SDG 6 goals.

SUCCESS STORIES

Mpulungu's Kasakalawe Water Purification Facility

In Mpulungu, Zambia, the Kasakalawe Water Purification Facility, funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), has brought clean, safe drinking water to a community previously reliant on wells and boreholes. The facility pumps water from Lake Tanganyika, purifies it, and stores it in tanks for distribution through local kiosks, with solar power ensuring reliability. While transformative, challenges remain, as noted by caretaker Mr. Siame, who highlighted the need for broader efforts to address water access. This project has significantly improved health outcomes and quality of life, showcasing the impact of sustainable WASH initiatives.



Water Reticulation System in Mufulira District

The installation of a solar-powered reticulation water system in Mukambo Ward, Kantashi Constituency, has drastically improved access to clean water for residents, reducing the burden of long treks to distant, unsafe sources as shown in the before picture. Located at Lima Clinic and Lima School, the system now provides community taps within a two-kilometer radius, easing daily struggles and fostering better hygiene. Residents express gratitude for this life-changing development, though additional taps are needed to serve remote areas. The project exemplifies how community engagement and government support can address basic needs, paving the way for healthier, more productive lives.



Before



After



About Us

The NGO WASH Forum is a network of non-governmental organizations working together to advocate for improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) access and practices.

Contact us:

Building 6 Plot 377A/43C/2, Ibex Hill Road, Ibex Hill , Lusaka, Zambia

+260978590979

zambia_ngo_wash_forum@yahoo.com