



IMPACTinACTION

WASH and NTD Collaborations that Work

WASH and NTD data to improve targeting and equity of services

This case study sets out the imperative for the use of WASH and NTD data in monitoring and planning and analyses several country examples to highlight successes, challenges and further action. Jump to page 4 for an overview of lessons learned.

The role of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the control and elimination of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) has long been established in NTD strategies and guidelines. Nonetheless, the current [NTD road map](#) provided a significant milestone by embedding a specific cross-cutting target, “Universal access to at least basic water supply, sanitation and hygiene in areas endemic for neglected tropical diseases – to achieve targets 6.1 and 6.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 6” within its monitoring framework.

The accompanying [Global Strategy on WASH and NTDs 2021-2030](#) built on this imperative by including a strategic objective (SO2), urging implementers and decision makers to “use WASH data in NTD programmes and NTD data in WASH programmes to highlight inequalities, target investment, and track progress.” The Strategy encouraged endemic countries to adopt joint WASH and NTD monitoring frameworks that assist the WASH sector in achieving its goal of universal access by targeting investments to the poorest and most marginalized populations, and providing WASH information to accelerate and sustain progress made through NTD investments.

These strategic measures imply a shift from simply acknowledging the need to coordinate programme efforts, to viewing WASH as a fundamental component in achieving and

Data for decision making milestones

- **Ethiopia:** Policy change on use of NTD data for WASH prioritisation
- **Nigeria:** Development of state-level WASH NTD plans based on data
- **Kenya:** County Investment Plans include WASH and NTDs



Cross section of stakeholders at the NTD-WASH Dashboard launch event in Abuja, June 2023.

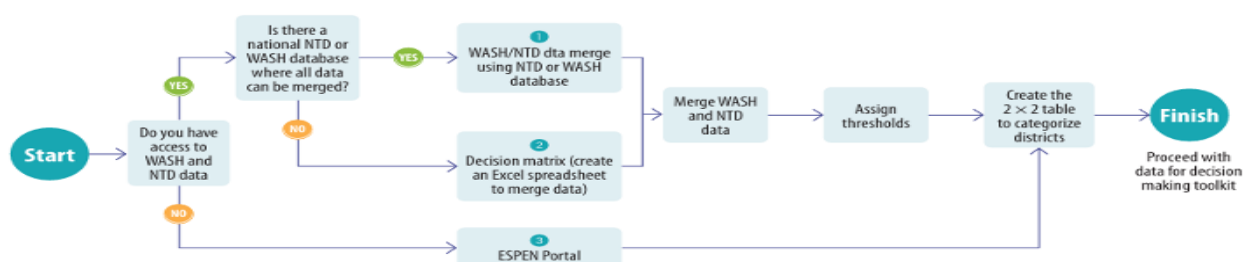
sustaining progress on NTD elimination. WASH services is below national thresholds. However, for this shift to deliver programmatic results, it requires translation into specific measures at the national level.

From strategy to action

The [WASH and NTDs](#) guide published by WHO and the NNN proposes prioritizing and targeting WASH spending towards areas in which NTD endemicity is high and access to

WASH services is below national thresholds. As demonstrated by the decision tree below, the approach is pragmatic; in some countries, where national databases were lacking, a one-off data collection process in support of a joint WASH and NTD planning processes was most feasible. This then led to advocating for the integration of available WASH data from multiple sources into specific NTD data platforms.

Fig. 3. Choosing the approach to obtaining data for decision-making



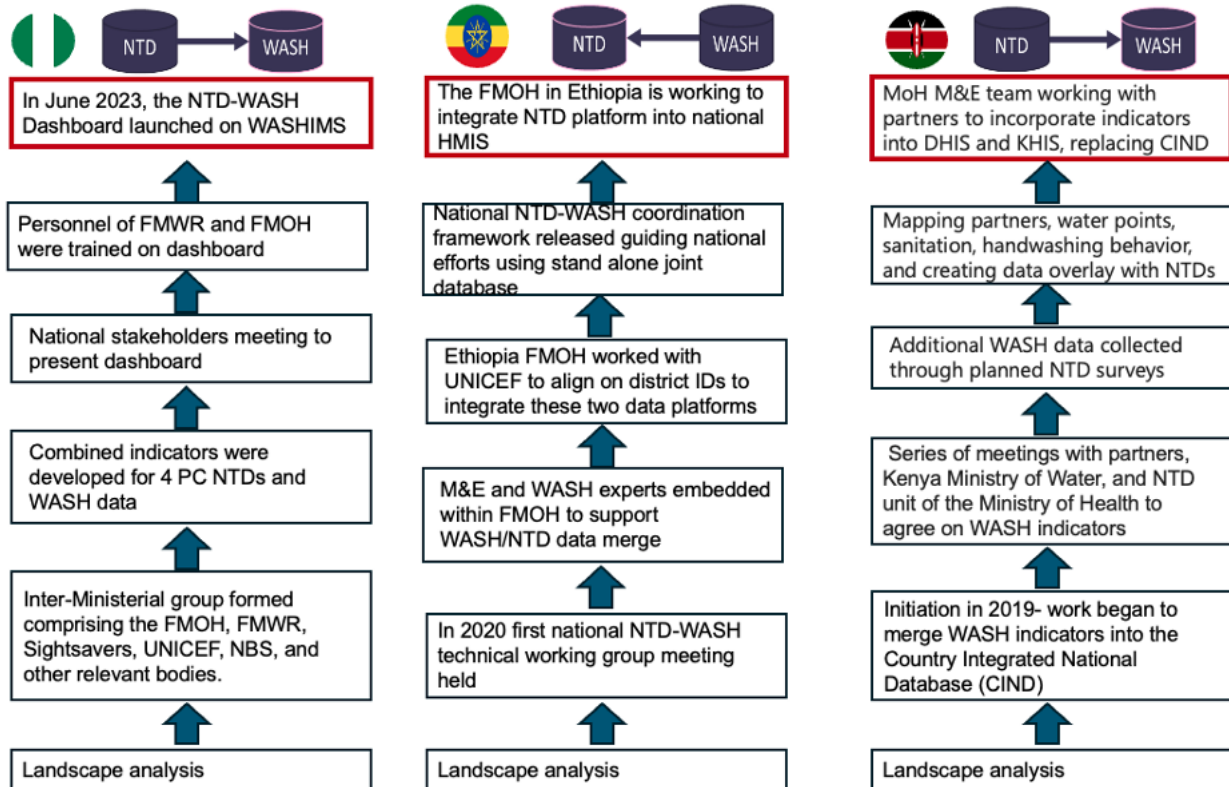
Source: WHO and NNN, 2023: WASH and Health working together: a 'how to' guide for NTD programmes. 2nd edition.

“Impact in Action” is a series showcasing successful collaborations between WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiatives and Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) programmes. Curated by the NNN WASH Working Group in partnership with WHO, this series brings together insightful case studies from around the globe. Each story highlights innovative strategies and tangible outcomes resulting from integrating WASH practices with NTD control and elimination efforts. [View more case studies](#) and download [WASH and health working together: a 'how-to' guide for neglected tropical disease programmes, second edition.](#)



The work so far – growing momentum for WASH and NTDs DfDM

Three African countries - Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria - have made significant progress in implementing WASH-NTD data for decision-making initiatives. The main steps undertaken by each country are detailed in the figure below.



Ethiopia: WASH into NTDs

The **Ethiopia NTD DHIS2 database**, which combines NTD data and sanitation data from UNICEF, allows users to produce custom multi-layer maps to show both sanitation indicators and disease prevalence. This allows resource investments to be directed to areas where they would have the greatest impact on disease burden.

Data Quality Improvement - The FMOH has led the first of planned quarterly analyses comparing NTD data added to the national HMIS with data collected through the disease-specific parallel process. The analysis found that treatment data in HMIS were below those reported through the parallel process. The FMOH is working with the Health Information Technology Directorate (HITD), the team that enters data into HMIS, to include them in NTD-integrated training as a strategy to improve reporting. Once reporting through HMIS matches the parallel process, HMIS data for treatments will be integrated with the NTD DHIS2 database.

Successfully Scaling up - The FMOH in Ethiopia is working closely with other directorates including the Policy and Planning

Directorate and the Health Information Technology Directorate on how best to integrate NTD data. The process of moving from the disease vertical data flow, which happens outside of the national health information system, to the integrated data flow, data reported through the national health information system, is currently underway. During the transition, both data flows are occurring in parallel and evaluated to identify reporting gaps.

Nigeria: NTDs into WASH

WASH NTDs collaboration efforts started in 2018. The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation (FMWRS) developed a WASH/NTD combined indicator dashboard with the support of partners to improve data visualization for collaborative planning, resource mobilization, and decision-making. Development of this dashboard culminated in June of 2023 with the launch of the [NTD - WASH Combined Indicators Dashboard](#) on the Water Sanitation and Hygiene Information Management System (WASHIMS) platform.

The lack of an NTD platform to host the

NTD-WASH data merge dashboard posed an initial roadblock in the early stages of this process. This was resolved largely through the dedicated resources working with the FMWRS to have a dedicated NTD module within the WASHIMS. As is the case in most countries, differences in indicators and data capture levels for NTD and WASH data was the next hurdle for Nigeria. Also, sustained coordination meetings and advocacy to relevant ministries helped to resolve bureaucratic bottlenecks and close communication gaps.

The Integration Process - In 2021 combined indicators were developed for four Preventive Chemotherapy (PC) NTDs—Trachoma, Schistosomiasis, Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH), and Lymphatic Filariasis—as well as WASH data (using the NTD Snapshot and WASHNORM reports). Subsequently, a national stakeholders meeting was held in June 2022 during which the data merge dashboard was introduced to NTD and WASH stakeholders. State level stakeholders' engagements were conducted over the year. Before launching the NTD-WASH dashboard, personnel of FMWRS and FMOH were trained on dashboard data access, upload and update format and



the frequency of updates agreed by the two ministries. NTD Prevalence Data is exported from NTD excel spreadsheets, combined with relevant WASH Indicators and imported into a dedicated page for WASH-NTD Combined Indicators in the WASHIMS database. Decisions for intervention will be based on defined WASH-NTD Thresholds.

Strengthening multi-sectoral collaboration through national and sub-national engagements - In 2022 a national level stakeholders meeting was held to introduce the data merge effort, ensuring buy-in of key policy and decision makers from government, private sector and other development partners from the NTD and WASH sectors.

Joint planning and coordination meetings at the subnational levels have continued to sustain cross-sectoral collaboration through the facilitation of engagements between the NTD, WASH and other sectors. These coordination meetings are key.

Key insights - Intentional and sustained inter-ministerial engagements were important to achieve integration at the national level. This includes scaling down integration efforts to the subnational levels, which facilitates sustainability of the efforts and timely data collection for updating data on the dashboard.

Kenya: NTDs into WASH

In Kenya, work began in 2019 to merge WASH indicators into the Country Integrated National Database (CIND). This process involved a series of meetings with partners alongside the Kenya Ministry of Water and the NTD unit of the Ministry of Health to agree on a list of WASH indicators to include in the CIND. Agreeing on the sources for the WASH indicators and obtaining access to these data through the HMIS was the main hurdle in this process. This was facilitated through a dedicated WASH NTD focal person within the NTD department of the MOH and through the MoH M&E focal person.

WASH into a National NTD database - MoH M&E team are currently working with partners to incorporate indicators into NTD information system (on DHIS2 Platform) and KHIS. The NTD information system development is underway to link with KHIS. The NTD information system replaced the Country Integrated National Database (CIND).

Dedicated WASH data collection (Data Matrix) - In parallel to the integration process outlined above there has been some successes in collecting additional WASH data through planned NTD surveys. Specifically, through the disease prevalence mapping surveys for schistosomiasis



A cross section of participants accessing and using the NTD-WASH dashboard during the NTD and WASH stakeholders meeting in Sokoto state.

and helminths conducted in 2020 and 2021. More recently the MoH and partners have been mapping partners, water points, sanitation, handwashing behaviour and creating data overlay with NTDs.

Moving forward - In Kenya, as in other countries this process has been sometimes slow and relied on building relationships. This has built trust and enabled engagement. Structures are now in place and according to partners there is a “collaborative atmosphere within the NTD program beyond just surgeries and MDA.”

The success of this work exists largely through county team engagement- this is the level where more cross-coordination is present.

While most of the foundational structures are in place, there are still some personalities and motivations proving to be barriers. Prioritizing this work is often challenging due to funding constraints, but directing resources through individual countries may help bypass higher-level administrative hurdles.

Key learnings and next steps on page 4!

Additional resources: [WASH and Health working together - a 'how-to' guide for neglected tropical disease programmes, second edition](#)

Other titles in the Impact in Action Series:

- [WASH and NTD action for social justice in Nepal](#)
- [From inclusion to empowerment: Transforming WASH and NTD initiatives to advance disability rights, livelihoods and wellbeing](#)
- [Mass Drug Administration \(MDAs\): an opportunity for community engagement and social behaviour change](#)
- [WASH on wheels: A groundbreaking solution for global water access](#)
- [Keeping zoonotic diseases at bay through a One Health approach - progress in the Gambia](#)
- [Prevention in action: changing behaviours to fight Dengue](#)





Key challenges to implementing joint WASH and NTDs data for decision-making

- » Many countries lack an existing platform on which the NTD-WASH data dashboard can be hosted. This can incur costs and lead to delays.
- » The difference in indicators and administrative data capture levels between the NTD and WASH sectors can result in data having to be manually recoded and imported, causing delays and making data quickly out of date. Additionally, while in the case of NTDs, there is an assumption that eventually indicators will need to be included in the central health management information system (HMIS) instead of on standalone databases; WASH monitoring, however, is likely to be required in the long term.
- » Progress is impeded by bureaucratic bottlenecks at inter-ministerial levels, caused by differences in processes, budget lines, planning schedules and mismatched priorities.
- » WASH data can be politically-loaded; progress on water supply is particularly political, which can lead to reluctance to collect, validate and share information. Additionally, the relationship between WASH and NTDs is not always clear cut, and NTD prevalence is just one indicator of a lack of access to WASH services is only one of many considerations for allocation of WASH resources.
- » The overall lack of funding, and the vertical nature of funding, particularly in the case of NTDs, creates lack of motivation to collaborate or coordinate across sectors as each programme is accountable for its own objectives.

What worked well?

- » Putting in place a process of developing combined indicators as a useful mechanism to bring stakeholders together and increase buy-in for working towards a shared objective. The process of data collection and validation is also a key opportunity for convening, and creating a sense of shared ownership.
- » Sustained coordination meetings and advocacy to relevant ministries to resolve bureaucratic bottlenecks and close communication gaps, followed by continued engagement to ensure buy-in - across politicians, government, civil society, and the private sector. In some cases, collaboration was simpler at local administrative levels.
- » Joint planning and coordination meetings at the subnational levels have continued

to sustain cross-sectoral collaboration through the facilitation of engagements » between the NTD, WASH and other sectors. Leveraging existing structures and platforms for both NTDs and WASH in the intervention areas and nationally ensures quick wins that can be built upon for sustainability.

Steps to sustain momentum

- » Go beyond NTDs to provide a full picture of WASH and health investment: WASH and NTD databases, or existing HMIS databases, can be expanded to include other relevant WASH-related health indicators, such as cholera distribution, or nutritional indicators such as stunting. This will provide a fuller picture of the need for WASH services, as well as increase buy-in.
- » Widen the stakeholders 'pool': involve other sectors and line ministries, such as finance, education, gender and agriculture, as well as other key agencies such as UNICEF,

UNDP, and multilateral development banks. Exchange expertise and experience across countries: Engage in open conversation to share the lessons and challenges of undertaking improved data processes, as well as share technical expertise. This requires that endemic countries are aware of what can be achieved, and what technical resources can be made available to them.

- » Build on progress to respond to current financing challenges: As funding for current strategies such as mass drug administration dwindles, it is important to put WASH at the centre of NTD control, elimination and eradication efforts as a sustainable, equitable solution. Strong advocacy is needed to ensure that the shrinking funding environment for global health and development does not result in a return to the prioritising of output-driven interventions, at the expense of equity and sustainability.

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