



Strengthening Climate Resilience Systems in Water Sanitation Hygiene: Technical Assistance Project

- **SDG:** #3, #5, #6, #10, #13
- **SECTORS:** Water
- **COUNTRIES:** Ethiopia
- **CLIENT:** Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)
- **VALUE:** £7,447,926
- **DURATION:** Oct 21 – Aug 24

The United Kingdom is the lead bilateral donor in the Water Sanitation and Hygiene sector in Ethiopia. Through this support, the UK assists the Climate Resilient pillar of the Government of Ethiopia's flagship One WaSH National Programme (OWNP) through the Strengthening Climate Resilience Systems in Water Sanitation Hygiene (SCRS-WaSH) programme (2019 – 2026) in prioritised drought affected areas.

Under the SCRS WaSH programme, NIRAS is implementing the rural-focused Technical Assistance Project to strengthen climate-resilient delivery systems to amplify the impact of financial aid that has been provided to the ONWP. The TA component is led by NIRAS in consortium with Water Aid.

Objectives

The Project supports three levels of beneficiaries: federal level, regional level and facility level, across 13 regions in Ethiopia. Key programme objectives include:

- 1) Strengthening management systems of water supply systems in 30 rural multi-village schemes in drought-prone areas to transition them into sustainable business models and integrating climate resilience and mitigation strategies into existing and new water supply schemes;
- 2) Establishing systems for post construction maintenance and spare part supply to improve non-functionality of multi-village schemes and create job opportunities by supporting women and youth led Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) for post-construction maintenance management and spare parts supply;
- 3) Formulating a National WaSH Financing Strategy with an emphasis on domestic resource mobilisation;
- 4) Piloting innovative private sector supplies with an emphasis on effective Menstrual Hygiene Management products, in order to address the challenge of "period poverty" at targeted programme schools; and
- 5) Sharing learning to inform the Government of Ethiopia's policies and the next phase of the ONWP.

Climate resilience and gender and social inclusion are themes that cut across all project activities. The SCRS-WaSH project team is collaborating with the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), particularly the Water Supply and Sanitation Infrastructure Management Directorate and Water Supply Study, Design and Construction monitoring Directorate, and the Ministries of Health (MoH), Education (MoE); Finance (MoF), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Job creation, and their respective Regional Bureaus in the intervention regions.

Project Achievements (As of June 2024)

Strengthening Management systems of rural multi-village water supply schemes

Of the 30 rural multi-village water supply schemes set to receive support, diagnostic assessments and business plans have already been developed for 27 and major improvements in their operations and management have been achieved. The project team is working mostly with MoWE departments, respective regional bureaus, and locally with the schemes directly to diagnose strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and bottlenecks and develop and implement plans for improvements in their operations:

- Technical and Managerial Trainings provided to 572 utility board members and staff on topics such as water tariff setting, GIS mapping of the schemes, asset management and maintenance, and reducing non-revenue water.
- Customised training provided to develop business plans, including capacitating rural schemes with essential tools and equipment, and on-the-job training.
- Major improvements in the performance of the first 20 MVSs operations have been achieved across the six MVS utilities system strengthening pillars (i.e. policy implementation, strategy and management, human resources, financial management, technical operations, and commercial operations).



Climate Resilient Water Safety Planning

To improve the climate resilience of water resources in drought-prone areas targeted by the project, Climate Resilient Water Safety Plans (CR WSPs) have been prepared in collaboration with government stakeholders. These assess the implications of climate change at every part of the water cycle from rainfall reaching the catchment to the end users and back. Climate Change and Environmental Risk and Vulnerability Assessments and [Climate Resilient Water Safety Plans](#) have been prepared and validated to date for 26 utilities to ensure water security and sustainability of service delivery.

- Joint field work with government and utilities to increase knowledge on the resource base through monitoring and overall water safety planning and support in the implementation of locally-led actions for catchment management and water safety planning.
- Regional government stakeholders and utilities have been made increasingly aware of climate change and environment-induced risks posed to water supply, including the introduction of improved structural designs to address flood risks on schemes infrastructure.

SCRS-WaSH has brought the development of these plans to a new level by incorporating advanced tools to assess the vulnerability of catchments, including GIS with satellite imagery; source catchment delineation; mapping and analysis of current land use; landscape area degradation and flood risk; downscaling of climate data to the basin level: hydrogeology/ aquifer characterisation; type and nature of the aquifers – including lithology, aquifer size, flow direction; and identification of recharge areas.

Establishing and capacitating women and youth-led MSEs for maintenance and spare parts

NIRAS is supporting these groups to be organised as MSEs for the provision of maintenance services and spare parts supplies to water supply facilities:

- To date, all 30 women-led MSEs have been set up and trained, comprising 349 people: 219 female and 130 male.
- Support to the preparation and implementation of Business Plans, including marketing strategies, creating linkages with market outlets, demand creation, and the provision of equipment and fast-moving spare parts.
- Over 60 technical and vocational education trainers from RWEB and other experts have been provided with Training of Trainers (ToT).
- Twelve regional bureaus have provided working premises for the MSEs and training apprenticeships delivered, in collaboration with water utilities and woreda offices, to maintain water infrastructure systems.

Development of a WaSH Finance Strategy

The project team has spearheaded the development of Ethiopia's first draft National WaSH Finance Strategy, leveraging international experience, key informant interviews, and quantitative financial analysis. The Strategy aims to maximise domestic resource mobilisation for the WASH sector, identify a range of domestic finance options and estimate their revenue potential [to unlock financial pathways](#) for sustainable WaSH. Following a validation workshop in November 2023, the draft strategy is under review by the MoF and the MoWE. The final strategy is expected to be implemented in 2024 to effectively mobilise resources for Ethiopia's WASH sector.

Addressing period poverty to keep girls in school



With the overall goal of improving girls' school attendance and educational performance, the SCRS-WaSH team has provided reusable menstrual hygiene kits, together with underwear, to 35,000 school girls across 150 schools. In addition to making MH products more accessible, the project printed behavioural change materials that were shared with the schools to create awareness and break down taboos. These are targeted at boys and girls, as well as teachers and parents. ToT has been completed for Gender Club leads and School Directors in Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Dire Dawa, Gambella, Harari, Oromia, Sidama, the former SNNPR, Somali and Tigray. This has cascaded down to enhance awareness, ownership, and sustainability of these gains among the community.

For more information, visit our project website, [Building the long-term resilience of safe water supply systems in 13 regions of drought-prone Ethiopia \(niras.com\)](#) or contact:

Tim Grayling, Team Leader tigr@niras.dk

Zewdu Assefa, Deputy Team Leader Zewdu.assefa@scrswash.com