Outcomes-Based Programming for Water and Sanitation: Oxfam's vision and monitoring framework

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Cover photos:

Left: Bishara Abdiladir, 53, collects water from a water ATM in Hadado town, Northern Kenya, June 2017. Photo: Katie G. Nelson/Oxfam.

Right: Liezel, a builder from Bantayan Island training more builders in Guiuan, Eastern Samar in the Philippines, August 2016. Photo: Roma Ramos/Oxfam.

Contents

1: Why outcomes-based programming?	4
2: Oxfam's approach for sustainable water and sanitation programming	4
3: Fragility in this framework	5
4: Programming for outcomes	8
5: Using the framework	9
6: Potential measures of success for moving towards programme outcomes	10
7: Supporting our partners	23
8: Additional tools available	23

Framework overview

Oxfam's ambition is to achieve greater sustainability and governance of water and sanitation services, especially for the poorest, most marginalized and most vulnerable people. To do this, we need to change the way we programme: from designing the intervention to establishing the monitoring system, we need to focus on outcomes. This framework provides ideas for what sustainable outcomes can look like, even in contexts affected by conflict and fragility, and how we can measure our progress towards achieving them.

The first five sections explain the rationale for adopting an outcomes-based approach, explain Oxfam's foundational principles, which are the basis of all our water and sanitation programming, and show how to use the framework. Section 6 contains ideas for programmatic outcomes, programme activities and potential measures of success sustainability. Section 7 is about supporting our partners in an outcomes-based approach, and section 8 provides some guidance on tools already available to help with some of the programme activities, particularly analysis tools.

We do not pretend to have all the answers on how to provide sustainable, affordable and equitable water and sanitation services to everyone, but as the global population grows and our natural resources shrink, inequality and conflicts over resources will get worse. So we do need to keep improving how we work.

This framework is not a blueprint for how to carry out a sustainable water and sanitation programme, but it is intended to help point the way. Think about the outcomes your programme is trying to achieve, find the measures of success for those ambitions and either use them as they are, modify them to suit the programme context or use them as a starting point to develop your own ideas to ensure that **everyone can use affordable, safely managed and good-quality water and sanitation services all the time.**

1. Why outcomes-based programming?

The shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has huge implications for water and sanitation programming. It's not just about access anymore and counting infrastructure. It's about everyone having access **to affordable, safely managed, quality water and sanitation all the time**. It's also about **reducing pollution of water resources, increasing safe re-use, increasing water use efficiency and implementing integrated water resources management** at all levels. This means we need to adopt a longer-term vision in our programming and start focusing on the outcomes we're trying to achieve with our work.

Oxfam's five foundational principles for sustainable water and sanitation services

1. Reaching the last mile

- Full coverage of services, including the hardest to reach, with intra-household and intra-community equity. No one can be left behind.
- Working in water-insecure areas, whatever the reason for water insecurity.

2. Ensuring inclusion and affordability

- Ensuring that personal identities (e.g. disability, caste, gender, race, economic status, political views, religion) and contextual factors (e.g. geographic location and conflict divides) are not barriers to the use of services.
- Ensuring that no one is too poor to drink safe water or use a decent toilet.

3. Promoting sustainable technology

- Ensuring that the technologies we promote are cost-effective both during construction and over their lifetime.
- Understanding how the use of technology can achieve greater inclusion, transparency and more reliable service provision.
- Investing in research and development (R&D) of water and sanitation technologies that will contribute to tackling issues of water security (e.g. desalination, solar power).

4. Developing innovative financial mechanisms that incentivize inclusion

- Traditional ways of funding access to water and sanitation have limitations in the scale that can be achieved. To meet the SDGs new financial mechanisms are needed, but these cannot be created at the expense of the poorest people who are least able to afford even basic services. Approaches such as smart subsidies for the poorest need to be thought about at the beginning of a programme, not at the end.

5. Promoting trust building and constructive interactions

- Fostering constructive interactions in formal and informal relations, horizontal society–society relations and vertical society–state relations to ensure that services are designed and governed in a way that promotes trust and social cohesion, without creating, reigniting or exacerbating conflicts.

2. Oxfam's approach for sustainable water and sanitation programming

Oxfam GB has developed an overall approach for its water and sanitation programming. In practical terms, this means focusing on **continuity of access, use and affordability** of water and sanitation services **for all, despite exposure to current and future natural and human-made risks, including climate change and conflict**.

Oxfam's approach for ensuring sustainability in water and sanitation programming

Patricia lives in Doe community in downtown Monrovia, Liberia. Toilet blocks are few and far between and those that exist are in poor shape; unclean and usually unsafe, especially at night and especially for women. Patricia has had an Oxfam Tigerworm toilet for three years now. Photo: Tommy Trenchard/Oxfam

3. Fragility in this framework

Working in fragile contexts

More than two billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and it is estimated that by 2030 most of the world's poor will live in such contexts. This forecast corresponds with the increasing number of conflicts that the world has witnessed over the past two decades¹. Unsurprisingly, fragile contexts are also where levels of extreme poverty are highest.

We do not expect one programme to solve the underlying causes of crisis, conflict and fragility in a country, but by developing an outcomes-based approach, focused on a specific, longer-term vision of sustainability, each programme can make incremental changes in pursuit of the overall outcome. If we want to meet the SDGs, it is critical that we strive for sustainable water and sanitation services for everyone, even in contexts where humanitarian rather than development programming is the norm. In this framework, we refer to risks and 'shocks', because shocks are materialized exposure to risk.

A shock can be natural (fire, flood, drought, etc.) or man-made (political turmoil, economic collapse, war, etc.). In many contexts people are exposed and vulnerable to multiple risks and shocks which can interact and reinforce and fuel one another, leading to increased fragility.

Water security and fragility

Issues related to water and fragility consistently dominate the list of global risks identified by world economic experts² and in countries experiencing the effects of climate change, fragility, conflict and violence it is particularly challenging to achieve water security. When people are repeatedly affected by water insecurity, it can fuel perceptions that institutions and governments are not doing enough to help, worsen existing grievances, create new risks and further entrench inequality. Fragility deepens through the instability caused by water insecurity, which in turn makes the challenges of water management more difficult and so the cycle continues.

UN-Water developed a definition for water security to underpin the SDGs: 'The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.'³

Water pollution is a significant aspect of water security, and water resources can be affected by ongoing conflict. If water resources are polluted, it reduces the amount of usable water available globally and increases the costs of treating water. Getting sanitation right is therefore a critical piece of the water security challenge. The SDGs move beyond household access to a toilet to work on reducing pollution of water resources through the proper management of solid, liquid and faecal wastes.

¹ Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2018). Available at: <http://ucdp.uu.se/-/exploratory>

² C.W. Sadoff, E. Borgomeo and D. de Waal (2017). *Turbulent Waters: Pursuing Water Security in Fragile Contexts*. Washington, DC, World Bank.

³ UN-Water (2013). *What is water security?* Available at: <http://www.unwater.org/publications/water-security-infographic/>

Programming into risk

Being exposed to risk creates vulnerabilities (fragility), and when a shock or stress happens the risks faced will in many cases increase, further increasing vulnerabilities. To work effectively in fragile contexts, we need to be able to understand and articulate the risks faced in each one by different people and the ways that these interact with coping capacities (positive and negative) and resilience-building actions. Not everyone experiences a risk in the same way, not everyone has the same levels of resilience and not everyone has the same coping strategy for the same risk.

Many of the shocks that occur in fragile contexts are predictable (e.g. annual flooding, violence caused by religious conflict, conflict over resources, violence around elections, etc.). If we can anticipate shocks and understand risk, we can take steps to reduce people's exposure to risk and consequently lessen the impact of a shock. We call this '**programming into risk**'.

There is no separate framework for establishing outcomes in fragile contexts because we believe that, ultimately, if the goal is to achieve sustainable services for everyone then the same outcomes should apply, whether working in a fragile context or not. What should change are the activities we undertake to reach an outcome, our expectations about how long change might take and how we plan for reducing risk and dealing with shocks within a programme.

Abdiruzak, 25, stands next to his flock of 34 dead goats and sheep in Northern Kenya. Most of his livestock died during the ongoing drought in the Horn of Africa; the remaining few are too weak and sick to survive until the October rains. Kenya, Wajir.
Photo: Katie G. Nelson/Oxfam

4. Programming for outcomes

We already know:

- There is no single way to achieve sustainable and affordable water and sanitation services.
- Water and sanitation are basic needs for people, but they are not their only needs.
- In all contexts, we need to take a systems-wide approach, working on the governance, social accountability, financial viability and environmental sustainability of services.
- Complex and rapidly changing contexts can present challenges, but they also represent opportunities to support wider transformative change.
- Not everything we implement works the way we expect it to. Normal programme design processes and normal monitoring frameworks (log frames) are not good at capturing when changes happen so they can be difficult to adapt when needed.

To programme for outcomes, we work out what problem we are trying to solve and therefore **what outcome we are trying to achieve**. Then we develop the outputs, followed by the activities and inputs needed. So an outcomes-based programming process looks like this...

Programming for outcomes means we need to **monitor outcomes as well**, and not just focus on outputs. So, we need to adapt our approach to monitoring. To achieve most outcomes, **several activities will need to be combined, which could result in multiple outputs**. When we monitor each activity or output in isolation from the others, we cannot get a full picture of whether the outcome is being met or not. We want to be able to see how the activities we are doing are contributing to achieving the sustainable outcome we planned for.

This framework provides ideas for what sustainable outcomes can look like and how we can measure our progress towards achieving them

5. Using the framework

Theme: Organized into four themes

Programme outcome: Ideas for programmatic outcomes within the four key themes

In fragile contexts: the outcomes we want to achieve are the same, but the way we undertake activities to reach those outcomes will need to be adapted to a fragile context. Key issues we need to consider when working in fragile contexts are included throughout the themes

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Activities are the 'what we will do' to achieve outcomes through programmes</p>	<p>Basic: These provide a way to assess progress towards outcomes more quickly in shorter programmes (less than two years). They show progress towards an outcome, not that an outcome has been achieved. They are easier to measure but more limited in scope. When designing a programme, we should be aiming to achieve at least the basic level of what success looks like.</p>	<p>Progressive: These will provide a way to assess stronger progress towards outcomes but can take longer to realize and can be more difficult to measure. In most cases the basic measure of success will need to be achieved before aiming for the progressive one.</p>

Using the measures of success

The specific activities undertaken to progress towards each outcome will establish what indicators need to be developed to measure the extent to which success has been achieved. Some of the measures of success contain percentages (%), these can be changed to meet context or programme limitations (e.g. timeframes). The measures of success can be included in existing monitoring frameworks and used at key points such as baselines, mid-lines and end-lines.

6. Potential measures of success for moving towards programme outcomes

Theme 1: Strengthening the enabling environment for service provision

- Programme outcome 1: Enabling environment for service provision is supportive (rather than creating blockages) and enables equity of access
- Programme outcome 2: Enabling environment is supportive (not obstructive) of market-based service provision

Theme 2: Stronger governance of water and sanitation services

- Programme outcome 1: Decision-making structures (formal and informal) represent and relate to the needs of the population and in particular highlight the needs of vulnerable women
- Programme outcome 2: Social contracts enhance trust between populations, service providers and governments
- Programme outcome 3: Communities and other relevant stakeholders have the capacities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts over water and sanitation services, leading to peaceful living

Theme 3: Making sure that services keep working and remain affordable despite shocks

- Programme outcome 1: Strengthen resilience of physical water and sanitation infrastructure and the management of service provision
- Programme outcome 2: Improving service provision
- Programme outcome 3: Market-based service provision is self-sustaining (meaning that very little or no donor funding is needed for day-to-day operation, including maintenance, repair and expansion)
- Programme outcome 4: Making sure that the least able to pay for services are not denied access because they are not able to pay for them

Theme 4: Water security through protection of resources and ecosystems

- Programme outcome 1: Protection and management of water resources (e.g. not allowing over-exploitation)

Theme 1: Strengthening the enabling environment for service provision

Programme outcome 1: Enabling environment for service provision is supportive (rather than creating blockages) and enables equity of access

In fragile contexts:

In divided or unstable communities, water and sanitation services can be caught up in conflict divides and manipulated by one side or the other. They can also serve as a 'connector' between divided groups who have a vested interest in keeping services operational and are willing to work together to maintain this. We need to recognize these dynamics and spot opportunities for supporting wider capacities for peace, cohesion and inclusion in communities through our interventions.

Examples of activities and approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Using analysis tools e.g. context analysis, scenario planning, risk analysis, political stakeholder analysis, gender, power and conflict analysis to understand the programming situation, identify problems to tackle and programme in 'solutions' from the beginning (proactive not reactive programming).</p> <p><i>In a conflict analysis:</i> <i>It is important to identify who controls access to services (the resource itself, e.g. a reservoir, and the access points, e.g. taps) and how decisions about installation and maintenance are made in different locations to understand what impact that might have on conflict dynamics.</i></p>	<p>Based on the analysis completed, 'solutions' to problems are implemented through planned activities and monitored to assess their suitability in contributing to equitable access to services for all under current conditions (i.e. are they solving the current problem?).</p>	<p>Based on the analysis completed, activities are adapted and modified as needed to reflect changes in a dynamic context or if they do not appear to be working (e.g. if there is a significant change in the economy, increased violence, a change in resource availability, etc.).</p> <p>We can clearly identify the impact of our intervention on the wider context (e.g. a change in gender power relations) and demonstrate how we adapted the project in line with dynamic changes in the context.</p>
<p>Support service provider oversight/regulatory body to improve performance management of service providers through evidence-based advocacy.</p> <p><i>In fragile contexts:</i> <i>There may be no formal system of oversight or regulatory body to work with, but it is important to identify the informal institutions that manage services, whether they collaborate or conflict, and whether services are effective for all or just for a particular identity group (e.g. religious group, economic class).</i></p>	<p>Service provision is transparent, fair and equitable (due to performance management indicators being set and monitored).</p>	<p>Regulator's performance in working with service users (e.g. space for people to make decisions on public services).</p> <p>Regulator can act on behalf of consumers to hold service providers to account.</p>

Examples of activities and approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Working at national, regional or state level to advocate/influence for policy changes to support progress towards outcomes. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaining recognition for different types of service provider (formal and informal, not a 'one size fits all' policy) - Reducing, restructuring or removing informal 'taxes'/payments - Oxfam acting as a convener of stakeholders in decision-making spaces - Ensuring that legal/regulatory provisions are made for the most vulnerable to access and use services - Developing agreements on how tensions/ disputes over services can be resolved. <p><i>In fragile contexts:</i> <i>It may not be possible or appropriate to work with government actors due to their affiliations with one side of the conflict divide. Engaging with formal and informal power holders and bridging the gap between formal policy and traditional structures for managing water and sanitation will be critical.</i></p>	<p>Appropriate public service legislation is in place (relevant to different contexts within a country).</p> <p>Operating agreements for formal and informal service provision are established.</p> <p>Status and levels of access, gaps and failures in public service provisions are known.</p> <p>Adequate contingency planning is done for predictable shocks and stresses to prevent large-scale disruption to service provision.</p> <p>Activities implemented do not exacerbate existing tensions or do harm in programming implementation areas.</p>	<p>Appropriate public service legislation is implemented, included in the national budget, etc.</p> <p>Recognition of service provision, planning and investment for all, including slum and informal locations and marginalized populations.</p> <p>Law/policy ensuring corporate accountability in the provision of public services is in place and implemented.</p> <p>Tensions between service user groups are reduced or removed.</p>

Programme outcome 2: Enabling environment is supportive (not obstructive) of market-based service provision

In fragile contexts:

it is important to identify if there are predatory practices happening within the existing ways in which people access water and sanitation services, for example, the presence of water selling cartels or price fixing. The activities we undertake within a water or sanitation service market cannot support or strengthen predatory practices.

Examples of activities and approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Activities to support market entry and exit – likely to be focused on convening actors and partnerships around a systems-based approach. Activities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working to remove restrictive licences, obstructive regulatory environment and outdated policies, etc. - Developing appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks - Supporting access to affordable finance (for consumers and service providers) - Developing consumer protection mechanisms/processes. 	<p>Legal and regulatory frameworks to promote and protect market functions are in place.</p> <p>Consumers are aware of their rights and protection mechanisms/processes available.</p> <p>Service providers are aware of the financial services available to them and their obligations to consumers.</p>	<p>Legal and regulatory frameworks to promote and protect market functions are enforced.</p> <p>Legal and regulatory frameworks to promote and protect market functions are updated as market conditions change.</p> <p>Consumers are successfully able to use consumer protection mechanisms/processes.</p> <p>Absence of market externalities – all costs and benefits of producing a good or service are borne by market actors supplying it and/or through public financing.</p>

Theme 2: Stronger governance of water and sanitation services

Programme outcome 1: Decision-making structures (formal and informal) represent and relate to the needs of the population and in particular highlight the needs of vulnerable women

In fragile contexts:

It is important to identify possible areas of competition over resources and services, whether some groups are receiving preferential access (even if this is based only on perceptions) and the roles that customary authorities are playing in the context, especially if they are competing with formal government bodies for authority.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Actions specifically supporting under-represented people to gain more voice in decision-making spaces (at home and in the community). Under-representation could be due to various reasons: religion, caste, economic status, social status, historical conflict divides, gender, etc.). Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowering people to gain access to and negotiate on decisions affecting infrastructure provision with safe and continued access to services - Going beyond head counts of representation (e.g. the number of women on a committee) to promote meaningful participation - Empowering people to play active roles in dispute resolution processes. 	<p>Collective (community) and/or individual (home) voices of under-represented people are considered as a priority during decision making on water and sanitation systems (whether decision making happens in a formal or an informal space).</p> <p>There are no negative consequences (whether in the home or in the community) for under-represented people engaging in decision making.</p>	<p>Under-represented people can influence other decisions and investments that affect their lives, either in the community or at household level.</p> <p>Under-represented people can establish (legal) structures or entities to support them in being recognized voices in decision-making spaces (whether those decision-making spaces are formal or informal).</p> <p>Under-represented people can play an active role in resolving disputes over water and sanitation services.</p>

Programme outcome 2: Social contracts enhance trust between populations, service providers and governments

In fragile contexts:

Activities to enhance trust and support the building of social contracts are particularly important in fragile contexts as trust may have broken down completely, or a lack of trust may be a driver of tensions and conflict.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Activities that support systematic change to strengthen levels of trust, engagement and transparency – likely to be focused on convening activities (ideally supported by but not led by Oxfam). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making sure that all stakeholders can have their voices heard without prejudice - Supporting the development of a relevant channel/process to transmit decisions - Promoting transparent decision making on investments and resource allocation (e.g. through advocacy on fiscal justice) - Embedding social accountability and good governance approaches in policy making - Supporting under-represented groups to strengthen their negotiating capacity. 	<p>Social accountability is embedded into national/state/regional water and sanitation policies.</p> <p>The population has the channels and processes necessary to hold service delivery actors and decision makers to account.</p> <p>Services are transparently managed at all levels.</p>	<p>People know their rights and are using the appropriate process to hold service delivery actors and/or decision makers to account.</p> <p>Service delivery actors and decision makers are actively responding to feedback and complaints from the population.</p> <p>There is an increase in the number or percentage of people reporting satisfaction that their feedback or complaint has been acted upon by the appropriate stakeholder.</p> <p>Under-represented groups can negotiate on equal terms on issues such as investments and resource allocation.</p>

Programme outcome 3: Communities and other relevant stakeholders have the capacities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts over water and sanitation services, leading to peaceful living

In fragile contexts:

It is important to identify if water and sanitation services are being intentionally damaged or obstructed and what the consequences are. It should also be understood, if anyone is at risk of harm when accessing services, how, why and what can be done to mitigate or prevent the harm.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Activities that support communities and key stakeholder groups to identify drivers of conflict and instability related to water and sanitation services and support peaceful resolution of disputes and inclusive governance. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community conflict and gender analysis that identifies root causes of conflict, potential regular or seasonal spikes in conflict, roles of different actors and existing capacities and connectors for peace - Understanding who can mobilize groups to express discontent with services and who can mobilize groups to collaborate peacefully on management of services - Ongoing monitoring of conflict and gender sensitivity in relation to project implementation and changes in context - Conflict resolution training and sensitization on the importance of women's role and role of excluded minorities in governance structures and grievance resolution - Development and monitoring of grievance resolution mechanisms as part of governance structures for water and sanitation services. 	<p>Activities implemented do not exacerbate existing tensions or do harm in target locations.</p> <p>No new grievances arise because of the activities implemented.</p> <p>Activities are adapted and changed as a result of changes in the local context.</p> <p>Women and people from under-represented groups who are typically excluded from services/decision making/conflict resolution are no longer excluded.</p> <p>Grievance resolution mechanisms can function despite new or exacerbated shocks or stresses.</p>	<p>Issues that were identified as root causes of conflict related to water and sanitation services, along with conflict recurrence (and frequency), decrease because of the activities completed.</p> <p>Conflicts and grievances related to water and sanitation services are resolved through new or revitalized conflict resolution mechanisms and are monitored over time (especially if there is a recurrence of the conflict).</p> <p>Women and people from under-represented groups play a meaningful and active role in the resolution of conflicts.</p> <p>We can clearly identify the impact of our intervention on the wider context (e.g. a change in gender power relations) and demonstrate how we adapted the project in line with dynamic changes in the context.</p>

Theme 3: Making sure that services keep working and remain affordable despite shocks

Programme outcome 1: Strengthen resilience of physical water and sanitation infrastructure and the management of service provision

In fragile contexts:

It is important to understand if and when trade-offs are necessary. It is not possible to optimize the resilience of infrastructure against every shock or stress, but decisions on trade-offs must be made transparently and the consequences communicated to people.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Known shocks and conflict spikes and their potential implications on infrastructure are assessed and planned for. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk analysis and stakeholder mapping are completed to understand what risks are present and who can do what about them - Mitigation activities identified, planned and implemented e.g. pre-emptive maintenance - Future-proofing of infrastructure where possible - Working with community representative groups for quick mobilization post-shock - Support for collection and dissemination of accurate water data (hydrogeological modelling, infrastructure mapping, etc.). 	<p>Results of risk analysis and stakeholder mapping are documented and monitored to support early action on known shocks.</p> <p>Outputs-level monitoring of mitigation activities in relation to assumed shock or conflict spike is carried out.</p> <p>Interventions before, during and after a shock are informed by the local context and led by the views and priorities of community representative groups.</p> <p>Community representative groups are able to carry out their roles with some donor support before, during and after a shock.</p>	<p>Results of risk analysis are documented and periodically reassessed to detect changes in context/situation and in relation to stakeholder roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Mitigation activities implemented are monitored and modified when necessary to reflect changes in context or exposure to new risks.</p> <p>Community representative groups are able to carry out their roles with very limited or no donor support before, during and after a shock.</p>
<p>Increase ability to make use of early warning information from existing or new systems to implement mitigating actions for reducing impact of shocks (of known shocks and stresses e.g. cyclical drought, flooding, cyclones).</p>	<p>People are consulted and made aware of any likely changes to services in advance.</p> <p>Service providers take measures to prioritize access for most vulnerable people during a shock (may need donor support to do so).</p> <p>Services remain accessible and affordable to users during a shock (so changes to services are minimized).</p>	<p>Working with multiple stakeholders to support improvements in coordination and communication of early warning systems to lessen impact of shocks.</p> <p>Service providers undertake contingency planning and associated preparedness actions to protect and maintain infrastructure in the face of known risks.</p>

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
Infrastructure is built properly, enabling it to fulfil its planned lifetime use, providing good-quality and adequate water, security, ease of access, etc. to all users within the service area (i.e. within the limits of provision either by type of technology, resource type or geography).	<p>Infrastructure allows service providers to provide a quality service to users within the service area (e.g. quality of infrastructure does not compromise water quality, quantity, ease of access, etc.).</p> <p>Safe access for women and girls at all times.</p>	<p>Service providers can temporarily expand provision of a quality service in times of shock or stress to meet increased user demands (e.g. due to internal displacement).</p> <p>Infrastructure is designed and maintained in a risk-sensitive way so that it consistently provides a quality service to users despite shocks and stresses.</p>

Programme outcome 2: Improving service provision

In fragile contexts:

It is important to identify areas of competition for resources and services, whether some groups are receiving preferential access (even if this is based only on perceptions) and the roles that customary authorities are playing in the context, especially if they are competing with formal government bodies for authority

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Working with service providers/duty holders to improve service provision. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing non-revenue water (e.g. reducing illegal connections, improved billing, etc.) - Supporting behaviour change of service users (e.g. to reduce vandalism) - Ensuring that no one is excluded from services. 	Service providers can provide a quality service to all users within the service area according to agreed key performance indicators.	Service providers can incrementally improve service to all users (e.g. move to household connections, increase affordability and reliability).

Programme outcome 3: Market-based service provision is self-sustaining (meaning that very little or no donor funding is needed for day-to-day operation, including maintenance, repair and expansion)

In fragile contexts:

It is important to identify where existing social mechanisms or social safety nets (which may be informal) are already supporting the poorest to gain access to services, for example, where communities have decided that the poorest should pay less for water or where a community joins together to help a widowed household construct a toilet. These existing mechanisms should, where possible, be built in to business models and strengthened, not ignored or removed.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Developing and testing the validity of appropriate business models for different contexts based on assessments, evidence and analysis. Business models may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a structured asset management and maintenance programme - Establishing a financially viable service contract with a local provider (for preventative and post-shock maintenance) - Establishing a revolving fund for rehabilitation work (not donor-dependent) - Establishing a public-private partnership for service provision. 	<p>Business models are profitable – gross margins in excess of 50%.</p> <p>Services are affordable for 100% of the population (which may require the use of smart subsidies).</p> <p><i>In fragile contexts: it is important to remember that just because we are using a markets based service provision approach it does not necessarily mean that we will be able to charge a tariff that allows for full cost recovery or even a realistic market tariff without offering subsidies (in some form) for the poorest</i></p> <p>Service providers can provide a quality service to users within the service area according to agreed key performance indicators.</p>	<p>Service providers can incrementally improve service to users (e.g. move to household connections, etc., increase affordability and reliability).</p>

Programme outcome 4: Making sure that the least able to pay for services are not denied access because they are not able to pay for them

In fragile contexts:

It is important to identify where existing social mechanisms or social safety nets (which may be informal) are already supporting the poorest to gain access to services, for example, where communities have decided that the poorest should pay less for water or where a community joins together to help a widowed household construct a toilet. These existing mechanisms should, where possible, be built in to business models and strengthened, not ignored or removed.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Develop alternative ways for the least able to pay to access services. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with financial institutions to expand affordable financing options (e.g. loans for households and to water and sanitation enterprises, and larger loans to municipalities so they can provide better services) - Develop smart subsidies based on or linked to existing social support mechanisms (smart subsidies should not distort the market). 	<p>Smart subsidies are built into business models and financial projections from the beginning (some donor support to subsidies may be necessary).</p> <p>People are aware of and able to access the financial services or subsidies available.</p> <p>Service providers are aware of the financial services available to them.</p> <p>100% of people in a service area are able to access safe and affordable water.</p>	<p>Public authorities are able to absorb subsidy provision into their responsibilities (i.e. donor support to subsidies is no longer needed).</p> <p>Subsidies do not create any market distortion.</p> <p>100% of people in a country are able to access safe and affordable water.</p>

Theme 4: Water security through protection of resources and ecosystems

Programme outcome 1: Protection and management of water resources (e.g. not allowing over-exploitation).

In fragile contexts:

Tensions between pastoral and nomadic groups over water resources can escalate into violent conflict. All activities must be based on a thorough understanding of the reality of water use by different groups and the potential for conflict escalation or an increase in tensions.

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
<p>Develop and implement water safety plans, including training for relevant people on how to implement a water safety plan.</p> <p><i>In fragile contexts:</i> <i>It is important to identify areas of competition over water resources, including upstream and downstream catchment areas and potential tensions over pollution and over-abstraction.</i></p>	<p>People know how to sustain a healthy environment around their water source.</p> <p>People know how to keep their water safe, from source to point of use (e.g. during transportation/carrying).</p>	<p>People practise healthy water systems maintenance according to a water safety plan.</p>
<p>Establish local watershed development plans with relevant stakeholders which look at the whole water supply system. Plan could include activities on, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting issues around water source protection and how to tackle them (e.g. reduce pollution going into source) - Analysis of preferential access to and use of resources or services - Establishing community-based water resource management groups linked to relevant local or national government actors - Assessing if ecosystem-based interventions can be developed to tackle issues highlighted - Understanding the role of customary authorities or traditional norms in accessing and managing services - The needs of different user groups are included and mechanisms for resolving potential conflicts over use are developed. 	<p>Local watershed development plans are developed and complied with.</p> <p>Activities implemented do not exacerbate existing tensions or do harm in programming implementation areas.</p> <p>No new grievances or conflicts arise because of the activities implemented.</p> <p>Resource management is transparent, fair and equitable</p>	<p>Service providers and service authorities actively manage and regulate resources.</p> <p>Local watershed development plans are continually updated to take account of changes in local context and are responsive to emerging trends and evolving risks.</p> <p>Local watershed development plans are recognized and used to inform national and trans-boundary level decisions on water resources management.</p> <p>Tensions between service user groups are reduced or removed.</p> <p>Extent of enforcement of water access and use by-laws (for watershed protection).</p>

Examples of activities/approaches contributing to outcome	Potential measures of success in moving towards (or achieving) programme outcome	
	Basic	Progressive
Developing ways to encourage smart water use (e.g. re-use, efficient use, treatment options) through technology and behaviour change (e.g. water conservation).	Increase in amount of water saved or re-used both domestically and productively.	Reduced over-extraction/in-efficient use of water leading to improved stability of water resources (within a specific watershed or river basin) and reduced water insecurity for the population in that area.
Water supply systems are planned to account for domestic and productive uses.	Increase in amount of water available for both domestic and productive uses.	Economic diversification of population leading to potentially more secure livelihoods (if done in conjunction with other types of programming). Reduced domestic care burden (especially for women and girls).

7. Supporting our partners

When working on outcomes it is important to understand the limitations of our expertise and that in many cases Oxfam will be one of several actors working to achieve a specific outcome. Consequently, not all the measures of success presented in section 6 will be directly attributable to Oxfam's activities. Some will be related to partner activities, some will be related to Oxfam's role as a convenor around a given theme and some will be related to influencing others to carry out activities that contribute towards meeting an outcome.

Practical areas of potential support:

- Focusing on outcomes rather than activities and outputs requires different ways of monitoring progress towards the outcome. Partners may need support in developing an appropriate system and tools for data gathering.
- Partners need to be allowed to try new approaches without fear of failure. Good monitoring systems supported by tight feedback loops (an adaptive management approach) can support this way of working.
- Developing or enhancing the capacities of partners to do the necessary analysis to support the systems-based approach needed to work with a focus on outcomes.
- Creating spaces for open dialogue between implementing actors to learn from and listen to others working towards the same outcomes.
- Developing or enhancing the ability of partners to do campaigns and advocacy, especially in spaces where Oxfam is acting as convenor rather than direct implementer.
- Support and enable partners to take leadership roles in influencing policy and national decision-making and utilize Oxfam's access and reach to ensure local representation within inter-agency and UN coordination mechanisms.

8. Additional tools available

Oxfam resources

- Quick guide to power analysis, Oxfam GB, 2014
- See Both Sides: A practical guide to gender analysis for quality service delivery, Oxfam GB, 2004
- A How to Guide on Measuring Women's Empowerment, Oxfam GB, 2017
- The Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Toolkit
- The Future is a Choice: The Oxfam Framework and Guidance for Resilient Development, Oxfam GB, 2016
- Resilient development practical guide, Oxfam International, 2017
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Resilience: A companion guide (to the resilience framework), Oxfam GB, 2018

Other agency resources

- How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity, Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012
- WASH sustainability index tool, USAID, 2013
- Participatory learning approaches for resilience: Bringing conflict sensitivity, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation together, World Vision, 2013
- Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators, Asian Development Bank, 2013
- Water & Conflict: A tool for programming, USAID, 2014
- Violence, Gender and WASH: A practitioner's toolkit, SHARE, 2015
- Sex-disaggregated indicators for water assessment, monitoring and reporting, UNESCO, 2015
- Gender-Responsive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Key elements for effective WASH programming, UNICEF, 2017
- USAID and ABCG – Integrated indicators for freshwater conservation and WASH (workshop report), Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group, 2014

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