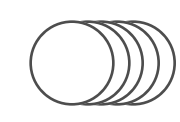


SUSTAINABLE WASH INNOVATION HUB

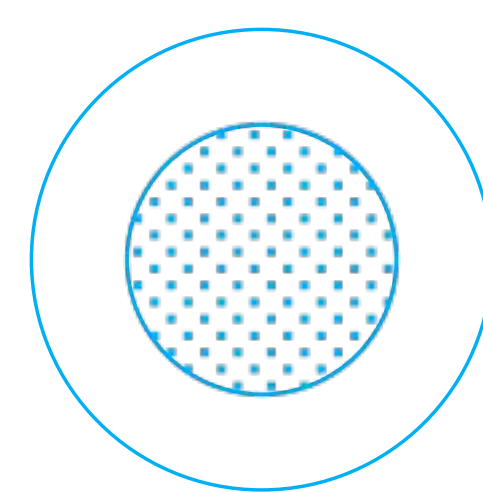
Igniting a WASH revolution for children

 A global home dedicated to accelerating the scale-up of transformational, climate resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) innovations for children and their families.

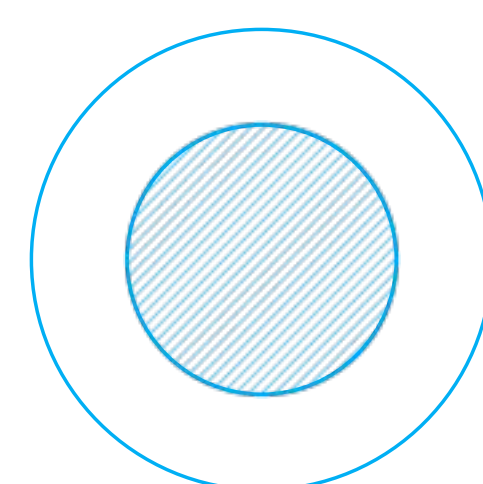
From using satellite data to locate water hidden deep underground to unlocking millions of dollars in innovative financing to build toilets, the UNICEF Sustainable WASH Innovation Hub (the Hub) is working to **accelerate the scale-up of innovations** which have the potential to **transform access** to clean WASH for some of the world's most vulnerable children.

We're not just making incremental improvements - we're harnessing the power of innovation to spark a WASH revolution.

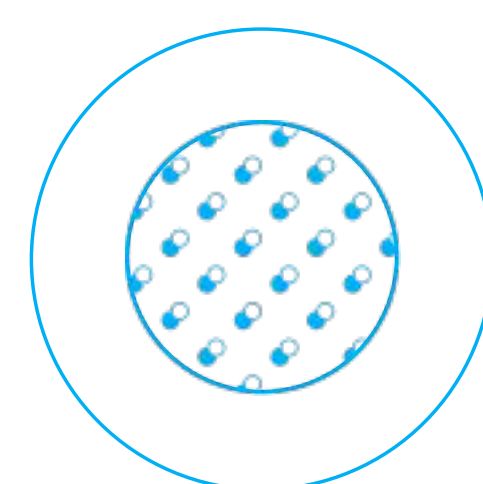
The hub's mission:



Accelerating the scale-up of innovative and climate-resilient WASH solutions with the potential for global impact by;



building capacity within the UNICEF WASH network and partners to embrace and implement innovative approaches and;



strengthening connections and collaboration on WASH innovation across business, academia, donors, academic and development partners.

THE CHALLENGE

Clean water and sanitation are essential for children's health, education, and well-being—yet this right is increasingly threatened by climate change, conflict, and poverty. Today, 1 in 4 people lack access to safely managed drinking water, and nearly half the world's population lacks access to safely managed hygiene and sanitation.

Meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of clean water and sanitation for all by 2030 requires bold solutions. UNICEF's Sustainable WASH Innovation Hub (the Hub) is accelerating the development and scale-up of high-impact innovations that can drive systemic change and reach millions of vulnerable children.



OUR APPROACH

The UNICEF Sustainable WASH Innovation Hub identifies, refines, and scales high-impact solutions that address the most pressing challenges in WASH. We go beyond technology—supporting innovative programmatic approaches, management practices, and financing models that strengthen WASH systems. The Hub also:

- **Connects global actors** across academia, the private sector, donors, and governments to drive WASH innovation.
- **Mobilizes investment** by facilitating financing models that unlock sustainable funding for WASH solutions.
- **Builds capacity** by equipping governments, local businesses, and UNICEF teams with the knowledge and tools to implement and scale innovative WASH services.
- **Strengthens risk management** to ensure that WASH innovations are sustainable, resilient, and scalable across multiple regions.

As part of the UNICEF Office of Innovation and supported by the Danish government, the Hub plays a critical role in advancing proven WASH solutions, helping UNICEF deliver impact at scale.

THE WASH HUB PORTFOLIO: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INNOVATION

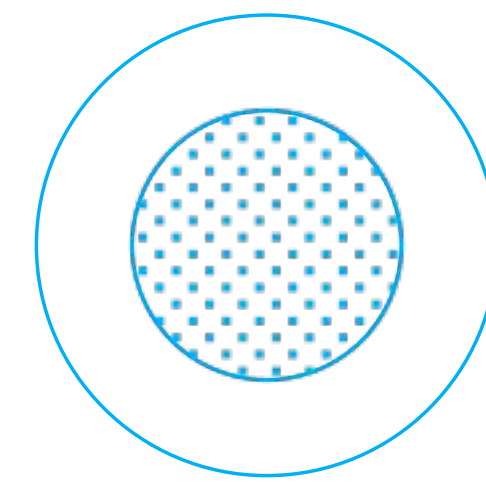
Our portfolio-based approach is a way to identify, validate and prioritise investment in transformational, climate-resilient innovations. Our current portfolio includes solutions with the potential to provide tens of millions of people with sustainable WASH services.

“Climate change is intensifying the water crisis. Through our partnership with UNICEF, we are investing in innovative approaches that build resilience and ensure long-term access to clean water and sanitation.”

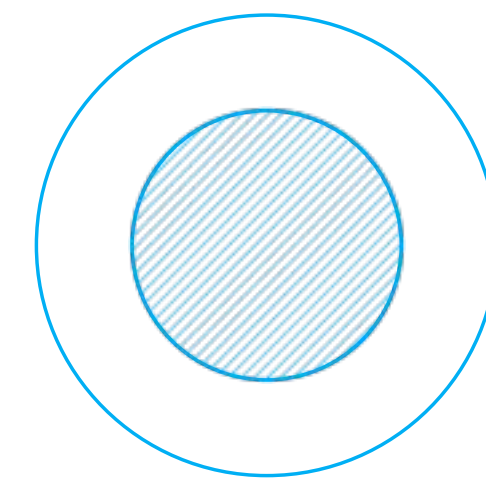
— **Karin Poulsen,**

Director of Green Diplomacy and Climate,
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

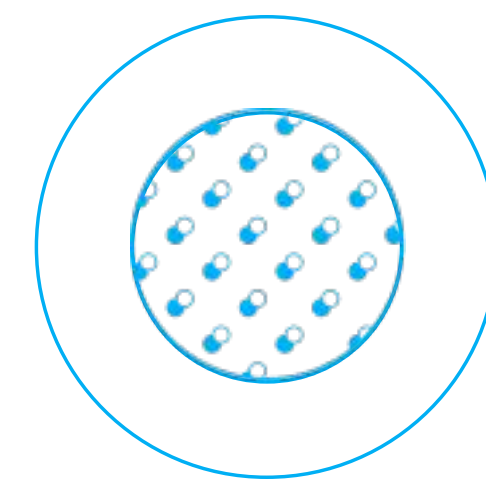
Problems our Portfolio is working to solve:



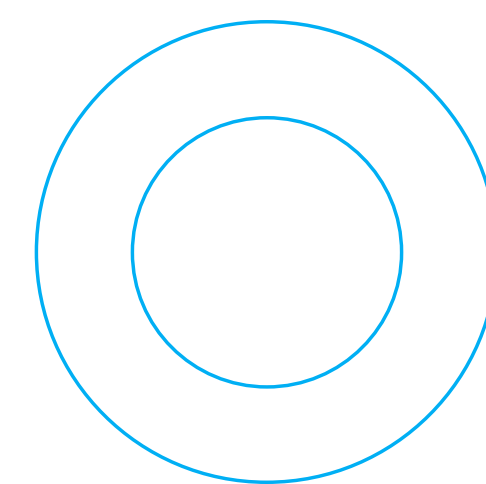
Lack of adequate and climate- sensitive groundwater mapping and development.



Insufficient climate-sensitive data and understanding of integrating climate change impacts into WASH programming.



Complexities in innovative finance which make it difficult to implement, scale, develop and identify investable programmes.



A lack of supportive environments for WASH small and medium enterprises.



EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO SOLUTIONS

- **More Water More Life** combines satellite imagery, digital mapping, and local knowledge to locate deep groundwater in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Angola, benefiting hundreds of thousands. By improving groundwater detection accuracy, it increases drilling success for sustainable water sources. Endorsed by the World Economic Forum, UNICEF is scaling the initiative to reach millions with safe water.
- **Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR)** is a low-cost solution that stores excess surface water underground during wet seasons for use during dry periods. MAR has successfully improved water security in Timor-Leste and Iraq, ensuring children and communities have reliable access to water during droughts. The Hub is working with governments and local stakeholders to expand MAR to multiple regions facing climate-induced water scarcity.
- **Sanitation Financing Facility (SFF)** is a UNICEF-brokered blended financing model that unlocks capital for household sanitation improvements in sub-Saharan Africa. By securing donor-backed guarantees and leveraging private-sector investment, SFF is set to mobilize millions of dollars in affordable credit for households and sanitation businesses. This model is poised to expand access to improved sanitation for millions of people.
- **Nature Based Solutions (NBS) for Urban Wastewater Treatment** refers to approaches that leverage natural processes, ecosystems and biodiversity to treat wastewater in an environmentally sustainable and cost-effective way. Successfully piloted with the support of UNICEF in Dhaka, Bangladesh, NBS solutions have demonstrated potential for broader urban deployment across Africa and Asia, improving sanitation while enhancing urban biodiversity and resilience.

BUILDING CAPACITY

With a presence in **over 100 countries**, UNICEF's WASH network is the **largest of its kind**, providing a strong foundation for the Hub's work in scaling innovation and financial mechanisms in the sector. The Hub develops knowledge products and works closely with UNICEF colleagues across global, regional, and country offices, capitalizing on the organization's extensive field presence. It also helps national governments strengthen risk management and confidently adopt innovative approaches. This approach is designed to support innovation in WASH broadly, extending beyond the Hub's own portfolio.

CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION

The Hub is a convener of global WASH innovation, fostering partnerships and knowledge exchange through:

- **Technical and Solution Advisory Groups** are being established, forming a dynamic network of experts from both the public and private sectors. These groups strengthen the WASH innovation ecosystem by expanding stakeholder connections and ensuring technical rigour in advancing WASH solutions.
- A curated online **knowledge management and contacts database** is being developed to acceleration innovation across the WASH sector. Beyond supporting portfolio projects, this platform will facilitate collaboration and scale solutions more broadly.
- The Hub **convenes strategic events** to engage the global WASH innovation community, fostering collaboration, showcasing key solutions, and demonstrating thought leadership in driving progress toward UNICEF's goals.



INNOVATIVE FINANCE

Innovative finance is key to scaling WASH solutions, yet lack of investment remains a major bottleneck due to perceived high risks. The Hub helps mitigate these risks by providing financial resources and hands-on support to country offices, guiding them in project design, scale-up strategies, and the development of financially sustainable models.

The private sector plays a key role in innovative finance, mobilizing resources to support development and humanitarian goals. Blended finance, which combines public and private capital, helps de-risk investments and attract funding to the WASH sector. The Hub identifies and facilitates innovative financing mechanisms to complement existing resources and bridge critical funding gaps.

“We’d like to thank the UNICEF Sustainable WASH Innovation Hub for their support. With their help, we’re working to scale up access to sanitation for families across Togo.”

— **Dr. Wotabe Kokou Marin,**

Secretary General, Ministry of Health, Togo

To enable investment in WASH, the Hub focuses on:

Strengthening capacity by:

- Addressing technical and business capability gaps among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs);
- Supporting governments in creating policies and regulations that enable innovation and financing; and
- Enhancing financial institutions’ understanding of the WASH sector.

• **Fostering collaboration by** engaging investors, governments, and the private sector to improve governance, build household demand for WASH services, and remove investment barriers.

• **Demonstrating proof of concept** by developing business cases for revolving funds and private-sector investment in portfolio solutions.

• **Driving scale** by creating pathways for accelerated growth, generating evidence to support replication, and enabling rapid scaling.

CONTACT US

We are working to ignite a WASH revolution in climate-resilient WASH solutions—but scaling these innovations requires collaboration. We invite partners, investors, and innovators to join us in driving transformative change for children worldwide. Want to learn more?

Get in touch: washinnovation@unicef.org

