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The U.S. Government Framework for Action

Addressing Water Challenges in the Developing World



Three pillars of USAID's strategic Framework for Action for Water.



WASH educational program is being celebrated in the local community.

To guide its investments in the water and sanitation sectors, the U.S. Government (USG) has developed a *Framework for Action* that demonstrates its commitment to achieve a water secure world where people and countries have reliable and sustainable access to acceptable quantities and quality of water and sanitation facilities to meet human, economic and ecosystem needs.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The *Framework* outlines three key program areas for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) missions to invest in around the world:

- Increasing access to water supply and sanitation, and promoting better hygiene;
- Improving water resources management among competing needs; and
- Improving water productivity, especially in agriculture and industry.

The priorities and approaches incorporated in the *Framework* draw upon the growing body of internationally endorsed principles and good practices. A key strategic imperative is that the water issues are best developed within this broader context.

INCREASING ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION, AND PROMOTING BETTER HYGIENE

Understanding that the gap in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is immense – from the financial, technical capacity and governance perspectives – the USG recognizes the need for multi-actor action and will focus its investments on:

- Capacity building of small-scale rural and peri-urban service providers.
- Improving the operating environment, operations and financial sustainability of utilities that serve cities and towns that are undergoing the most rapid population growth.
- Mobilizing capital from domestic markets for infrastructure development on a permanent and sustainable basis.
- Improving household hygiene and maintaining water quality at the household level.
- Capitalizing on investments by humanitarian assistance/disaster programs in water supply and sanitation.



Efficient operation of a new wastewater treatment plant and interceptor sewer is helping preserve Vietnam's spectacular beauty and tourist industry in Halong Bay.



Managing water use efficiency in agriculture can improve quality of produce for farmers.

IMPROVING WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Based on experience over the past several decades, the USG has learned that investment in policy and legal reforms, building local capacity and strengthening water resources planning, management and governance yield more lasting change than investments in infrastructure. Therefore, USG investments in water resources management will address water quantity and quality issues by:

- Policy, regulatory, and institutional frameworks that address planning at the appropriate scale and across relevant sectors.
- Supply optimization, including assessments of surface and groundwater, water balance, wastewater reuse, and environmental impacts.
- Demand management, including cost-recovery policies, water use efficiency technologies, and decentralized water resource management authority.
- Equitable access to water resources through participatory and transparent governance.
- Financing to sustain investments in water resources management and protection.
- Attention to hydrologic variability and climate change and taking actions to mitigate and minimize impacts of droughts and floods.

IMPROVING WATER PRODUCTIVITY

Competing needs for water require improvements to water productivity and efficiency across all sectors. The USG will focus investments on cost-effective and efficient approaches that are sustainable, market-friendly, and for which sound business cases can be made. These include:

- Improving water use efficiency in agriculture.
- Helping countries adapt to climate variability and climate change.
- Reducing water pollution by industry.
- Improving water use efficiency in cities.

PARTNERS FOR IMPACT

In making investment decisions, the USG takes into account numerous factors, especially opportunities to leverage its investments with those of other donors and where partnership opportunities exist with private companies, and international foundations and NGOs.

To download complete copies of the *Framework for Action and Water for the Poor Act Congressional Report*, please visit: www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross_cutting_programs/water