



GWSP

GLOBAL WATER
SECURITY & SANITATION
PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT **2023**

Executive Summary



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About the Water Global Practice

Launched in 2014, the World Bank Group's Water Global Practice brings together financing, knowledge, and implementation in one platform. By combining the Bank's global knowledge with country investments, this model generates more firepower for transformational solutions to help countries grow sustainably.

Visit us at worldbank.org/water and worldbank.org/gwsp

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WORLD BANK GROUP

About GWSP

The Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership was launched in 2017 as an international partnership to support countries to meet the targets related to water and sanitation under the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those of Goal 6.

GWSP is a multidonor trust fund administered by the World Bank Group's Water Global Practice (GP) and supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austria's Federal Ministry of Finance, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the US Agency for International Development.

GWSP acts as the Water GP's "think tank," providing client countries and other development partners with global knowledge, innovations, and country-level technical support while also leveraging World Bank resources and financial instruments.

GWSP-funded knowledge and technical assistance

influence the design and implementation of client policies and programs as well as water sector investments and reforms carried out by governments with the support of the World Bank and other partners.

GWSP expands the global knowledge base through its broad dissemination of knowledge and analytics. Dissemination includes making experts available for hundreds of speaking engagements and active participation in water-related conferences and meetings around the globe.

The analytical and knowledge work produced by GWSP is open-source and available globally to all development partners. While a strong emphasis is placed on quality analytics and delivery through policy dialogues with client governments and World Bank lending operations, it is equally important that the material finds a wide, global audience.

Influence on World Bank Lending

GWSP's unique position within the Water GP enables it to influence, through knowledge and technical assistance, the design and implementation of water sector reforms and infrastructure projects financed by the World Bank. In fiscal year 2023 alone, GWSP provided critical knowledge and analytical support to teams that delivered \$13.53 billion in World Bank lending.

GWSP Entry Points

GWSP supports World Bank Group task teams and clients through three distinct entry points:

LONG-TERM COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT

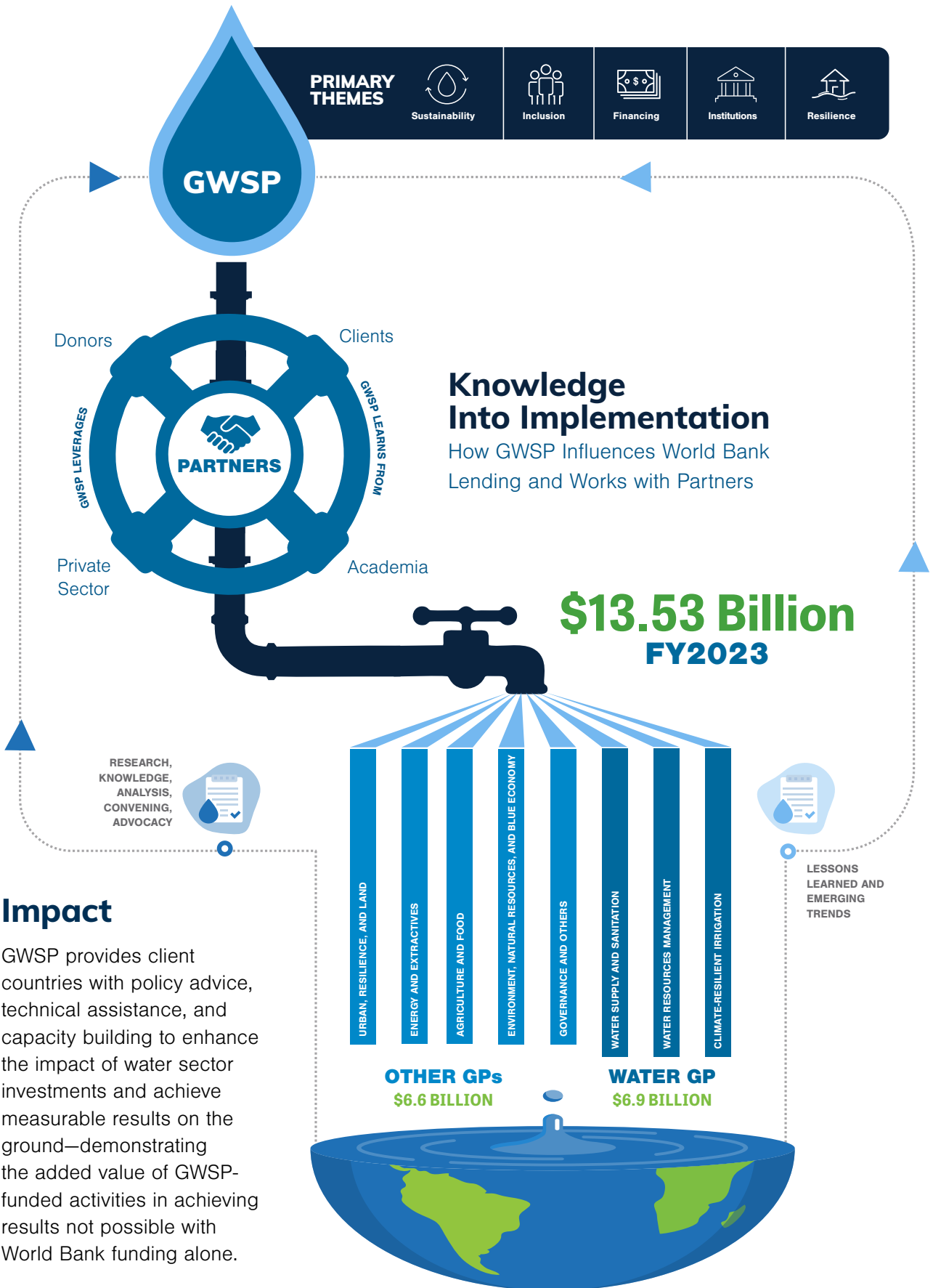
- Lays the framework for country strategies between lending operations or before lending operations begin.
- Strengthens institutions before and during reforms.
- Provides project implementation support to agencies with lower capacity, especially in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

KNOWLEDGE INTO IMPLEMENTATION

- Leverages the global reach of the Water GP, sharing lessons from one part of the world with another.
- Drives investments and innovation through cutting-edge analyses.
- Supports proof-of-concept applications.
- Shifts mindsets through advocacy and outreach.

JUST-IN-TIME TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Enhances project designs with highly specialized global knowledge.
- Offers a rapid response to changing circumstances.
- Provides an unparalleled capacity-building model based on peer-to-peer learning.



Impact

GWSP provides client countries with policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity building to enhance the impact of water sector investments and achieve measurable results on the ground—demonstrating the added value of GWSP-funded activities in achieving results not possible with World Bank funding alone.





Executive Summary

Key Themes



GWSP Activities in Climate-Resilient Irrigation



GWSP Activities in Water Resources Management



GWSP Activities in Water Supply and Sanitation



Advancing Results



Knowledge to Go Further

Fiscal year (FY) 2023 was a pivotal year in which the world took note of the urgent need to accelerate action to address the global water crisis. This realization was in part due to dramatic floods and droughts caused by a changing climate. The first United Nations conference on water in nearly half a century brought the international community together to urgently set the world back on track to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.

The World Bank Group, with tremendous support from the Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership (GWSP), assumed a leadership position in confronting the water crisis by providing tailored policy advice and evidence-based solutions to help countries overcome their most critical water challenges. GWSP continued its work of the past six years in advancing global knowledge and building the government capacity needed to support the sustainable delivery of water services. In FY23, the Partnership leaned into four efforts:

Addressing a renewed urgency for universal access to water and sanitation. GWSP helped World Bank water and sanitation projects achieve results by providing tools to enable utilities to deliver inclusive, resilient, and sustainable services; technical assistance to promote circular, resilient, inclusive, and water- and sanitation-secure cities; and policy advice to improve policies, institutions, and regulations, including on pricing and subsidies.

Connecting water, climate, and the economy. GWSP led global efforts to increase awareness and

understanding of the centrality of water in climate and economic development dialogues. For example, the GWSP-supported FY23 Bank report *The Hidden Wealth of Nations: Groundwater in Times of Climate Change* shows how groundwater serves as nature’s multirisk insurance and is key to poverty reduction, resilience, and climate adaptation. GWSP also began developing a new drought business line that will help it more systematically build drought resilience in client countries.

Encouraging stronger private sector participation in the water sector. To meet SDG 6, investment must increase sixfold from current levels by 2030. The Bank, the largest investor in water in emerging markets, redoubled its efforts to illustrate how the private sector can and must invest in water. GWSP supported these efforts. One example: in Tunisia, it contributed to the design and implementation of public-private partnerships to deliver sanitation services.

Setting the stage for the Global Facility for Transboundary Waters Cooperation. Given that almost half the world’s rivers span national boundaries, GWSP established the global facility to bring together key partners and institutions to help countries understand transboundary issues, identify solutions, promote agreements, and catalyze investment in support of water security. The facility also helps countries address broader global challenges, such as conflict prevention and biodiversity preservation.

Key Themes

Fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV), poor water resources management, and climate change risk form a negative feedback loop that impede efforts to pursue inclusive and sustainable development and, therefore, to eliminate poverty. People living in regions marked by FCV have a significantly lower probability of accessing safely managed drinking water (43 percent) than people in more stable areas (82 percent). In FY23, GWSP supported development of the water sector in 18 countries affected by FCV. The Partnership provided analytical support to inform policy making, hosted learning and knowledge-sharing experiences, created tools and protocols, and implemented innovative pilot projects. This support helped provide 3.45 million people with access to improved water sources and 2.88 million





people with access to improved sanitation services through World Bank-financed projects in FCV settings.

Social inclusion, diversity, and equity in the water sector increase ownership and impact. GWSP's social inclusion program started with a focus on gender but has broadened to include guidelines and tools that clients can use to reach other marginalized groups—youth, indigenous people, and people with disabilities—and to effectively engage all citizens. For example, to account for the needs of excluded and marginalized groups in project design, the Partnership developed a sector-specific screening tool using indicators, project examples, and a set of questions to measure disability inclusion. In addition, GWSP supported integration of an approach and an associated online diagnostic tool (the EPIC tool) for client governments to analyze their capacity to engage citizens in flood and drought mitigation and to conduct inclusive participatory water resources management. The approach and tool were tested in nine countries in FY23.

The combination of **climate change** and water scarcity may lead to regions losing as much as 6 percent of their gross domestic product, triggering migration and escalating conflicts. Yet water often remains inadequately valued. In FY23, GWSP provided support for 26 Bank country climate and development reports, which help countries prioritize actions to meet their climate and development goals. Moreover, GWSP provided technical expertise to help design projects that were expected to

offset greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by, for example, capturing biogas and reducing methane emissions through sanitation investments. Such activities will help projects approved in FY23 achieve a net reduction in their expected GHG emissions of more than 700,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.

Decreasing natural storage, deteriorating storage infrastructure, and other factors have led to a significant gap in global **water storage**. In FY23, GWSP provided coordinated support to teams working on water storage across the Bank's portfolio of projects, enabling the Bank to take a more programmatic, global approach to closing the storage gap. A major GWSP-funded Bank report, *What the Future Has in Store: A New Paradigm for Water Storage*, called for a new approach to water storage, with solutions such as expanding natural water storage in landscapes as soil moisture. GWSP activities also supported Bank dam safety projects that build on the Bank's history of assisting client countries with risk-based approaches to dam management.

GWSP Activities in Climate-Resilient Irrigation

Climate-resilient irrigation is a fundamental component of agricultural water management in the context of a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss that has intensified competition for water resources across various economic sectors. To underscore the importance of climate adaptation and

mitigation in achieving a water-, food-, and nutrition-secure world, the World Bank's Water Global Practice (GP) changed the name of its "water in agriculture" business line to "climate-resilient irrigation" (CRI). GWSP supports a diverse global portfolio of CRI projects, from low- to high-tech, government- to farmer-led, low- to high-cost, and small to large operations. These projects to improve existing irrigated agriculture and to support rainfed and conservation agriculture have increased irrigation efficiency and provided valuable insights to inform investments.

GWSP-funded knowledge and technical assistance for CRI projects in FY23 included efforts to boost hydroinformatics and water accounting in Ukraine to establish the bedrock for well-informed decisions. In another initiative, farmer-led irrigation development (FLID) continued to expand operations and reach new individuals, communities, and countries. The impacts of the FLID initiative grew in countries where it already existed, such as Uganda. In Morocco, the CRI team developed and disseminated knowledge related to a circular water economy. GWSP also supported the Irrigation Operator of the Future (iOF) toolkit, which aims to improve the performance of service delivery in irrigation plans. During FY23, the iOF team engaged with the Perkerra Irrigation Scheme in Baringo County, Kenya.

GWSP Activities in Water Resources Management

The combined impacts of climate change on water resources—including flooding and increased rainfall variability, pollution, and resource mismanagement—are progressively diminishing water availability and security. Amid this uncertainty, GWSP support addressed a range of challenges, from transboundary waters management to disaster risk reduction.

In South Sudan, one initiative enabled a structured program of support for the water sector, with investments in flood protection and climate resilience for vulnerable populations. In Türkiye, GWSP provided technical assistance to support both the construction of a wastewater treatment plant and reuse of treated wastewater for water-scarce irrigated areas. In Indonesia, GWSP supported projects to improve climate-resilient irrigation for farmers and to bolster sustainable water supply and sanitation services that are aligned with the



In FY23,
GWSP informed
\$13.5 billion in newly
reported lending
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billion** in all lending
projects.

findings of a comprehensive water security diagnostic funded by the Partnership. In Nepal, GWSP helped improve the delivery of dependable water supplies to farmers and increase the capacity of local governments to provide safely managed water and sanitation services.

GWSP Activities in Water Supply and Sanitation

Lack of access to safely managed water supply and sanitation services constitutes a public health, economic, and environmental emergency in low- and middle-income countries. GWSP helps countries achieve universal access to water and sanitation services through support for the creation of policies, institutions, and regulations. It assists with development of innovative and scalable solutions to key challenges, such as how to rapidly increase access to safe water and sanitation, ensure maintenance of existing infrastructure, and improve quality of services.

In FY23, GWSP-funded knowledge and technical assistance influenced the design and implementation of water sector reforms and infrastructure projects on various fronts—from a World Bank guarantee mobilizing private finance in the water sector in Angola, to inter-sectoral work such as an operational toolkit for water and sanitation services in health care facilities globally. Other notable efforts include a \$1.25 billion project to dramatically boost water and sanitation services in the Democratic Republic of Congo, public-private partnerships to deliver sanitation services in Tunisia, and expansion of wastewater-based epidemiology from Latin America to other regions.

Advancing Results

The GWSP Results Framework tracks how the Partnership helps client countries improve and deliver water services by enhancing the impact of the World Bank's water portfolio and achieving measurable results on the ground. FY23 results capture the added value of GWSP's "knowledge into implementation" model. GWSP informed \$13.5 billion in newly reported lending projects and \$37.7 billion in all lending projects (including previously reported projects). Among the newly influenced lending projects, 15 were linked to 8 countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Niger, Nigeria, and Somalia) and one economy (West Bank and Gaza) in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

About half of the lending projects influenced by GWSP in FY23 were led by global practices outside the Water GP. This is consistent with the role that water plays in all facets of the Bank's work, including in ensuring that clients are prepared to adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts. For example, GWSP informed approximately \$2.66 billion in the Agriculture and Food GP's lending portfolio and more than \$1.84 billion in the portfolio of the Environment, Natural Resources, and the Blue Economy GP.

In FY23, GWSP supported the following achievements:

Inclusion. Eighty-nine percent of water operations financed by the International Development Association, the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries, included actions to create employment opportunities for women in medium- and high-skilled water sector jobs. More than half (54 percent) of the projects used disability-inclusive approaches in water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (compared with a target of 60 percent by FY30).

Resilience. All new projects incorporated resilience in the design of water-related activities, in line with performance in FY22. Furthermore, the percentage of projects with climate change co-benefits increased from 58 percent in FY22 to 65 percent in FY23. Additionally, newly approved projects are supporting eight countries (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) and one economy (West Bank and Gaza) affected by fragility and conflict—two more such countries than in FY22.

Results Reported By World Bank Lending Operations

GWSP's knowledge, analytics, and technical assistance influence how policies and projects are designed and implemented, contributing to better project outcomes:



11.34

million people with access to an improved water source



15.87

million people with access to improved sanitation



2,559

schools and health centers with access to improved water and sanitation services



5,158

water user associations created/strengthened



2.9

million hectares under sustainable land/water management practices



23

Institutions with water resources management monitoring systems



Financing. The percentage of projects that supported reforms/actions improving financial viability decreased (from 89 percent in FY22 to 81 percent in FY23), as did the percentage of projects with an explicit focus on leveraging private finance (from 22 percent to 8 percent). This was the first year that both climate-resilient irrigation and water resources management projects were being assessed under both indicators because these projects typically have been publicly funded.

Institutions. The percentage of projects that supported reforms/actions that strengthen institutional capacity was slightly lower in FY23 (96 percent) than in FY22 (100 percent). Only one project approved in FY23 does not strengthen that capacity: the Water Emergency Relief Project for Afghanistan.

Sustainability. All 26 Water GP-approved projects promoted sustainable and efficient water use, in line with performance in FY22. Furthermore, the indicator for rural water supply and sanitation that measures the functionality of water points held steady at 100 percent in FY23.

Knowledge to Go Further

GWSP enables the exchange of knowledge required to address the swiftly evolving challenges encountered by the World Bank's clients. Communication plays a vital role in ensuring that the innovative research produced by GWSP reaches key policy makers and implementers.

Putting Knowledge into Use. GWSP supports a comprehensive learning program for staff as well as country counterparts and other external practitioners. It includes an online webinar series and in-person events that allow teams to share emerging developments, interesting initiatives, and impactful activity from related sectors in a timely and low-cost manner.

Connecting Operational Teams with Technical Expertise. The Water GP's Knowledge Management and Learning (KML) program connects operational teams with technical expertise and knowledge through the AskWater Help Desk and the Water Expertise Facility. The AskWater Help Desk responded to more than 120 queries, many from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and East and Central Asia. The GWSP's Water Expertise Facility supported 28 activities, predominantly in Africa.

Curating and Disseminating Knowledge. The KML program produced more than 50 publications and translations, including several flagship reports. Online learning opportunities are another cornerstone of the program. The comprehensive Water Utility Creditworthiness eLearning course launched in FY23 was developed in collaboration with the Private Infrastructure Development Group.

GWSP Communications. GWSP's strategic communications leaned into country-level engagements. To illustrate how GWSP operations at the country level enrich its knowledge products and vice versa, GWSP produced an array of communications, including blogs, immersive stories, feature stories, and videos. The Partnership also integrated a new customer relationship management system in its newsletter to encourage use of its online products, to provide a better user experience, and to improve analytics and reporting.



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