

IRC

India

IRC India Strategy 2017-2021

Building WASH systems to deliver
the Sustainable Development Goals



Supporting water sanitation
and hygiene services for life

At IRC, we believe that turning on a working tap should not be a surprise or cause for celebration. We believe in a world where water, sanitation and hygiene services are fundamental utilities that everyone can take for granted. For good.

We face a complex challenge. Every year, thousands of projects within and beyond the WASH sector fail – the result of short-term targets and interventions, at the cost of long-term service solutions.

This leaves around a third of the world's poorest people without access to the most basic of human rights, and leads directly to economic, social and health problems on a global scale. IRC exists to continually challenge and shape the established practices of the WASH sector.

Through collaboration and the active application of our expertise, we work with governments, service providers and international organisations to deliver systems and services that are truly built to last.

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This document presents IRC India medium term strategic framework and theory of change for the years 2017 to 2021.

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Abbreviations

CBGA	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
CURE	Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence
DGIS	the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation
HH	Household
IHWASH	Innovation Hub for Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Solutions in India
NIUA	National Institute of Urban Affairs
ODF	Open-Defecation Free
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDG 6	Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation for All
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



1 Introduction

This programme strategy has been prepared by IRC India in consultation with key partners to guide the delivery of IRC programming in India from 2017-2021. It sets out IRC India's goals in relation to the IRC overall mission and goals contributing to the SDGs. The IRC Strategic Framework and theory of change 2017-2030 is primarily dedicated to achieving SDG 6, and within this is focused on Targets 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3. IRC India aligns these broad goals with the vision and priorities of the Government of India.

IRC has been active in India for more than four decades in the form of support to projects managed from IRC headquarters in the Netherlands. Since 2010, IRC started focusing on specific countries and districts to allow for long-term engagement. IRC India now has national full-time consultants on the ground and a growing portfolio of activity; engaging in action research, innovation, knowledge management and advisory assignments. This local presence has allowed IRC to be better known in the WASH sector in India.

Some of the larger projects in the past ten years have been WASHCost, Community Water Plus, Watershed and Innovation Hub for Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Solutions in India (IHUWASH). The WASHCost project, which aims to account for full life-cycle costs of services, brought about recognition of IRC's work at the state (Andhra Pradesh) and national level. The international training of senior officials (supported by UNICEF) in 2013 further helped in the appreciation of IRC's work and approach amongst state and national level government officials in the WASH sector.

BOX 1 THE INDICATORS FOR SDG 6

SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation

6.1 Water

For a **safely managed** drinking water service, people must use an improved source meeting three criteria:

- it should be accessible on premises,
- water should be available when needed, and
- the water supplied should be free from contamination.

If the improved source does not meet any one of these criteria but a round trip to collect water takes 30 minutes or less, then it will be classified as a **basic** drinking water service. If water collection from an improved source exceeds 30 minutes it will be categorised as a **limited** service. The JMP also differentiates populations using **unimproved** sources such as unprotected wells or springs, and populations drinking surface water collected directly from a river, dam, lake, stream or irrigation canal.

SDG 6.2.1 Sanitation

For **safely managed** sanitation services, people should use improved sanitation facilities, which are not shared with other households, and the excreta produced should either be:

- treated and disposed in situ,
- stored temporarily and then emptied and transported to treatment off-site, or
- transported through a sewer with wastewater and then treated off-site.

If the excreta from **improved** sanitation facilities are not safely managed, then people using those facilities will be classed as having a **basic** sanitation service. People using improved facilities, which are shared with other households, will be classified as having a **limited** service.

SDG 6.2.2 Hygiene

The presence of a handwashing facility with soap and water on premises has been identified as the priority indicator for global monitoring of hygiene. Households that have a handwashing facility with soap and water available on premises will meet the criteria for a **basic** hygiene facility. Households that have a facility but lack water or soap will be classified as having a **limited** facility, and distinguished from households that have **no facility** at all. In some cultures, ash, soil, sand or other materials are used as handwashing agents, but these are less effective than soap and are therefore counted as limited handwashing facilities.

Source: WHO/ UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme

The India Country Programme is advocating for strong and sustainable WASH systems. It does so through consortia with others, including Watershed (in Bihar and Odisha), the Strategic Partnership with the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and at national level with the National Institute of Urban Affairs that is leading a consortium on innovation hubs for urban WASH in which IRC plays a capacity development role. In the focus area (Ganjam District, Odisha), IRC has the opportunity to build and strengthen district hubs and to share its work and approach based on evidence within the state of Odisha and at national level in India. The district level work also allows more opportunities for civil society partnerships and collaborations.

In India, the investments for water and sanitation come from the union and state government. There are ambitious targets in the national missions and strategies concerning access to services. The experience has been that the regression of these services is also significantly high. IRC's strategy is to focus on a district and support the district by jointly working on the different elements (building blocks) to strengthen the system that makes the services possible, and to align the different (administrative) levels towards the same goal of continued and sustainable water and sanitation services.

As mentioned above, the in-country presence has helped in building collaborations, one such is the IHUWASH project supported by USAID. This project looks at urban water and sanitation services in three cities and came about from collaborative work with Taru Leading Edge, Ennovent and the National Institute of Urban Affairs. While being a strategic partner in this

complex project, IRC's focus and interest area is capacity building of urban local bodies to plan and monitor sustainable water and sanitation services.

1.1 THE CHALLENGE

Unequal income distribution

India is home to 1.24 billion people (Census 2011) living in 29 states and 7 union territories. The performance of states with respect to basic services and development varies greatly. Taking for example, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, the highest is in Goa at USD 4,903 and the lowest is in Bihar at USD 682.

Operationalisation of national policies and programmes

India has a federal structure, where water and sanitation are state subjects. Therefore, the policies, strategies, and guidelines are provided by the national ministries and state governments. The key national programmes are:

- the National Strategy for Rural Drinking Water, which aims to reach 90% of rural households with a piped water supply by 2021.
- the National Swachh Bharat Mission, a sanitation programme of the central government to make India, urban and rural, open-defecation free by 2019.
- the National Urban Sanitation Policy (2008), which includes planning aspects and benchmarks for water and sanitation. These benchmarks are now (2018) proposed to be modified to include benchmarks for onsite sanitation. Policies and strategies are adapted or modified by the states.
- the Faecal Sludge and Septage Management policy, which was launched by the National Urban Ministry in 2017, for state government to adapt and implement.

While these policies and programmes and the associated monitoring systems are a positive attempt towards addressing safely managed water and sanitation services, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. The biggest gap is in the implementation of these policies, the distribution of responsibilities across various departments and the lack of coordination between them and capacities of these departments.

BOX 2: EXAMPLE OF CHALLENGES IN OPERATIONALISATION OF STATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

For example, in focus district (Odisha), the State Urban Water Supply Policy (2013) envisages all household to have access to water through direct-piped connections and urban poor to receive all the facilities available to other residents at an affordable cost by 2030. For sanitation, there is the Odisha Urban Sanitation Strategy (2017) which has as goal to make all cities and towns in the state clean, sanitised, safe, healthy and liveable, managed by Urban Local Bodies with active citizen and stakeholder participation in 10 years (2027). While these policies are in place, implementation remains a challenge, with roles and coordination often ambiguous. In the case of Odisha State, there are:

- the Department of Panchayati Raj and Housing and Urban Affairs, which are responsible for the provision of these services, playing mostly the role of service authority
- the Odisha State Water & Sanitation Mission for planning, monitoring, and implementing
- the Odisha Water Supply & Sewerage Board for planning, monitoring and implementing

1.2 EMERGING TRENDS

Access to sanitation

The national government’s focus on sanitation (toilets) is expected to comparatively reduce by October 2019, the deadline for the country becoming ODF. It is hoped that some national level interest will remain post-construction for operation and maintenance, and safe service and management of faecal waste.

In the case of Odisha, the state government has formulated recent policies with the support of donors, for example, the Urban Sanitation (2017), and the Faecal Sludge and Septage Management strategies

can be attributed to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s presence. There is certain capacity building work initiated to support the implementation of these strategies.

In the case of Bihar, the World Bank’s Bihar Transformative Development Project (2016-2022), which looks to enhance household-level incomes and improve access to and use of nutrition and sanitation services among targeted households through strengthening self-help groups, is moving towards its second phase. It would be an interesting collaboration for IRC India to explore this work under the Watershed project in Bihar.

Finance

The 15th Finance Commission has been announced, and the recommendations of this commission would be crucial for us to see whether the flow of funds to the Gram Panchayat (lowest administrative level) remains similar, or if other conditions change.

1.3 2012-2016 BUSINESS PLAN: LESSONS LEARNED

Reflecting on the 2012-2016 business plan, we learned the importance of presence on the ground, to link district, state and national level, and the challenges in doing so with a small programme. For this reason, IRC India will shift focus towards building learning alliances - a district hub with local (district/state) organisations to leverage our work.

The IRC systems approach has been adopted by our partners (Wetlands, Akvo and local partner Nidan and Gram-Utthan) working in the rural areas. WaterAid, our Agenda for Change partner at global level, is also active in Odisha, however, IRC India has not capitalised on this partnership.

The building of learning alliances is also motivated by IRC India’s inability to acquire funding, as it is not registered as a legal entity in India. As such, IRC India relies on leveraging funds and working through partnerships.

IRC has been contemplating the idea of a local registration in India for a number of years. On examining various options, the option of a non-profit company seemed most appropriate. However, meeting other sector experts and seeing the trend of NGOs in the WASH sector, the team found it more cost-effective at this stage to explore collaborations with like-minded organisations instead of starting a new organisation.

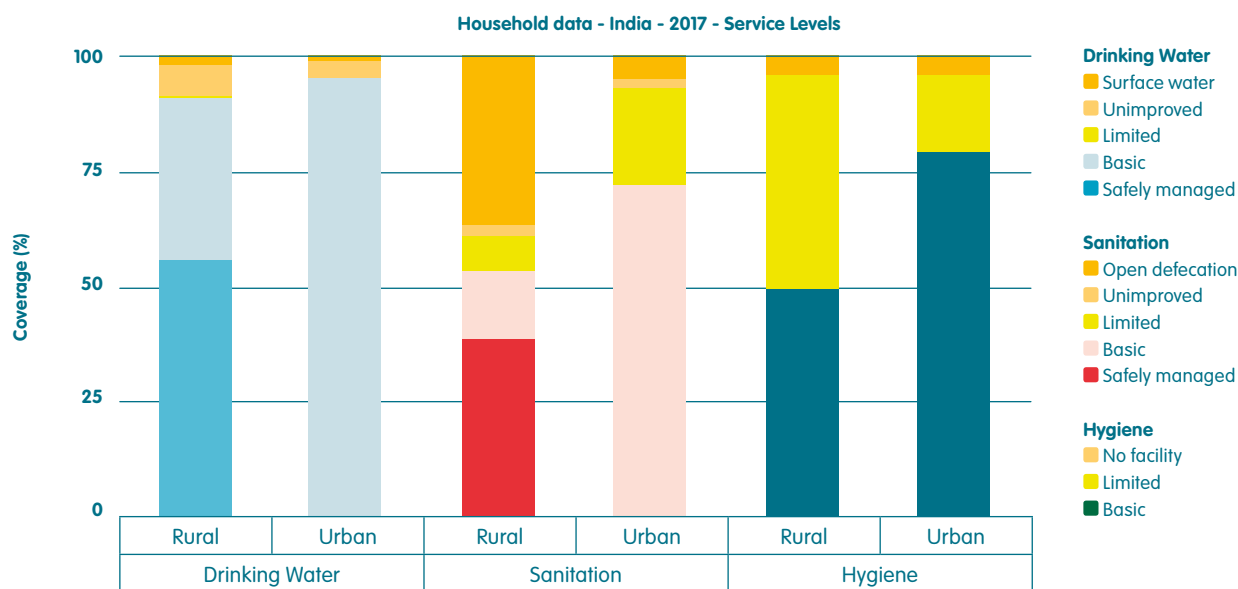


FIGURE 1 SERVICE DELIVERY (JMP 2017 WASHDATA.ORG), 36% OPEN DEFECACTION IN RURAL AREAS

2 Strategic framework

IRC's Strategic Framework and theory of change for 2017-2030 presents a set of overarching long-term priority objectives and actions primarily dedicated to achieving SDG 6 and most clearly focused on Targets 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.

2.1 OUR ROLE AND THEORY OF CHANGE

IRC's theory of change has a vision of strong national systems at district and national level that deliver and maintain universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as address other water-related targets of SDG 6. It is based on the key assumption that strong national systems are underpinned by strong national leadership – both political and financial. We believe that decentralised administrative units provide the right scale at which to model behaviour, test approaches and identify solutions to drive the route to universal access. For this reason, IRC will work with partner districts to map water and sanitation infrastructure assets, monitor services and systems, develop realistic budgets and bankable plans – and subsequently help to identify financing for those plans.

However, success at district level is not in itself enough to be sustainable or to spark a national movement to achieve universal access. It must connect strongly with national level activities, to build strong partnerships and create the building blocks that will enable districts to achieve their goals.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 is about ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. Collaborative efforts and new thinking, approaches, and methods are needed alongside strong local and national governmental institutions and leadership. There is a need to test new, realistic, and promising solutions and approaches to build credible and actionable evidence on how SDG 6 can be achieved. IRC has identified opportunities at local and national level to begin building this evidence.

This theory of change encapsulates IRC's role, and the actions that it intends to take, at district, national and global level to support the achievement of its vision through several broadly expressed outcomes. It is based on the idea that IRC, through these actions, can provide a hub or backbone for collective action by strong district and national partnerships, and catalyse and support sustained action leading to universal

access. IRC will leverage partnerships and networks at the national and district level to improve the means of WASH delivery. IRC's hub role at the national and district level will involve convening actors, stimulating experimentation, codifying and sharing knowledge.

IRC will monitor outcome level change within partner districts and at national level to measure progress and to ensure that results in IRC partner districts contribute to a broader national movement for universal access.

2.2 NATIONAL LEVEL: BUILDING HIGH-LEVEL BUY-IN

At the national level, IRC India will be involved in the national and state level discussions around SGD 6. The India Country Programme will continue to capture and disseminate best practices related to service delivery models (urban and rural) and share experiences from focus and partner districts at

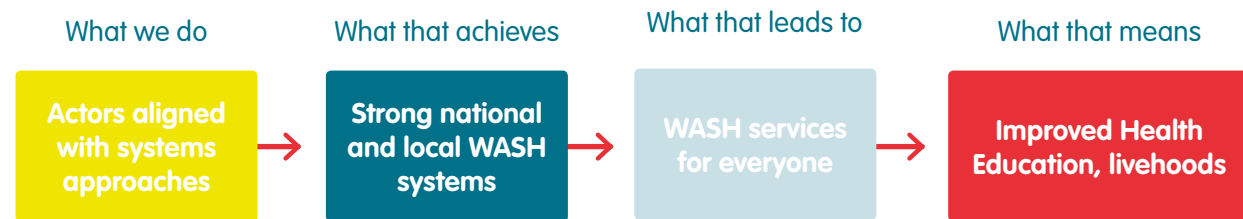


FIGURE 2 SUMMARISES THE IRC THEORY OF CHANGE, WHILE ANNEX 1 PRESENTS THE DETAILED LOGICAL STEPS THAT THE THEORY OF CHANGE FOLLOWS.

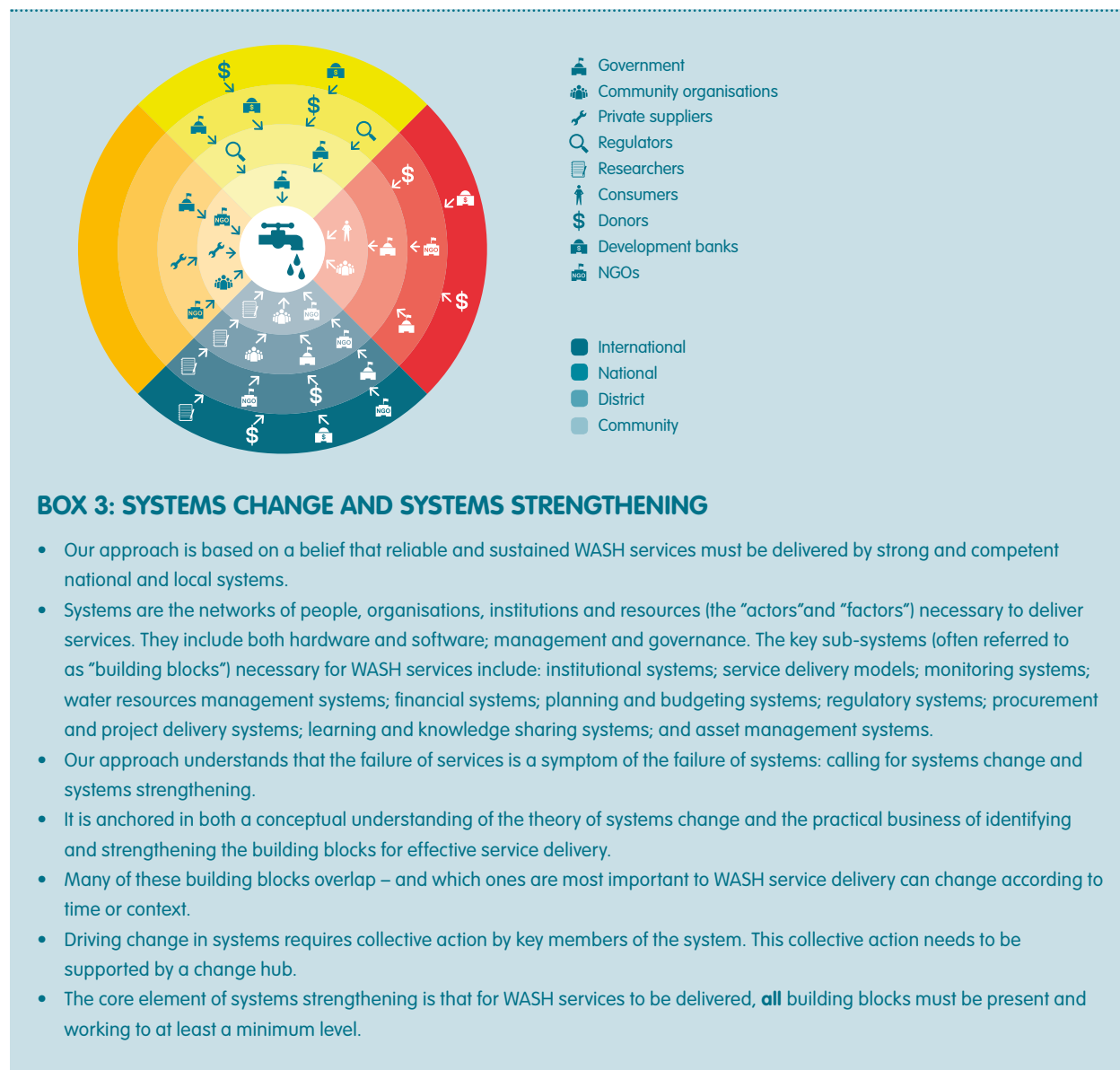
national level platforms. National level partners we engage with are Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), National Institute of Urban Affairs, WaterAid and Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA).

At the state level, IRC India will be working on strengthening planning, finance (costs, budgets) and asset management (capital maintenance) processes. For this, IRC India aims to work with government and non-government organisations and networks in the WASH space in focus state (Odisha) and target donors to support systems strengthening.

2.3 DISTRICT LEVEL: PLANNING AND BUDGETING IS KEY

Rather than finance, planning and budgeting are the biggest issue at district level. As such, IRC India will focus on Chatrapur block, working with the district, block and local government on building their capacities on planning, budgeting, tracking funds and advocating for resources with the district authorities. IRC will also work on asset management with the local government and line departments to allow for a more effective planning process. The aim of the whole process is to provide inclusive water and sanitation services for all, forever.

Building from the small town of Chatrapur, we will expand this approach and roll out roadmap activities (service level assessments; building blocks scorecards) to the municipality in the district (Berhampur, population: 350,000).





3 Main partnerships

The IRC systems approach has been adopted by our partners and the main partnerships for IRC India are with the Watershed consortium (Wetlands International India, Akvo, and local partner NGOs Nidan and Gram-Utthan) and the Agenda for Change partnership (WaterAid, active in Ganjam district).

Other important partnerships at national level are the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, and the India Sanitation Coalition - which allow IRC India to become known in places to which we not would have had access otherwise.

In the focus district (Odisha), we will be seeking closer collaboration with the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE). We will work with local partner, Gram-Utthan, to build an active learning alliance at district level.

For our urban programme, we will continue our partnership with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), Taru Leading Edge and Ennovent until the end of the project.

IRC India will use the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation's (DGIS) Programmatic Funding to support partners in the adoption of the systems strengthening approach.

4 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

IRC India works with the Watershed consortium partners and state partners to lead or support joint reflection meetings (annually and as needed). Such meetings are an opportunity to share findings from baseline and progress on sustainability-related indicators. There are also bi-annual review meetings in the IHUWASH programme.

At district level, more effort will be undertaken to develop a learning agenda with the district authorities and learning alliance actors. Annual review meetings are to reflect on progress on the key indicators identified for the district plan.

We plan to undertake:

- Joint monitoring of WASH services with line department, local government (Gram Panchayat) and NGO partners (Nidan in Bihar and Gram-Utthan in Odisha)
- Lessons shared with district for scale-up
- Joint monitoring results to be used by the Gram Panchayat and line department
- Knowledge products on WASH finance are developed and disseminated annually
- Knowledge product for asset management developed

IRC India maintains active learning platforms at the national level, of which the platform initiated in 2017 with Taru Leading Edge and the India Sanitation Coalition, is a great example. This platform discusses issues, experiences and evidence around sustainable

water and sanitation services for the development sector and Corporate Social Responsibility professionals working on WASH. The platform intends to be an informal space for individuals/organisations to discuss, question and learn around themes set by the WASH dialogue, for example, behaviour change for sanitation, and policy and budget commitments in WASH.

Other linkages, include:

- SuSanA, which has a large India chapter with whom IRC India works closely
- Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) regional

5 Our organisation

IRC India has two full-time consultants at the national level. In addition, the team works with a pool of national and international IRC associates on business development, sanitation businesses, and communication.

The roles will shift gradually, and we expect from 2019 onwards that the programme runs mainly from India with Indian consultants, with a proposed full-time consultant at district level, who is able to build a team, strengthen partnerships and collaboration efforts with other actors on the ground, like Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) and WaterAid.

A district plan is to be developed in collaboration with the district authorities and IRC will turn parts of this plan into bankable/fundable pieces of work. In the coming years, a long-term IRC associate will work on monetising IRC's tools and approaches, support the district in finding resources for their plan and overall advise IRC India on business development. Support from HQ will be limited to strategic feedback and discussions, peer review of the annual monitoring exercise and linking with practices and experiences in other country programmes.

6 Our business model

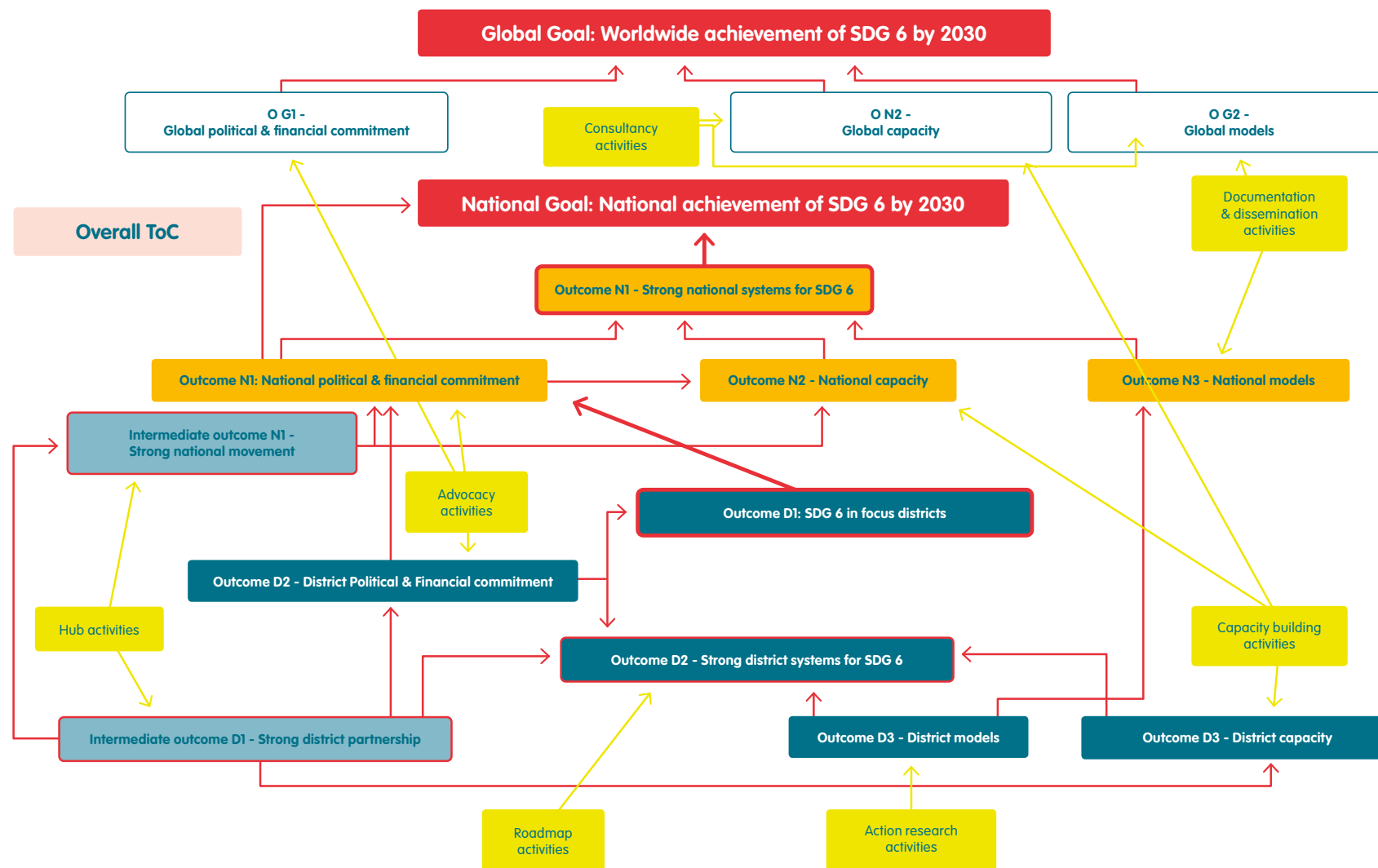
IRC India has contracted funding from Watershed and IHUWASH until 2019, and from DGIS until 2020.

It is crucial for IRC to continue work in India, to develop and actively reach out to donors at the international level. The India team will continue to work through partnerships, however lacking registration, the main funders will only be international organisations.

In addition to the district work, IRC's niche in India will be the ability to work as a neutral partner with government, businesses as well as NGO WASH actors. The coming years the India team will strengthen their capacity on finance, gender and inclusion, zero waste solutions for solid and faecal waste, and energy efficiencies in water provision to get more traction in advisory work. The team will also build credibility outside India by jointly publishing papers.



Annex 1: Our theory of change: district action for national global impact



Annex 2: Intermediate outcomes, activities and resources for programmes

The IRC India team will mainly focus on intermediate outcomes:

D1: SDG 6 in focus districts, and

D2: Strong district systems for SDG 6, and the following activities:

Roadmap activities

Working on practical solutions and evidence building with the district

- Assessment of urban and rural WASH services
- Asset management at GP level updated
- Asset registry made at the Gram Panchayat level

Hub activities / establishing learning alliance:

- Partnership established with the district
- Capacity building with local government and line departments
- Village level plans are developed in the formal planning progress

Advocacy activities

- Capacity building of local government, key influencers in the villages and NGOs on planning and budget tracking in WASH
- Partner NGOs at the national and state level have an understanding of life-cycle costing (and use this in their annual budget analysis)
- Capacity building of local government on planning and the use of data (HH services, assets) in planning and budgets
- Updated asset management is used for planning and updated every quarter

DISTRICT LEVEL

Intermediate outcomes (2021)	Main activities	Targets 2021
Outcome D6 : SDG 6 in focus districts		
Intermediate Outcome D6.1: Inter-departmental coordination to plan, monitor and evaluate for water and sanitation services are in place in Ganjam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership established with the district • Work with district to get resources for (parts of their) district plan • Assessment of urban and rural WASH services and costs (urban) • Capacity building with local government and line departments • Joint monitoring of WASH services (line department, local government and NGO partner) 	
Intermediate Outcome D6.2: 10% improvement in service quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village level plans are developed in the formal planning progress • Asset management at GP level updated • Lessons shared with district for scale up 	
Outcome D2: Strong district systems		
Intermediate Outcomes D2.1: Building block – Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of local government, key influencers in the villages and NGOs on planning and budget tracking in WASH 	
Intermediate Outcomes D2.2: Building block – Finance: Local government and line departments understand the life-cycle components and are planning based on these elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner NGOs at the national and state level understand life-cycle costing (and use this in their annual budget analysis) • Capacity building of local government on planning and the use of data (HH services, assets) in planning and budgets • Updated asset management is used for planning 	
Intermediate Outcome D2.3: Building block – Asset development and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset registry to be made at the Gram Panchayat level • Updated every quarter • Joint monitoring results to be used by the Gram Panchayat and line department 	

Key results by 2021: A minimum 10% reduction in those unserved; a 10% improvement in the quality of service delivery; significant progress on indicators of building blocks [planning, finance, asset management] and behaviour advocate for sanitation and water for key actors; realistic strategies to rapidly scale and achieve universal access to basic national standards for safe drinking water and sanitation within partner districts by 2030.

NATIONAL LEVEL

Intermediate outcomes (2021)	Main activities	Targets 2021
National Goal: National achievement of SDG 6		
Outcome N5 – Strong national systems		
Intermediate Outcomes N5.1: Building block – Learning and adaptation: Sharing the learnings from the field at state and national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 knowledge product on WASH finance annually developed and disseminated • 1 knowledge product for asset management 	



Annex 3: Links between existing projects and intermediate outcomes

DISTRICT LEVEL

Project number and name	Brief description	Main intermediate outcomes to which project contributes
Watershed (E16.06)	IRC's role in the Watershed strategic partnership in India is on WASH. Wetlands (South Asia) focuses on the WRM component. Akvo's role is around monitoring in the project.	Intermediate Outcomes D2.1: Building block – Planning. Intermediate Outcomes D2.2: Building block – Finance: Local government and line departments understand the life-cycle components and are planning based on these elements. Intermediate Outcome D2.3: Building block – Asset development and management.
DGIS (the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation) programmatic funding (E17.88)	The programmatic funding is towards IRC's district level work in Ganjam: To complement and build further (to include urban) on what we are trying to do in the Watershed project.	Intermediate Outcomes N5.1: Building block – Learning and adaptation: Sharing the learnings from the field at state and national level. Intermediate Outcome D6.1: Inter-departmental coordination to plan, monitor and evaluate for water and sanitation services are in place in Ganjam. Intermediate Outcome D6.2: 10% improvement in service quality.

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