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EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND PLAN

Evaluation Title: *End-Cycle Independent Evaluation of the Nigeria-UNICEF WASH Country Programme Cooperation (CPC 2018-2022)*

Region: WCARO

Office: Nigeria CO

Evaluation Year: 2025

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Overall Response to the Evaluation

This evaluation served dual purposes of accountability and organizational learning. It assessed key achievements under the WASH programme while identifying critical factors influencing programme results, with particular emphasis on system strengthening, political ownership, the enabling environment for WASH, and transformative changes in access, behaviours and health outcomes.The findings and recommendations extend beyond the current programme cycle, offering insights to guide long-term sectoral planning and cross-sectoral integration.

The evaluation employed a rigorous mixed-methods design combining qualitative and quantitative data collection with comprehensive desk review. A hybrid analytical framework integrating contribution analysis and quasi-experimental techniques ensured robust and credible assessment of programme results and contribution.

The WASH Programme (2018–2022) evaluation demonstrated substantial positive impacts, including transforming national sanitation discourse on Ending Open Defecation and the “Clean Nigeria Campaign”. The programme also demonstrated positive impact on the *Institutional and System Strengthening* by establishing permanent WASH oversight institutions in nearly all states (RUWASSA), setting of WASH Information Management System in 250 LGAs to support Evidence-Based Decision Making, and securing Government Investment ($100 million) in WASH. In addition, positive s*ocial and gender impacts (Well-being and Education) were recorded through b*etter school attendance for girls and improved Community Well-being.

The evaluation highlighted three key areas of inconclusive impact of the WASH programme. Beyond merely simple contradiction between quantitative and qualitative analysis, the divergence suggests exploring issues of context, scale and time lag.

- Divergence in Girls' Education: The qualitative stories prove immediate success. BUT there was no numerical proof that the new school toilets and MHM directly led to higher school completion rates for girls.
- The WASH program's effect on major public health indicators (diarrhoea prevalence, nutrition) is inconclusive (divergence between quantitative and qualitative data). NCO and partners do not see this as a failure, but as critical information reflecting differences in measurement scale, temporal impact, and contextual complexity. Further investigation will be pursued.

In conclusion, the evaluation was robust, and findings aligned with the evolving UNICEF WASH programmatic shift away from service delivery. The evaluation findings transcend the current CPD and will inform long-term programming. Recommendations include the need to integrate urban WASH, climate resilience, and innovation – many of these already integrated, as shown in the current management response.

Planned use of evaluation:

The government and UNICEF will use the findings from this evaluation to strengthen political commitment and advocacy for sound federal and state investment in the WASH Sector. The evaluation findings transcend the current CPD and will help accelerate the programmatic shifts towards system strengthening, WASH sector financing, and climate resilience programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: WASH Programme Leadership

- *Transition to a government-led, program-based WASH approach, with UNICEF providing technical and financial support. For rural areas, implement a UNICEF-led basket program with operational and M&E guidelines, while strengthening regulatory frameworks. For urban areas, develop a dedicated urban WASH program aligned with global frameworks. Align all interventions with national strategies to enhance ownership, capacity, and long-term sustainability*.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

- **If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:** *UNICEF Nigeria WASH programme has consistently provided technical and financial support to a government-led and owned program-based WASH approach, strengthening systems and developing guidelines – and will continue to do so. The programme has not previously specifically addressed urban WASH, and this is seen as a gap.*

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 1.1: UNICEF will support GoN to generate evidence and develop an urban WASH strategy in the new CPD which can strategically address the structural inequalities that hinder access to basic services for the most vulnerable.	UNICEF WASH Abuja CO	Chief WASH/FO/FMWRS/WASH Specialist Syst. Strengthening	Oct-2027	Not started		
Act 1.2: Support one focus state to start working on an urban and urban slum WASH plan that follows national goals.	UNICEF WASH	WASH Manager/Climate Change (Chiran Tiwari)	Dec-2027	Not started		

Act 1.3: strengthen the urban WASH component in the WASHNORM, and integrate Urban WASH data in WASHIMs	FMWRS	Chief WASH	Dec-2027	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: National WASH Data System

- *Establish a government-led, unified WASH data system integrating local to national levels, supported by donors and partners. Strengthen government capacity in data management, ensure data integrity, and promote joint monitoring and transparent, data-driven planning across sectors.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: This unified system is already in the planning with the FMWRS and supported financially under the World Bank SURWASH project. There are plans to integrate more urban WASH data into the new WASHNORM IV. UNICEF is fully involved, including updating the WASHIMS module and supporting with data analysis for the 2025 WASH NORM.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 2.1: UNICEF continues to support FMWRS with technical capacity on WASHNORM and WASHIMS.	UNICEF WASH Abuja CO	UNICEF/FMWRS/WASH-PMR-ICTD	March- 2026	Done (WASHNORM IV Survey completed)	The WASHIMs is currently under version upgrade for robustness to accommodate additional data, better user experience and government management/ownership Underway-the WASHNORM IV Survey is ongoing with estimated completion date December 2025.	
Act 2.2: UNICEF will continue to advocate at state level for the establishment of WASH Departments in all LGAs, to conduct WASH baselines and enter into WASHIMS.	UNICEF WASH	WASH M&E Specialist (Ife Nwankwo – Output 2.1 Advocacy plan)	March-2027	Underway		

Act 2.3: Capacity building: Strengthen government capacity in data management to ensure data ownership, integrity and build skills in utilization and management of the WASHIMs	FMWRS	WASH M&E Specialist (Ife Nwankwo – Output 2.1 Advocacy plan)	Sept-2027	Underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: Climate Resilient WASH Programme

- *Integrate climate risk into all WASH interventions using tools like CLAC and CRIBS. Develop region-specific action plans, strengthen groundwater and surface water monitoring, and build government capacity. Support high-level advocacy, resource mobilization, and establish accountability mechanisms to track climate resilience commitments.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: *UNICEF has already supported the sector partners, led by FMWRS, to develop the WASH Climate Rationale/Action Plan Document, with wide consultation, and due to be published in 2025. This document has clear action plans and steps to improve climate resilience across the sector. Through UNICEF advocacy, the CRIBS Assessment Tool (former CRAT) is widely accepted by the MoH and Federal Ministry of Education as part of a wider requirement for all Nigerian infrastructure, and is integrated into all UNICEF interventions in WASH, Health and Education.*

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 3.1: Support the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation (FMWRS) to share and promote the use of the existing revised National Action Plan (or other relevant climate document) as part of the national WASH strategy.	WASH Section CO/FO/FMWRS	WASH/Climate Manager/Sections focal persons	March- 2027	Underway		
Act 3.2: Support states to develop their own climate-related WASH action plans based on the NAP	WASH Section CO/FO/FMWRS	WASH/Climate Manager/Sections focal persons	May 2027	Not started		
Act 3.3: Develop review and feedback mechanism with FMWRS for the Climate Rationale/ Action Plan – to be implemented at state level.	WASH Section CO/FO/FMWRS	WASH/Climate Manager/Sections focal persons	Oct 2026	Not started		
Act 3.4: Continue adoption of CRIBS principles in all basic	UNICEF/MoH/MoE/FMWRS	WASH/Climate Manager/Sections focal persons	Jan 2026-Dec-2027	Underway		

infrastructure plans – schools and PHCs						

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: Sector-Wide WASH Approach

- *Promote a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) among development partners to align with Nigeria's WASH strategy. UNICEF should lead technical coordination, support harmonized planning, and facilitate regular forums to streamline donor efforts, reduce fragmentation, and enhance impact.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

There is currently limited appetite for a SWAp approach in the Nigeria WASH sector, but this can be raised during the discussions on the revision of the National Action Plan, currently ongoing. UNICEF is a key member of the WASH and Climate DPGs, which meet regularly and are working to align donor contributions to the sector.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 4.1: UNICEF will continue to support the DPGs to harmonize planning to reduce fragmentation for a stronger WASH impact	UNICEF WASH Section/DPG /FMWRS	WASH Chief /WASH Specialist Syst. Strengthening	Dec-2025 through Dec 2027	Underway		
Act 4.2: UNICEF will ensure the discussion around a sector-wide approach is raised during the NAP review process/meetings.	UNICEF WASH/Climate	WASH Chief	Dec- 2026	underway		
Act 4.3: UNICEF will strengthen donor coordination at state level aligning to programmes such as ASWA III. Eg with JSR plans in ASWA and SURWASH states	UNICEF/DPG/WASH partners/FMWRS	WASH Chief	June-2027	underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: Regional Water Scheme Development

- *Shift from isolated boreholes to sustainable regional water schemes, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. Consolidate resources to maximize existing water infrastructure, improve efficiency, and align with SDG targets.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: Aligning with UNICEF's overall shift away from major service delivery, we will continue to promote sustainable regional water services delivery models through strategic advocacy and partnerships - in particular, supporting the investment in and sustainability of O&M systems. UNICEF is also working with the FMWRS in establishing and strengthening water services sustainability TWG, which would be the key forum for policy advocacy on sustainable water services delivery models.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 5.1: Develop policy briefs and evidence-based reports highlighting the long-term benefits of consolidated water infrastructure and the investment in and sustainability of O&M systems	Abuja CO (WASH)	WASH Manager Access & Climate/FMWRS	June-2027	Not started		
Act 5.2: Support advocacy at national (FMM TWG) and states on the need to have a sustainable service delivery model for water services.	Abuja CO (WASH)	WASH Manager Access & Climate – Advocacy Plan/FMWRS	Dec-2025 thru Dec-2027	Underway		
Act 5.3: Assess and advocate for sustainable regional water supply schemes, where feasible, and promote discussions on improving operational efficiency through sector	Abuja CO (WASH)	Chief WASH	March 2027	Not started		

coordination platforms (eg. DPG) and aligned with state-level priorities.						

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: Upgraded Sanitation infrastructure.

- *Promote durable, standard sanitation facilities over basic pit latrines to reduce slippage. Ensure systems include proper waste evacuation, treatment, and reuse, with improved latrines or septic tanks where sewerage is not feasible.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF works towards safely managed and climate resilient sanitation, and we agree that unimproved pits cannot sustain ODF gains and are only a stopgap on the journey to end OD, yet they often represent the first affordable step for the poorest households. UNICEF already promotes improved facilities, as per the JMP definitions, and has already begun to pivot its sanitation programme towards durable, climate resilient solutions that span the full sanitation value chain.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 6.1: UNICEF has supported the development of revised climate resilient WASH designs (NWRI), including toilets, and will continue to ensure their dissemination and use at state level.	Abuja CO (WASH)/FMWRS	WASH Manager Sanitation/FMWRS/FMEnv/NWRI	June 2026	Underway	Developed updated designs for durable sanitation infrastructure.	
Act 6.2: New training modules for local masons and Toilet Business Owners (TBOs) have recently been developed and will be widely disseminated.	Abuja CO (WASH)/FMWRS	WASH Manager Sanitation/FMWRS/FMEnv/NWRI	June 2026	underway		

Act 6.3: Working towards Safely managed sanitation, UNICEF will widely share the example of the Bauchi FSM roadmap with other states to develop similar and to work together with the local private sector for a sustainable path to safely contained faecal matter.	Abuja CO (WASH)/FMWRS	WASH Manager Sanitation/FMWRS/FMEnv/NWRI	Dec-2025 thru Sept-2027	underway	Pilot study on Faecal Sludge Management Strategy in Bauchi	

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7: Revise Hygiene Strategy & integrate five (5) Key Hygiene Domains

- *Revise the current hygiene promotion strategy to adopt a holistic approach that addresses all five key hygiene domains. Move beyond the narrow focus on handwashing and menstrual hygiene by integrating practical, behavior-driven interventions. Identify and apply effective behavioral motivators to encourage consistent hygiene practices in daily life, ensuring that hygiene promotion is actionable, culturally relevant, and sustainable.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF recognises the need to incorporate water sources into our hygiene programming, as well as wider solid waste management and environmental hygiene. These are already included as key elements of the national hygiene promotion strategy, which is broken down into multiple phases. Some of these are gradually being addressed, particularly solid waste under the Green Rising environmental project. We have recently revised the Water Safety Plan approach to include broader climate resilient and environmental concerns. We have also recognized the need to strengthen the behaviour change components of our approaches and have conducted research to better understand drivers for hygiene behaviour in multiple states, which will be used to refine our approaches.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 7.1: Review and revise current hygiene promotion strategy to strengthen behaviour change and incorporate approaches such as environmental nudges	WASH /SBC Abuja	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	March 2027	Not started		
Act 7.2: New Water Safety Plan guidelines to be widely disseminated and utilised at state and LGA level.	FMWRS/UNICEF/WHO	WASH Managers	March 2026	Completed		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8: Strengthen Hygiene Programming

- *Expand the scope to include various hygiene domains beyond handwashing, ensuring practical implementation and context-specific strategies to address immediate environmental challenges and encourage behavioral change.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF recognises the need to incorporate water quality and the protection of water sources into our hygiene programming, as well as wider solid waste management and environmental hygiene. These are gradually being addressed, particularly solid waste management under the Green Rising environmental project. We have recently revised the Water Safety Plan approach to include broader climate resilient ad environmental concerns. We have also recognized the need to strengthen the behaviour change components of our approaches and have conducted research to better understand drivers for hygiene behaviour in multiple states, which will be used to refine our approaches

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 8.1: Review and revise current hygiene promotion strategy to strengthen behaviour change and incorporate approaches such as environmental nudges (same action as in Recommendation 7)	WASH ABUJA	WASH Sanitation manager/SBC/CAP	March-2027	Underway		
Act 8.2: Work with SBC to translate findings from hygiene behaviour change research into revised programme strategies, including incorporation of environmental nudges.	UNICEF WASH/SBC	WASH Manager	March-2027	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9: Improved handwashing Design

- *Improve the design, placement, and maintenance of handwashing facilities in public spaces like markets, schools, and government offices. Shift responsibility to institutions for sustaining functional infrastructure, ensure water availability before installation, and promote clear messaging to encourage regular use and upkeep.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): partially agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF will continue to improve HW facilities and advocate for strong O&M structures in institutional settings, particularly to ensure schools and PHCs have recurrent budget for ongoing maintenance and cleaning materials. In public spaces like markets, UNICEF advocates for the PPP model, where facilities are maintained by the owner. UNICEF has also updated its training of sanitation businesses to include promotion and sales of durable handwashing facilities.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 9.1: Review HW facility designs and ensure they are appropriate and can be maintained by the target users; promote updated designs through programmes	WASH Abuja	WASH Access & Climate /Sanitation WASH Managers/WASH Specialist/Officer	May 2027	Not started		
Act 9.2: Focus on school HW systems through CRIBS and 3 star approach	WASH Abuja	WASH Access & Climate /Sanitation WASH Managers/WASH Specialist/Officer	June -2027	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 10: Address environmental hygiene in schools • *Align hygiene promotion with students' real needs and school conditions. Prioritize infrastructure improvements alongside hygiene efforts, and tailor interventions to each school's context to ensure relevance and effectiveness.*						
Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially agree						
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF is focusing on institutional WASH under the new CPD output structure and has developed a strong strategy for engaging local authorities and school management groups eg SBMCs to address WASH and hygiene issues.						
Actions planned	**Responsible Office**	**Responsible Person**	**Expected completion date**	**Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled**	**Actions taken**	**Supporting documents**
Act 10.1: Continue advocacy to government, and to Education sector, to invest in WASH infrastructure and O&M in schools.	WASH /Education Abuja	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	Dec-2025 thru Dec-2027	Underway		
Act 10.2: Support Min Env in their plans to scale up environment/climate clubs in schools	WASH/Min Env	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	March-2027	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 11: Gender in WASH Programming

- *Fully integrate gender analysis into WASH project design and implementation by tailoring interventions to Nigeria's diverse gender contexts. Track gender-focused outcomes, promote women's leadership in WASHCOMs through targeted support, and strengthen collaboration with the Gender Section. Support the transition to gender-transformative approaches and advocate for the approval and integration of the Draft Gender in WASH Policy.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF has recently conducted a Gender Landscape Analysis for WASH (GALA), reviewing national as well as state level gender issues (in 2 states) and developing action plans for ensuring gender issues are mainstreamed and monitored.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 11.1: UNICEF will systematically track the GALA action plans to ensure gender-focused interventions are implemented and progress on women's empowerment, decision-making, and economic opportunities in WASH	WASH /ADAP Abuja	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	Jan 2026-thru Dec-2027	Underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 12: WASH Equity (LNOB) & Accountability

- *Strengthen equitable WASH access by embedding Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) principles and engaging vulnerable communities in planning and implementation. Improve feedback mechanisms, collaborate with local leaders, and develop a Composite WASH Vulnerability Index for data-driven planning. Conduct regular equity assessment and build WASHCOM capacity to support inclusive service delivery and local ownership.*

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: UNICEF has worked on its Accountability (AAP) feedback mechanisms and will continue to strengthen and do more in this respect. We are also supporting the development of a national Child Wellbeing Index, which includes WASH indicators.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
Act 12.1: Strengthen AAP feedback mechanisms to ensure the community voices are heard and feedback is taken into account for programme improvements.	WASH /SBC Abuja	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	Dec-2025 thru Dec-2027	Underway	SBC is expanding its community feedback mechanisms. For WASH specifically, a national-level SBC communications strategy is being developed to support sanitation efforts in selected Nigerian states. This is a World Bank initiative currently at the inception stage. Other upcoming SBC initiatives for programme	

					accountability include the establishment of a national hotline in collaboration with the National Orientation Agency	
Act 12.2: Support the NCO process to ensure a strong Child Wellbeing Index is developed.	UNICEF Child Protection/WASH /All programmes	Sanitation WASH Manager/WASH Specialist	March- 2027	Not started		