

REAL WATER —

RURAL EVIDENCE AND LEARNING FOR WATER



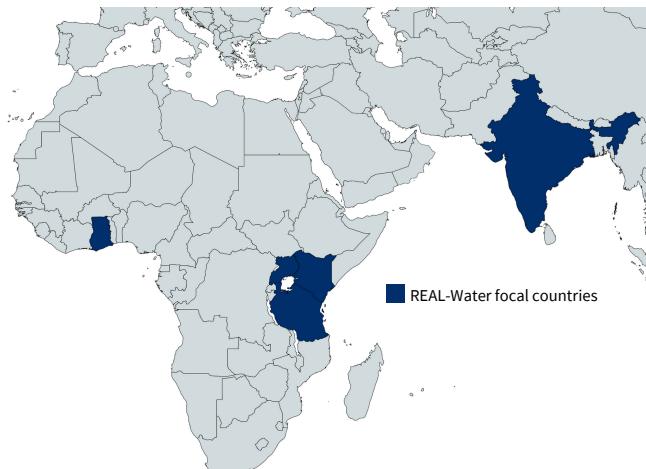
Developing and evaluating strategies for expanding access to safe, equitable, and sustainable rural water services.

REAL-Water will support policy makers, development partners, and service providers to make strategic decisions and implement best practices for water management through implementation research. It will also ensure coordination with USAID programs contributing to the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and Water Resources Management (WRM) knowledge base, in alignment with the USAID Water for the World Implementation Research Agenda.

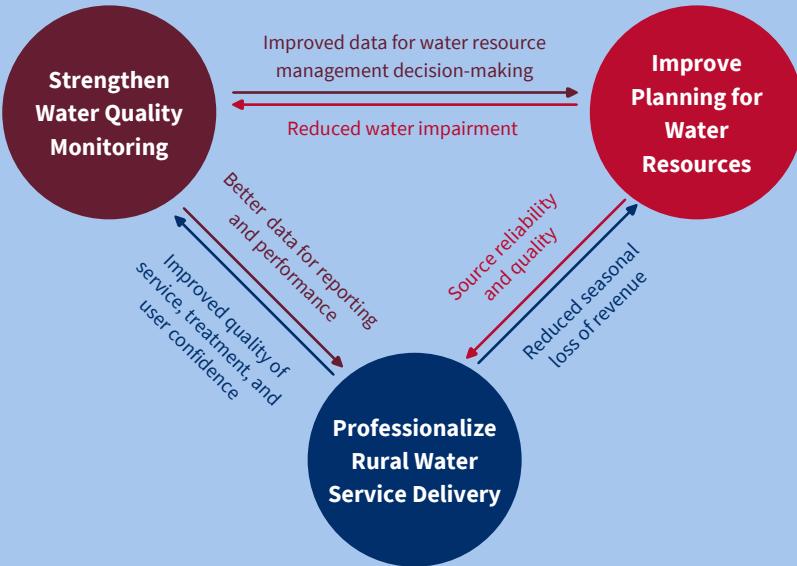
REAL-Water is an initiative of the Center for Water Security, Sanitation and Hygiene in USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security with support from the Office for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition in USAID's Bureau for Global Health.

USAID cooperative agreement with Aquaya (2021-2026):

- Implementation research that applies scientific methods, international collaboration, and rigorous analyses.
- Evidence for decision-making by national policymakers and government officials, development partners, and public and private sector service providers.
- Coordination and collaboration with related programs that are contributing to the WASH knowledge base.



Focal countries for field research: Ghana, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Additional countries under evaluation.



The three REAL-Water focal areas address critical elements of rural water supply systems that are interrelated.

REAL-Water Research Questions

REAL-Water is an implementation research program dedicated to three important and interrelated aspects of rural water supply development:

1. Professionalizing rural water service delivery

- What systemic factors support the professionalization of Community-Based Management (CBM) at scale?
- What factors – including systemic factors – support the development of alternatives to CBM at scale?
- Which local conditions and operational practices drive the performance of both CBM and alternative management approaches for rural water supplies?

2. Strengthening water quality monitoring

- How can existing professional water quality laboratories expand their services to include water testing for rural water supplies?
- How can water quality data trigger improvements in water treatment, consumer satisfaction, and sustainable water safety management practices?
- Are Water Safety Plans (WSPs) effective forms of risk mitigation for rural water supplies in low-resource settings?

3. Improved planning for water resources

- Where and how are rural water supply systems under threat due to problematic water resources management?
- How is holistic water resources planning – at scales relevant to rural water service authorities – implemented in practice?
- What are the barriers, enablers, costs, and benefits of successful holistic water resource planning approaches, with specific application to rural water supply?

REAL-Water partners



Aquaya is an independent, nonprofit research organization dedicated to building the evidence base that guides WASH decision-making for international development. Founded in 2005, Aquaya conducts implementation research across an array of rural and urban WASH priorities.



Aguaconsult is a UK-based consulting company founded in 2003 to support public and private sector organizations to improve water, sanitation, and environmental services globally. It is recognized as a global thought-leader in the field of rural water service delivery.



The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), established in 1996 in Bangalore, India, fosters environmental conservation and socially just development. ATREE works to strengthen India's capacity to confront its urgent environmental challenges in biodiversity, water, and climate change.



The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) has a strategic mandate to provide higher education, undertake research, disseminate knowledge, and foster relationships with external individuals and institutions in Ghana. Its Regional Water and Environmental Sanitation Center Kumasi (RWESCK) is one of the university's centers of excellence.



The Skat Foundation is based in Switzerland and hosts the Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) a global network of more than 13,000 water professionals in 168 countries. Since 1992, the network has been a trusted knowledge hub and expertise platform on practical planning, implementation, research, and innovation.



Safe Water Network is a nonprofit organization seeking to advance the scale and impact of decentralized local market-based solutions as a safe water solution for low-income populations in emerging economies. Since 2006, it has provided expertise to governments, partners, and local communities in Ghana and India to demonstrate successful small water enterprise approaches.



Water Mission is a Christian engineering nonprofit organization that builds safe WASH solutions in developing countries and disaster areas. Since 2001, Water Mission has served more than seven million people in 57 countries through 2,800 rural safe water and sanitation projects.