



SENEGAL

High-Priority Country Plan

GLOBAL WATER STRATEGY | 2022-2027

In 2023, Senegal was re-designated as a High-Priority Country under the new U.S. government Global Water Strategy (the GWS or “Strategy”). Over the next five years, USAID/Senegal will continue to work with the Government of Senegal (GOS) and other stakeholders to strengthen sector governance; address key financing gaps; and increase access to area-wide, sustainable water and sanitation services. USAID/Senegal’s investments over the next five years will increase access to basic or higher-quality water services for 500,000 people; increase access to basic or higher-quality sanitation to 500,000 people; strengthen 100 water resources management (WRM) institutions and water security, sanitation, and hygiene (WSSH) service providers; and mobilize roughly \$5 million for the sector. Outside of these direct investments, USAID/Senegal will partner broadly with the GOS and other development partners to leverage resources for amplified impact.

CONTEXT

Senegal has demonstrated political stability and consistent economic growth over the past 20 years, consistently ranking highly on the Economic Intelligence Unit’s list of top democracies in Africa.¹ Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, Senegal’s gross domestic product growth rate was over 6 percent in 2021 with a favorable macroeconomic outlook.²

However, Senegal remains a low-income country with a population of 16.9 million that is growing at 2.6 percent per year. In the United Nations Development Program’s 2021–2022 Human Development Index, a multidimensional measure of health, wealth, and education, Senegal ranks 170th out of 191 countries.³ Despite these challenges, consistent economic growth is resulting in a steady reduction in poverty. From 2011 to 2018, the percent of the population living below the national poverty line decreased from 43 percent to 38 percent; however, recent progress is expected to slow due to risks of global inflation and persistently high food and fertilizer prices.⁴

Continued progress on improving water and sanitation services plays a key role in advancing health, social, and economic outcomes in Senegal, and also represents a joint priority of the GOS and USAID. Senegal has made rapid progress over the last ten years in expanding access to water and sanitation for the country’s citizens. However, increasing access while addressing equity requires overcoming significant sector challenges. These challenges include increasing financing and domestic resource mobilization; improving institutional capacities for sector reforms and regulation; engaging the private sector; and better managing underlying risks to water resources.

The Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) estimates that Senegal’s overall access to basic drinking water rose from 60 percent of the population in 2000 to 86 percent in 2022 and from 38 percent of the population to 60 percent for basic sanitation during the same period.⁵ Senegal has excelled in expanding access to piped water in urban settings, with over 80 percent of the urban population having access to piped water on premises. Progress has also been made in improving rural water supply, with access to at least a basic water service now covering more than 75 percent of the population. However, there are marked regional and income disparities in access to drinking water and sanitation,

with rural areas facing larger gaps in access than their urban counterparts. Rural services in the country's south and east lag significantly behind, with wealth being an important predictor of access.⁶ Among rural people in the lower two wealth quintiles, access ranges from only 6–17 percent for basic sanitation and from 43–54 percent for basic drinking water.⁷

USAID/Senegal and the GOS will face the following key challenges and opportunities operating in this context over the next five years.

Increased water stress. Senegal is increasingly water-stressed, with renewable water resources gradually declining since the 1960s.⁸ This reduction is attributable to increases in population and the growth of water-intensive economic sectors such as irrigated agriculture and mining. There are major obstacles to effective and comprehensive water resource planning and management in Senegal, such as insufficient or low-quality hydrological and ecological data. For example, groundwater is an important potential source of water resilience in Senegal but data on its availability, quantity, and quality are not readily available. Rural communities that rely on shallow groundwater or surface water for domestic water use are also vulnerable, especially in places where such sources are at risk of over-abstraction for irrigation or threatened by pollution and watershed degradation. Improvements in data quality and availability will be critical to establishing effective management and governance of water resources.

Climate change. Climate change is expected to exacerbate the duration and severity of droughts and floods, which already pose significant challenges to agricultural livelihoods and food security in Senegal. Increased drought occurrences and higher temperatures can lead to boreholes providing water only during wetter seasons, forcing households to travel longer distances or rely on unimproved, unsafe sources. Heavy rainfall and flooding may damage water sources and sanitation facilities, reducing access and contaminating water sources. Changes in water availability, particularly water scarcity, increase competition among water users, making conflict more likely. Addressing these growing risks hinges on improving governance and capacity of WASH service providers.

Funding gap. In the past four years, GOS budget allocations to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation have increased by 23 percent, totalling approximately \$230 million in 2020. However, as of 2019, the World Health Organization estimated that the government budget gap for WASH is \$540 million per year, indicating the need for increased funding from governments, users, and the private sector.⁹ The Ministry of Water and Sanitation reports disbursing between 79 percent and 92 percent of budgeted amounts, indicating an opportunity to increase spending within current funding levels. However, a sector-wide approach that includes the public sector, private financial institutions, households, and businesses will be needed to address this gap.

Table 1: Summary of water and sanitation access in Senegal, 2020¹⁰

	At least basic access Total	At least basic access Urban	At least basic access Rural
Water	85%	95%	75%
Sanitation	57%	68%	46%

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Senegal is a committed supporter of universal access to water, and the GOS has set ambitious targets to boost the overall coverage of basic water and sanitation services and meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2016, the GOS released a new Program of Priority Actions for implementing the Integrated WRM Plan for 2018–2030, setting out key objectives for strengthening the governance and management of water resources. The government is making tangible financial commitments to reach these targets; from 2019 to 2022, the Ministry of Water and Sanitation budget increased by 23 percent.¹¹

Senegal's approach to reaching its SDGs has centered on clarifying ministry-level roles and responsibilities for water, sanitation, and WRM and leveraging the private sector. As part of this, policymaking for water, sanitation, and WRM has been consolidated within the Ministère de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement. In addition, a Sectoral Policy Letter for Water established specific offices for rural water services, urban sanitation, and rural sanitation, all with a mandate to

bolster private sector participation in the operation and maintenance of WASH facilities through service contracts. Ongoing sanitation reforms such as the Sanitation Code and the National Rural Sanitation Strategy further improve the foundation for non-sewered sanitation and fecal sludge management. To meet future water security challenges, Senegal is conducting in-depth reforms of the legal and organizational frameworks for WRM. A revised Water Code is in draft, which will focus more on WRM and strengthen the role of the Directorate of Water Resources Management and Planning.

USAID APPROACH AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

In furtherance of the U.S. GWS and GOS priorities, USAID/Senegal investments include activities focused on improving WSSH sector governance; expanding access to drinking water and sanitation services; and sustainably managing the country's water resources. The specific contributions of these programs, and other WASH-funded programs, to the GWS, are detailed below. The primary activities include the Senegal WRM Activity, the Government-to-Government (G2G) WASH Activity, and a forthcoming WASH Activity that is expected to be awarded in 2024. Smaller WASH activities or those co-funded with other sectors are identified as relevant below.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I

Strengthen Water and Sanitation Sector Governance, Financing, Institutions, and Markets

The WSSH sector in Senegal has clear goals, mandates, and structures. However, obstacles to implementation include unclear roles and responsibilities among the various institutions involved in monitoring and oversight of service provision, as well as a shortage of staff at the district level with strong technical and managerial skills. Addressing challenges in WSSH sector governance is central to achieving sustainable improvements in access, resource management, and sustainability.

Intermediate Results (IRs):

IR 1.1 Develop, strengthen, and implement inclusive laws, policies, and regulations: Mission investments will support improvements in the legal and regulatory environment to encourage development and extension of services. The ongoing investment in the G2G WASH program will ensure close, ongoing collaboration with ministry contacts, paving the way for deeper conversations on government policy. The Senegal WRM Activity will advocate for the implementation of new sector reforms and effective enforcement of existing mandates. These investments will support the creation of an inclusive and equitable enabling environment to facilitate the expansion of sustainable WASH access and services.

IR 1.2 Effectively mobilize and target public and private financing: The sector continues to suffer from a large financing gap in Senegal due to limited public and private investment. Increasing public sector WASH expenditures, mobilizing household spending, and leveraging commercial finance will be required to bridge the gap between WASH needs and current budget levels. Similar public investment is needed to ensure sound management of water resources and implementation of the forthcoming Water Code. The G2G WASH Activity provides financial support to GOS partners through a joint investment agreement to improve the speed and quality of service expansion. The Senegal WRM and WASH Demand activities will mobilize public and household spending to increase access to sustainable, climate-resilient WASH services.

IR 1.3 Improve the capacity and performance of national and subnational institutions: USAID/Senegal will support existing institutional and legal frameworks to implement sustainable, adequately financed programs. This includes advocacy for the ratification of the new Water Code and the Plan d'Action de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau (PAGIRE 2), clarifying roles and responsibilities among various line ministries and agencies and supporting local communities in a way that will strengthen accountability and action. Work under this IR will be supported by the G2G WASH, Senegal WRM, and Governance for Local Development (GOLD) activities.

IR 1.4 Advance transparency, accountability, equity, and efficiency through participatory, data-driven decision-making: USAID/Senegal will work with the GOS to seek input from a diverse set of stakeholders in transparent, equitable, and accountable ways to allocate and protect water resources. Senegal WRM focuses on

incorporating data into decision-making (such as through groundwater mapping and monitoring) and involving women, youth, and marginalized populations as stakeholders in the design and implementation of plans and policies. The GOLD Activity focuses on building capacity in local communities and private sector enterprises to ensure sustainable water and sanitation services. These interventions will collectively empower citizens to demand high-quality products and services and ensure that providers from both the government and private sector are meeting their mandates.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Increase Equitable Access to Safe, Sustainable, and Climate-Resilient Drinking Water and Sanitation Services and Adoption of Key Behaviors

USAID/Senegal's current WSSH portfolio is focused on increasing access to water and sanitation while building more sustainable models for water and sanitation service provision. This includes efforts to collaboratively strengthen the management capacity of government actors at national and local levels and improve the enabling environment for private sector participation.

IR 2.1 Increase area-wide access to safe, equitable, and affordable sanitation services: The G2G WASH Activity has ambitious targets for increasing access to basic sanitation across rural Senegal. These efforts will be complemented by the WASH Demand Activity, which will increase demand for sanitation products and services, thus improving the viability of private sector providers. USAID/Senegal investments will work to ensure that demand creation and marketing reaches women in the household, as women are often advocates for sanitation purchasing decisions, even when the male head of household controls the finances. USAID/Senegal will also build on previous activities by investing in financial and business management skills of sanitation entrepreneurs, a key component of market-based sanitation. Activities co-funded with USAID/Senegal's Health, Population, and Nutrition Office (HPNO) will contribute to this IR through its promotion of the Clean Clinic approach in health care facilities. This approach will improve the availability and sustainable operation of existing sanitation infrastructure.

IR 2.2 Increase access to equitable, safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water services: Activities under this IR will work to increase access to basic and safely managed water services while improving efficiency and quality of services in households and institutions. The G2G WASH Activity seeks to provide safely managed water in rural and peri-urban areas around Senegal through subsidized water connections and the installation of centralized chlorination systems. Activities co-funded with USAID/Senegal's HPNO will improve the availability and sustainable operation of existing water infrastructure in health care facilities.

IR 2.3 Improve performance and climate resilience of water and sanitation service providers: USAID/Senegal investments will focus on utility functionality and reliability as critical components of sustainable WASH services. Activities will focus on building technical capacity for operations and maintenance, climate resilience, and water quality. The Senegal WRM Activity will use integrated WRM approaches to improve drinking water quantity and quality; for example, through utility capacity building and nature-based solutions that increase year-round water availability. The Renewable Energy Activity will use WASH funding to provide technical assistance in replacing diesel pumps with electric alternatives to reduce costs and carbon emissions in water extraction and distribution.

IR 2.4 Increase adoption of key hygiene practices: USAID/Senegal investments will prioritize increased uptake of sanitation and hygiene practices through context-sensitive social and behavior change interventions. The locally-procured WASH Demand Activity will use community-led interventions to increase the adoption of key hygiene practices, such as latrine usage and handwashing with soap. Programs co-funded by the USAID/Senegal HPNO will use systems-level approaches to improve infection prevention and control, enable regular disinfection of clinic surfaces, and encourage handwashing with soap among clinic staff.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Improve Climate-Resilient Conservation and Management of Freshwater Resources and Associated Ecosystems

USAID/Senegal activities will support improved management of watersheds, including addressing climate change and water quality concerns. By enhancing coordination and clarifying sector roles and responsibilities in specific basins, efforts will support integrated activities across WASH, agriculture, and biodiversity.

IR 3.1 Allocate and use water resources more equitably and efficiently: Mission activities will focus on safeguarding future access to water for various users, including municipal and household services, agricultural production, and ecosystems. The Senegal WRM Activity will improve the equitable allocation of water, increase water use efficiency, and improve the quality, quantity, and storage of water in important watersheds and aquifers. In order to ensure sustainability, the activity will strengthen participatory governance from women, youth, and marginalized populations. This activity will take an integrated approach to WRM through collaborations with the agriculture and biodiversity offices and other development partners, such as the World Bank. For example, there is a concurrent World Bank program in Senegal that is conducting similar groundwater mapping efforts as proposed in the Senegal WRM Activity. It is critical that these efforts are complementary rather than duplicative in order to maximize the impact of development funds.

IR 3.2 Enhance reliability and quality of water resources through watershed management, including protection, restoration, and nature-based solutions: Senegal requires more robust basin-level planning to adequately consider stakeholders' needs and account for uncertainties related to disaster risk and climate change. The Senegal WRM Activity will prioritize collecting data and building capacity in relevant ministries to better integrate data-informed decision-making, especially in high-priority basins. The activity will also advance gender inclusion and women's empowerment by proactively engaging with women's groups and women-led sector associations, such as the Réseau des Femmes Professionnelles. These efforts will ensure that women are heavily involved in decision-making around WRM.

IR 3.3 Improve the climate resilience of WRM: Climate change poses significant risks to water resource systems and people that depend on them. The Senegal WRM Activity will integrate data on groundwater availability and seasonal forecasting to help watersheds adapt to more variable rainfall and rising temperatures. This activity will also implement nature-based approaches, such as agroforestry and the construction of demi-lunes or zai pits to increase groundwater recharge and reduce flood or erosion risks.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Anticipate and Reduce Conflict and Fragility Related to Water

USAID/Senegal recognizes the links between water stress, conflict, and fragility. Recent work published by the World Bank identified Senegal as a water-stressed country, with dwindling water resources, at elevated risk for natural resource-related conflict. Mission programming will consider conflict mitigation and fragility through effective targeting of water resources programs and enhanced coordination with regional partners.

IR 4.1 Strengthen capacity to predict, prepare for, and adapt to shocks affecting water and sanitation systems in fragile settings: USAID/Senegal will provide technical and planning support to municipal governments and water service providers to support the effective management of water resources. Specifically, the Senegal WRM Activity includes long-range seasonal forecasting and groundwater data collection, both of which will increase the climate resilience of the water and agriculture sectors. These efforts will allow water-stressed communities to be more resilient to droughts, floods, and other climatic shocks. In addition, forthcoming activities are expected to be active in post-conflict areas in the Casamance region to build government capacity and expand WSSH services.

PRINCIPLES

USAID/Senegal will integrate the GWS Operating Principles into this plan and throughout its programming. USAID/Senegal investments in water and sanitation use a **systems approach**, working to strengthen governance at a national and local level. Their focus on serving rural populations with a focus on youth and women demonstrates the prioritization of the needs of **marginalized and underserved communities** who are frequently excluded from decision-making. WASH Demand will reach beneficiaries who have never had access to a basic level of service. The Senegal WRM Activity aims to **leverage data, research, innovation, and learning** to make **evidence-based decisions**. USAID/Senegal will also incorporate **resilience** across its programming to advance, sustain, and safeguard progress in water and sanitation in the face of shocks and stressors such as increasing water stress induced by climate change and global health threats such as COVID-19.

MISSION RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The approaches and objectives outlined in Senegal's GWS High-Priority Country Plan advance USAID/Senegal's existing priorities laid out in its Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Specifically:

Development Objectives (DOs):

DO1: Increased Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth: Senegal WRM will improve natural resources management and agricultural development, particularly in the context of climate change. WASH activities will enhance the role of private sector sanitation entrepreneurs in service provision, increasing incomes and the availability of climate-resilient sanitation products.

DO2: Improving Human Capital: Investments in G2G WASH and co-funded activities with HPNO will improve the health status of households through the provision of sustainable WASH services at home and at health clinics. Recent research has measured the profound impact that WASH has on under-five child morbidity and mortality, underscoring the impact of the WASH portfolio on human capital development.

DO3: Increased GOS Effectiveness and Accountability: USAID will work with the GOS to improve governance and the underlying enabling environment for sustainable services and resource management. This includes enabling private sector participation, strengthening the capacity and performance of government and public utilities, and integrating data into routine decision-making. The Senegal WRM Activity will strengthen basin management organizations, ensuring effective protection of Senegal's natural resources in critical water basins.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Climate change is expected to make access to adequate water supplies more challenging in many areas of Senegal, especially in areas bordering the Sahel. Senegal is expected to experience more frequent droughts and floods, accompanied by higher variability in seasonal rainfall. These factors disproportionately affect smallholder farmers, most of whom rely exclusively on rainfall for their livelihood.¹² In addition, the amount of arable land is decreasing over time due to desertification, driven by poor WRM, land use change, overgrazing, and deforestation. Many of Senegal's economic growth areas, including agriculture, mining, and oil and gas extraction, are water-intensive, creating a need to balance conservation and growth. USAID/Senegal is investing in improved resource management, data-informed decision-making, and climate-resilient drinking water infrastructure to mitigate these risks and ensure sustainable and equitable access to WASH services.

Regional conflict and political instability are another risk to achieving USAID targets. Neighboring countries, such as Mali, are experiencing a surge in violent conflict between farmers and herders and between violent extremism organizations and local governments. In response, the Sahel region has been highlighted as a politically unstable region by the U.S. government's Global Fragility Act. Although Senegal is not one of the five countries specified in this Act, there is potential for regional spillover and instability to affect operations and investment. USAID/Senegal will continue to build capacity in its local government partners and invest in the growth of private sector enterprises in order to provide high-quality services to households.

Emerging diseases and infectious disease outbreaks also threaten WSHH activities in Senegal. Renewed outbreaks of COVID-19 or other diseases could lead to the redistribution of WASH funds to address public health crises. Additionally, in cases where outbreaks of infectious diseases negatively affect the Senegalese economy, customers may have less money available to pay for water bills or sanitation products. USAID/Senegal will continue to advocate for consistent government and private sector funding for WASH and will also improve the financial resilience of private operators and sanitation entrepreneurs to help them weather public health crises.

BUDGET

This plan is costed based on prior-year resources still available for programming, the FY 2022 estimated allocation of \$11.5 million, and the FY 2023 President's Budget Request of \$6 million.

EXPECTED RESULTS

From 2022 to 2027, USAID activities are estimated to provide Senegal with:



Access to basic water services or water services of improved quality for **500,000 people**, including first-time access to at least basic services for **250,000 people**



Access to basic sanitation or sanitation services of improved quality for **500,000 people**, including first-time access to at least basic services for **250,000 people**



100 WRM institutions and WASH service providers strengthened



\$5 million mobilized for the WASH sector through increased government allocation of public sector funds, household payment for WASH services, reduced rates of non-revenue water, and mobilization of commercial finance.

Endnotes

- 1 Economist Intelligence. [Democracy Index](#), 2022.
- 2 World Bank. [National Accounts Data](#), 2021.
- 3 United Nations Development Programme. [Human Development Reports](#), 2021–2022.
- 4 World Bank. [Senegal Poverty and Equity Brief](#), April 2023.
- 5 WHO/UNICEF JMP. [Joint Monitoring Program WASH Data](#), 2023.
- 6 Senegal Ministry of Water and Sanitation. *Revue Annuelle Conjointe*, 2023.
- 7 WHO/UNICEF JMP. [Joint Monitoring Program WASH Data](#), 2017.
- 8 World Bank. *Challenges and Recommendations for Water Security in Senegal at National Level and in the Dakar-Mbour-Thiès Triangle*, February 2022.
- 9 WHO (2019). [Senegal highlights based on country reported GLAAS 2018/2019 data](#).
- 10 WHO/UNICEF JMP. [Household Data - Senegal Service Levels](#), 2020. *Safely managed water not recorded*.
- 11 Senegal Ministry of Water and Sanitation Joint Sector Review, 2023.
- 12 USAID Feed the Future. [Climate Smart Agriculture in Senegal](#), 2019.