



Photo: USAID Partnership for Economic Growth, Somaliland

USAID FRAGILE WATERS

OVERVIEW

A quarter of the world's population now lives in conflict-affected areas and 80 percent of USAID Missions are in fragile or conflict-affected states. Stronger storms are flooding cities; more intense droughts are withering crops; and diseases are appearing where they never existed before, all heightening conflict and fragility. Climate change could push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2035 and displace over one billion people by 2050. In 2021, one hundred-twenty million people needed water, sanitation, and hygiene-related humanitarian assistance, but only 60 percent of needs were met. Women, gender minorities, persons with disabilities, and children experience disproportionately negative impacts from water security challenges.

In fragile contexts, water security, sanitation, and hygiene (WSSH) programming is complex, interdependent, and prone to system-wide constraints that limit overall effectiveness. Only through deliberate and purposeful coordination across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus can WSSH investments be effectively targeted, sustained, and made complementary to minimize disruptions in service delivery, reduce negative impacts on the ecosystem, and consistently deliver benefit to populations, including the disadvantaged.

USAID Fragile Waters, a five-year global mechanism (2023-2028), uses locally-led approaches to increase water security in fragile contexts, working across the HDP nexus, through a combination of technical assistance, grants, and analysis. USAID designed Fragile Waters with partners in the Bureaus for Resilience, Environment and Food Security, Humanitarian Assistance, and Conflict Prevention and Stabilization; and will continue to leverage the collaboration to implement USAID Fragile Waters.

OBJECTIVES

USAID Fragile Waters will:

1. conduct on-demand and rapid analyses to inform water security programming;

2. support capacity strengthening for local organizations to implement water security programming;
3. provide direct assistance to support evolving water security needs; and
4. advance learning for water security programming.

ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES

Demand-driven analysis such as water security vulnerability assessments and entry points for improvement, opportunities for peace-building through water security, and key drivers and best practice interventions to prevent water-related gender-based violence.

Capacity-building of local organizations and systems to improve water security, enhance coordination and collaboration, and respond to crises through in-person and remote training, twinning arrangements, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, joint work planning, and/or pause and reflect exercises across actors.

Direct assistance to support USAID Missions and Operating Units with evolving water security needs in fragile contexts.

Knowledge, learning products, guidance and tools to better position USAID, partners, and local organizations to achieve water security in fragile contexts. These products will strengthen decision making for WSSH service delivery post-shock; help communities and governments anticipate and prepare for crisis; and provide practical steps and preconditions for effective coordination, complementarity, and strengthen integration among HDP actors.

Grants to local partners to facilitate learning and operationalize learning and analyses.

GENDER AND INCLUSION

USAID Fragile Waters is committed to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and will effectively engage disadvantaged communities in water security programming in fragile contexts by reducing constraints, and increasing agency and access to services.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

USAID Fragile Waters will advance water security through water resource management including investments in collection and use of hydro-meteorological data, analytics and forecasting, institutional strengthening, collaborative and inclusive planning, and watershed management, protection, and restoration.

THE USAID FRAGILE WATERS TEAM

DAI's portfolio of WSSH projects spans a variety of fragile contexts, complemented by its expertise implementing ten Washington-based institutional support contracts for USAID.

Mercy Corps is a thought leader in resilience programming and enhancing the HDP nexus, with in-house crisis analytics, research, and learning teams for tailored research and analysis.

World Resources Institute (WRI) is a founding member of the Water, Peace, and Security partnership, and develops innovative tools that help stakeholders identify and address water security risks.

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