



THRIVE
NETWORKS



MID-TERM-REVIEW

Women-Led Output-Based Aid (WOBA) Vietnam

**Water for Women Fund, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and
Trade**

Final Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHOBA	Community Hygiene Output-Based Aid (a previous EMW project)
CPC	Commune People’s Committee
CWU	Commune Women’s Union
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOH	Department of Health
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Energy
DPC	District People’s Committee
DPO	Disabled People’s Organization
DWU	District Women’s Union
EMW	East Meets West
FSM	Fecal Sludge Management
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
HH	Household
ISF-UTS	Institute of Sustainable Future – University of Technology Sydney
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy
NCERWASS	National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
OBA	Output-Based Aid
PCERWASS	Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
PMB	Project Management Board
PPMB	Provincial Project Management Board
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
PWU	Provincial Women’s Union
SANOBA	The name of the EMW/WU sanitation enterprise
VBSP	Vietnam Bank for Social Policies
VIHEMA	Vietnam Environmental Health Management Agency
VWU	Vietnam Women’s Union
WASHOBA	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Output-Based Aid
WOBA	Women-led Output Based Aid

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WOBA Vietnam

WOBA Vietnam is a project designed and implemented by Thrive Networks /East Meets West Foundation aimed to bring equitable water and sanitation services and hygiene practices to marginalised households in five rural provinces of Vietnam, and to improve women's empowerment in the WASH sector. It is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Water for Women Fund over 4.5 years (June 2018 to December 2022) with a total budget of 5,893,086 Australian dollars.

The project was implemented using a partnership structure that follows the vertical government structure (national-subnational-village), and private sector sanitation suppliers and water operators to administer an OBA subsidy scheme. WOBA aimed to build capacity of women to lead WASH mobilisation through partnership with the Women's Union at all levels.

Project results

As of June 2021, WOBA achieved 12,767 latrine constructions, representing 64% of the project target for latrine uptake. The water connection output is slower with about 45% of water connection targets achieved. WOBA's COVID-19 response provided 3,056 handwashing devices to kindergartens, health stations and WOBA's 980 GESI households, and 200 plastic water tanks to households. Five private water operators and more than 60 private sanitation suppliers have partnered with WOBA. WOBA has partnered with the DRD to deliver training on disability in WASH.

Evaluation approach and methods

The mid-term-review focused on four areas of inquiry alongside WOBA's expected outcomes: 1) partnerships and networks for systems strengthening; 2) building capacity of partners and stakeholders about OBA approach and GESI; 3) empowering women as leaders and change agents in WASH; 4) inclusive access for poor and GESI households.

The evaluation was undertaken primarily for learning purposes. The main focus of the evaluation, and this report is on how, why, and under what circumstances results were achieved. The seven key evaluation questions and their sub questions address all five evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, and sustainability.¹

The evaluation applied the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) underpinned by implementation science to identify barriers and facilitators to successful implementation and contributing factors to changes at both the system and individual level.

The evaluation employed a people-centred, multi-stakeholder approach with mixed method of data collection in five phases.

Phase 1. Desk review of relevant Vietnam government (at national, district, commune) policies, regulations in rural WASH.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development criteria; Development Assistance committee (DAC) criteria, Australian Department of Foreign affairs and Trade criteria

Phase 2. Focus groups discussions and survey with partners in the sanitation and water components (n=38)

Phase 3. Semi-structured interviews with WOBA's beneficiaries (n=30)

Phase 4. Semi-structured interviews with WU women (n=18)

Phase 5. Semi-structured interviews with private sector operators (n=3)

The evaluation also used WOBA's M&E information, report of the study on WOBA's COVID-19 response², and other relevant studies to supplement the fieldwork data.

Limitations

- Short timeline limited the number and diversity of participants in the evaluation. The scope of the evaluation was mainly on the sanitation component and water component in three provinces due to restricted travel time.
- High risk of reporting bias given participants were all stakeholders of WOBA and have an inherent interest in the subsidy and incentives provided by the project.
- High risk of selection bias given the participants were selected by the implementation team.
- Except for sanitation and water coverage, lack of baseline data and appropriate M&E framework, processes, tools and data to assess change at various levels (individual, organisation, system) as a result of WOBA.
- Reliance on monitoring information (on verification of outputs) provided without appraisal of EMW's M&E system risk data accuracy and reliability.
- These limitations were mitigated through rigorous analysis of the field data and monitoring information using triangulation and comparative analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

Key lessons learnt

The key lessons presented in this section are framed around the focused areas of inquiry as opposed to specific evaluation questions. The report discusses the findings for each evaluation question.

- The WOBA model of implementation was based on the experience and success of EMW Vietnam's previous OBA projects in sanitation and water supply, and EMW Vietnam's established relationships with the local partners including WU and sanitation companies. This assumed partners' capacity building for OBA had already been achieved at the national and provincial level. Partners' perceptions of EMW Vietnam's quality and validity of evidence of latrine outputs through OBA in prior projects support their belief that WOBA will have desired outcomes in rural marginalised communities.
- In addition, the policy context of rural WASH in Vietnam provided the rationale for WOBA to deliver WASH services to target marginalised households in rural Vietnam and leverage the government structure to do so.
- The partnership structure of WOBA follows the government political structure to execute implementation, which has enabled consistent processes of operational governance, information flow and OBA payment across provinces. In addition, partners' shared goal of

² Pham, L. (2021). Hand washing products and hygiene promotion in rural Vietnam: A case study of the COVID-19 Response in the Women-Led Output-Based Aid (WOBA) Vietnam project. <https://emwwoba.info/language/en/hand-washing-products-and-hygiene-promotion-in-rural-vietnam-a-case-study-of-the-covid-19-response-in-the-woba-vietnam-project/>

latrine uptake and target beneficiaries coupled with the performance incentive scheme has enabled WOBA to achieve its sanitation and water targets for the poor and GESI groups.

- WOBA's focus on WASH outputs leveraging existing government structure applies a fixed design and implementation activities rather than adaptive to contexts and characteristics of households, private sector operators, and the WU mobilisers.
- WOBA's intention to influence at the system level is implicit, drawing on broader contextual conditions known by EMW rather than clear design and implementation plan for system strengthening intervention.
- Knowledge about WOBA and how the project operates is similar across provinces and stakeholders in terms of the subsidy amounts, target beneficiaries, and that WOBA is a 'reward' or 'donation' rather than market-based approach. This is contrary to the WOBA's ToC that assumes and aims to institutionalise a market-based inclusive WASH service delivery.
- Most beneficiaries appreciated the WOBA subsidy scheme and considered their WASH needs have improved, as with their understanding about WASH and health and the benefits of hygienic latrine and piped water. However, many are still using other water sources and unhygienic latrine to save on consumption costs and due to habits.
- WOBA's reliance on the government lists of poor and near poor households as a starting point to identify and select target beneficiaries risks many vulnerable households unable to access WOBA although they meet the criteria of poverty and vulnerability. Some eligible households have also been removed from the list to meet the New Rural Development Program (NRDP) targets of reduced number of poor households. This has created a perception of WOBA as unequal access rather than inclusive approach. This issue may be more pertinent in the period of 2018-2020 because the government's poverty line has increased for 2021-2025 which could lead to increase of poor and near poor households despite the NRDP pressure.
- The cost of latrine, even with subsidy, is too high for some households, which has led some households incurring debt, or relying on the WU to find alternative sources of funding.
- The WU at the commune and village level work under the existing line of authority of the PC and WU, which maintains their role as a socio-political organisation responsible for the government's propaganda activities and with that a sense of obligation rather than empowerment. In addition, the deployment of the WU is premised on a gendered view of WASH within the domestic space thus prioritising women's needs and the needs of poor and vulnerable households.
- Despite the entrenched gender norms and lack of real leadership opportunities in WASH, the WU women felt they were change agents because they were able to transfer their knowledge about WASH and health to improve households' awareness about benefits of sanitation and changed their hygiene practices, and to support the disadvantaged which aligns with their political mandate.
- Changed attitude of WOBA's partners and stakeholders toward persons with disabilities (PWDs) and understanding about PWDs' WASH needs is the most significant effect of WOBA's training, although application of such knowledge has not emerged due to higher cost of latrine for PWDs.
- GESI issues such as agency, participation, representation and accountability has not been addressed by WOBA intentionally or unintentionally at the system, individual, or community level.

- Affordability is the critical barrier for poor and vulnerable households to build latrine and universal use of hygienic latrine and piped water. Dedicated support for the government to households or policy in supporting private sector financing is needed to enable equitable latrine uptake and for water operators to be able to continue to provide water services for households living in areas far from water pipelines.
- WOBA has enabled co-financing arrangement with the PPC for latrine completion which has been adhered to although it is not clear whether this arrangement has worked or will continue post WOBA.
- Institutionalising OBA seems unlikely in the context of WOBA's target households and affordability of both households and the private enterprises, particularly capacity for private water companies to achieve revenue and profit sustainably.

Key recommendations for Thrive/EMW

- Continue to engage with the partners institutions with the explicit intention and action plans to contributing to institutional, individual and system changes. This could involve planning and agreeing on indicators of change to be tracked and reported by partners and synthesised by EMW and feedback to partners.
- Continue to deliver awareness raising activities on WASH and health to households even if the households have already built latrine or connected to piped water. These activities should be delivered in a targeted way and appropriate communication channels to ensure women, persons with disabilities, elderly people can access them.
- Incorporate feedback of beneficiaries about quality of service and products, and experience of WOBA in the verification surveys and use their feedback to improve and adapt the implementation processes.
- Assess unintended consequences of the process of identifying and selecting beneficiaries, and pushing targets on beneficiaries and WU, and develop mitigation strategies in collaboration with the partner institutions including the WU.
- Incorporate the WU women in the design, process and feedback at each stage of the WOBA implementation processes, and oversee their participation and performance in a collaborative way.
- Assess and identify opportunities for the WU members (at the commune and village level) to have a voice in decision making and leadership in the various activities. This assessment should be part the WOBA's M&E framework, processes and tools.
- Identify existing supportive structure for women's empowerment within the existing government structure that WOBA leverages and facilitate discussion that includes both men and women on gender norms, barriers and advantages to WU members and women households. These discussions should be conducted before, during and after a WOBA activity.
- Review appropriate designs and construction options for latrines for the very poor and vulnerable households and price range and subsidy structure including alternative resources, and communication about these options to the WU and beneficiaries. A pilot can be conducted for the prototype and revised support (subsidy and other resources) scheme and used to advocate for government's support and scale an innovation.
- Review the process of the WU in the water component to identify opportunities for supporting water companies in baseline data collection and mobilising households.
- Develop and implement appropriate M&E processes and tools to track GEDSI outcomes, system strengthening outcomes, and private sector outcomes alongside verification of

outputs. Indicators and qualitative information should be collected at baseline, throughout implementation to allow EMW to capture and report on these kinds of outcomes (as WOBA desires) in a meaningful way and to support adaptive management approaches to implementation results in a timely manner.

- Analyse and report performance indicators such as but not limited to latrine completion and water connection) using GSI disaggregated data.
- Develop and disseminate learning notes and policy briefs in English and Vietnamese from various studies conducted by EWM (including this report) to WOBA's partners, and stakeholders, and Vietnam's development networks in WASH. Follow up with partners to understand impact of WOBA's knowledge sharing.
- Conduct further studies to gain better understanding about the emerging issues from this MTR, and components that were not addressed in the MTR: 1) a study on gender equality and women's empowerment with the WU and other partners to assess contributing factors to the process of change, and identify areas where capacity building is needed among partners; 2) a study on financial health of WOBA's private sector sanitation suppliers and water operators, experiences of WOBA's non-poor households with these enterprises to assess and identify factors contributing to long term economic viability; 3) evaluation of the climate resilient water safety plan initiative to identify areas of climate change and adaptative capacity that water companies may need further support.

1. WOBA PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project background and objectives

WOBA Vietnam is a project designed and implemented by Thrive/East Meets West (EMW) to address challenges and inequities in Vietnam's rural water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. It is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Water for Women Fund over 4.5 years (June 2018 to December 2022) with a total budget of 5,893,086.43 Australian dollars.

WOBA Vietnam builds on the long history of DFAT's investment in the rural WASH sector in Vietnam, and the strong partnership between the Australian Embassy and EMW over the years. WOBA supports policy advocacy at national and sub-national levels in rural WASH, an area that aligns with DFAT's objectives for economic diplomacy in the sector.

The project has two objectives:

Objective 1: To increase access to equitable WASH services for the poor and marginalised (gender and social inclusion) communities in rural Vietnam.

Objective 2: To improve gender empowerment and inclusion of women through program implementation and decision making.

1.2 Targets and expected outcomes

To address the program's two objectives, and align with the Fund's goal of improved health, gender equality and wellbeing of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive sustainable WASH, WOBA Vietnam has three implementation components and targets:

- WATER: 7,100 poor/GESI³ households connected to piped water schemes with connections co-financed through a competitive output-based subsidy fund.
- SANITATION: Improved access to hygienic sanitation in rural communities, with latrines constructed by 3,000 poor and GESI households, 15,000 poor households and 2,000 non-poor households; and
- FECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT (FSM): A FSM pilot in Ben Tre province
- COVID-19 response: Distribute handwashing devices and water tanks and hygiene promotion in project communes.

WOBA Vietnam is implemented in the rural areas of five provinces of Thanh Hoa, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Ben Tre and Ha Tinh.

WOBA Vietnam has five expected outcomes:

1. Strengthened national and sub-national WASH systems with government able to implement and sustain inclusive output-based aid WASH approaches in rural Vietnam – achieved through a government co-financing requirement.

³ WOBA uses the GESI categorization used by Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. While some government categorizations are quite narrow, implementing through government systems is more efficient, and provides a pathway for scale if this targeted GESI support is successful. There are six GESI categories: (i) children under 16 without parental or foster care; (ii) People aged 16-22 currently enrolled in secondary schools, vocational schools, colleges or universities (who also meet criteria (i)); (iii) HIV-positive people from poor households; (iv) poor single parents with custody of children; (v) the elderly; and (vi) people with a disability. WOBA Vietnam specifically target people with disabilities and elderly people.

2. Strengthened private sector ability in sanitation and public/private enterprises in water to operate sustainably and reach poor and GESI communities in rural Vietnam, increasing their role in providing high quality WASH services to all.
3. Improved access to and use of equitable WASH services, especially among marginalised community members.
4. Improved gender empowerment and systematic inclusion of women and outcomes in households and communities and institutions.
5. Increased use of evidence and innovation in gender and inclusive WASH in Vietnam; increased contribution from Vietnam to regional and global evidence base.

1.3 Key strategies and activities

Guided by a theory of change that aligns with the Fund's theory of change, WOBA has three strategies which are expected to contribute to the five expected outcomes. Annex 2 presents WOBA Vietnam's theory of change.

- 1) Partner with district and commune government, Women's Union, and private sector WASH operators to strengthen coordination mechanisms (at all institutional levels) and private sector capacity in delivering WASH services for poor and GESI households.
- 2) Build capacity of government partners, women in the WU, and private sector WASH operators to implement OBA WASH services for poor and GESI households.
- 3) Leverage partnerships with government partners, WASH authorities, WU members, and private water operators to facilitate workshops to mainstream and advocate for gender, disability and socially inclusive approach in WASH delivery in Vietnam.

The key activities to implement these strategies include:

- Partner with and deliver training for WOBA's partners to implement project activities through commune and village administrations. The aim is to strengthen governmental capacity to deliver sustainable WASH services for poor and marginalised communities (gender & socially inclusive (GESI) households).
- Advocate and secure co-financing from the PPC to secure subsidy for poor, near poor and GESI households to take up latrine construction and water connections.
- Partner with private sector suppliers to strengthen supply chain for sanitation products and encourage private water enterprise to provide connections to target poor/GESI HH connections. The aim is to strengthen private sector ability to deliver sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities (poor and poor plus GESI households).
- Partner with DRD to provide training on disability for government partner and WU and private sector (local suppliers) to deliver inclusive WASH to rural households, especially to disability households.
- Build capacity of Vietnam WU to empower them to lead, coordinate, and deliver WASH services, and mobilize community households particularly from marginalized (poor & GESI) households to construct hygienic latrines and connect to clean water.
- Conduct baseline data collection, verification of latrines constructions and water connections, and operational monitoring to ensure gender and social inclusion (GESI) targets are achieved and progressing according to the program's operational plans and targets.

- Partner with social enterprises to distribute handwashing devices and water tanks and the WU to promote handwashing practices as part of WOBA's COVID-19 response.
- Organize and facilitate learning workshops with implementation partners and stakeholders to share insights, exchange knowledge, and advocate gender and inclusive WASH services in Vietnam.

2. SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

2.1 Purpose of the evaluation

This MTR evaluates the program's progress towards its planned outcomes and support learning by exploring the effectiveness of the strategies and activities implemented from June 2018 to June 2021. It explores some initial indications of impacts and sustainability. It provides important recommendation in the ongoing implementation of the program and progress towards the project's end-of-program outcomes.

This MTR will also aim to help lay the foundation for a strong end of term evaluation. It is intended that a better understanding the effectiveness/efficiency of the WOBA Vietnam approach would influence Thrive/EMW's programming in other WASH related areas.

The specific objectives of the MTR are:

1. Assess whether the project has successfully achieved its stated objectives and outcomes that meet the needs of targeted communities and in line with government national plans.
2. Assess the influence of program design, including the WOBA modality and verification process, on this achievement.
3. Identify challenges, compile lesson learnt and provide recommendations for actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve results by its completion.

Due to time constraint, the following components are out of scope of the MTR and this report:

- COVID-19 response as this was covered in a separate study.
- FSM pilot because of the delay in starting the FSM pilot
- Climate resilient water safety plan initiative because of the change in implementation plan and as of June 2021, the pilot of three CRWSP was not completed.
- Sanitation for non-poor households due to limited field travel time

2.2. Key evaluation questions

The following key evaluation questions and sub questions were formulated to address the MTR's objectives, and guided the data collection, analysis and structure of this report.

1. To what extent has WOBA aligned with the Vietnam government's policies in WASH in rural Vietnam? (Relevance)
2. To what extent has WOBA implemented its activities in an effective and efficient way? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
 - i. Are the project's partnership structure and implementation arrangements appropriate to the outcomes sought? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

- ii. How has WOBA Vietnam’s operational monitoring and verification arrangements affected the quality of outputs delivered and outcomes achieved? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
 - iii. Has WOBA Vietnam sufficiently identified and managed risks that can affect its outputs and outcomes achieved? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
 - iv. Has WOBA Vietnam allocated enough resources and technical expertise to implement appropriate capacity development strategies that are responsive to the needs of different beneficiaries and stakeholders? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
3. To what extent is WOBA Vietnam’s approach inclusive and is reaching the poor and marginalised (GESI) communities in rural Vietnam to address their WASH needs? (Effectiveness/Impact)
- i. Have the OBA subsidies been effective in reaching the poor and GESI-poor households in both sanitation and water supply? (Effectiveness)
 - ii. To what extent is there ownership of the results among targeted beneficiaries, particularly the poor/GESI households? (Effectiveness)
4. To what extent has the WOBA’s approach to gender and women’s empowerment, particularly through the involvement of the WU, has resulted in greater understanding of gender issues for WU and other stakeholders and enhanced WU women’s empowerment? (Effectiveness/Impact)
- i. To what extent has there been a greater understanding of gender issues and women’s empowerment among key stakeholders? (Effectiveness/Impact)
 - ii. To what extent has WOBA effectively engaged the WU in delivering WASH services for the poor and GESI communities? (Effectiveness)
 - iii. To what extent are the WU women empowered to be change agents in their communities and leaders in WASH sector championed their roles as leaders in the sector? (Effectiveness)
 - iv. How has gender analysis been incorporated in the monitoring, verification, and learning activities? (Effectiveness)
5. To what extent has WOBA strengthened the capacity of national and sub-national WASH systems to implement and sustain inclusive output-based aid WASH approaches in rural Vietnam – achieved through a government co-financing? (Effectiveness/Efficiency/Impact)
- i. What is the nature of the project’s engagement with government partners and how effective is it? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
 - ii. Is the approach of co-financing by provincial government leading towards institutionalisation of OBA approach in government systems? (Effectiveness)
6. To what extent has WOBA effectively engaged private sector operators in delivering WASH services for the poor and GESI communities? (Effectiveness)
7. What are impacts (intended, unintended, positive and negative) has WOBA Vietnam had and how sustainable are these? (Impact/Sustainability)
- i. What factors contribute to these and what is likely to undermine sustainability of positive changes? (Impact/Sustainability)

Informed by findings from the MTR, this report offers some practical recommendations for Thrive/EMW for the remaining 18 months of the project to ensure it could achieve the expected outcomes by completion date. These recommendations should be considered by Thrive/EMW, the Fund and DFAT in designing future inventions in rural Vietnam.

2.3 Evaluation audience and users

Given the purpose of the MTR is to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the effectiveness of WOBA Vietnam's inclusive approach and systems strengthening strategies in delivering its two objectives, the primary users of this MTR are Thrive/EMW, the Fund, and DFAT. The secondary users are the Vietnamese public, NGOs and INGOs operating in Vietnam development sector, and the government of Vietnam. The Australian public are also interested in the MTR results to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of Australian aid.

EMW, other NGOs in the WASH sector, and the Vietnam government maybe interested in the MTR findings to inform donor support from DFAT, other bilateral and multilateral agencies, and non-institutional donors.

This report is intended for the primary users of the MTR. Shorter reports will be compiled as learning notes and policy briefs and disseminated among the projects' partners at various levels to encourage engagement and use of the MTR findings.

2.4 Structure of the report

Section 3 – Methodology. This section presents the evaluation design, phases of data collection and instruments and field notes, sampling method, and analytical approach.

Section 4 – Key findings. This section presents the key findings based on to the key evaluation questions.

Section 5 – This section discusses the key findings through the concepts of Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) and auxiliary theories of gender empowerment and partnership for development to construct evaluative reasonings and lessons learnt from the MTR.

Section 6 – This section presents the recommendations for the remaining 18 months of the project, and broader implications for designing future projects.

3. METHODOLOGY

Underpinned by WOBA's theory of change alongside its expected outcomes, the evaluation focuses on four areas of inquiry: 1) partnerships and networks for systems strengthening; 2) building capacity of partners and stakeholders about OBA approach and GESI; 3) empowering women as leaders and change agents in WASH; 4) inclusive access for poor and GESI households.

Three provinces were selected for the evaluation: Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ben Tre, representing the northern, central, and southern parts of Vietnam respectively. Nghe An also has population of ethnic minorities, and all provinces have reported experiencing climate change impacts.

3.1 Evaluation approach

The MTR applies the *Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)*⁴ to assessing the *context* in terms of existing or potential barriers and enablers to successful implementation. It is underpinned by the

⁴ Damschroder LJ, Aron DC, Keith RE, et al. (2009). Fostering implementation of health services research findings into practice: a consolidated framework for advancing implementation science. *Implement Sci*, 4:50

Behaviour Change Wheel⁵ to explain changes and the factors contribution to changes at both the system and individual level.

In recognising that the MTR purpose is for learning, the CFIR is appropriate to include in the evaluation design both formative and summative evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the WOBA system and processes within the contexts of its operations. The formative evaluation component enhances the likelihood of success of the program through a diagnostic analysis of potential barriers and facilitators to practice change and implementing the program's strategies, and perceived utility of the program. The summative evaluation component aims to determine the degree of success, effectiveness, or goal achievement of the implementation activities through analysis of data on outputs, outcomes, and impacts as hypothesised in the theory of change. Further, current research suggests that implementation strategies must be tailored over time to address multiple contextual levels⁶: individual level behaviour change, collective (team, organisation, etc.) level change, structural changes at national and sub national level, and changes at the policy level. Thus, *contextual factors* that the WOBA Vietnam operates within is important to assess the appropriateness and relevance of the project and evaluate the project in relation to broader impacts and sustainability.

In addition to the application of the CFIR, the MTR employs a *gender and social inclusion lens* to assess the needs and priorities of the program's target beneficiaries (poor, gender & socially Inclusive (GESI), and evaluate their accessibility to the project, and impacts of the project on their lives and vulnerabilities (individually and collectively). Drawing on the Asian Development Bank's Tool Kit on Gender Equality⁷, the evaluation uses four gender dimensions: human capital, economic and social empowerment, voice and rights, and gender capacity building to evaluate positive and negative, intended and unintended changes and factors that contribute to these changes. Gender empowerment for the WU members is a key component of WOBA and the evaluation focuses on the impacts of WOBA in terms of the WU members' changed attitudes and values about delivering WASH services for marginalised communities, perception of themselves as leaders and change agents in these communities, and factors contributing to these changes.

The MTR used a *people-centred, multi-stakeholder approach* in data collection given WOBA's strategy of partnership and networks to implement activities. Sampling was purposive to allow for involvement of different beneficiary groups such as women, poor people, people with disability, and other GESI categories, WU, private sector operators, government partners and other stakeholders. The MTR fieldwork was conducted by national consultants to ensure questions and observations were made in a culturally appropriate, ensuring protocols at the various institutional levels, and at the community level were adhered to.

The MTR draws and builds on the monitoring data already being collected by in-country M&E WOBA program team. Annex 11 lists the program information including performance indicators used alongside the qualitative data collected in Phase 2 to 5.

The use of mixed methods data collection (primary and secondary [monitoring data collected from WOBA Vietnam]/ qualitative and quantitative) aims to capture depth and breadth of the evaluation and triangulation of data to strengthen confidence in the findings. Asking the same questions to different groups and exploring cases from multiple perspectives aims to strengthen the evaluation findings.

Multiple analysis approaches were used to assess impact and causal inference and ensure rigour in the evaluation findings.

⁵ Michie, S., van Stralen, M. & West, R. (2011) The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6:42, <http://www.implementationscience.com/content/6/1/42>

⁶ <https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13012-016-0536-x>

⁷ Asian Development Bank's Tool Kit on Gender Equality (2013). Asian Development Bank

3.2 Methods of data collection

3.2.1 Phase 1. Document review

This phase involved:

- i. review the WOBA Vietnam project documents including project design document, theory of change, implementation strategies and work plan activities to assess the consistency of the program logic with expected results of implementation activities and project outcomes.
- ii. review relevant policy documents and regulations in rural WASH to assess the extent to which the activities and expected outcomes are aligned with the broader national plans in WASH and related policy areas such as public healthcare.

In addition, WfW Fund ToC and MEL frameworks were consulted to identify alignment or divergence in terms of broad objectives and outcomes.

The WOBA Vietnam documents to be reviewed are listed in Annex 6.

The policy document review is conducted by the following steps:

- Identify the key themes relating to WASH that WOBA Vietnam focuses on based on the outcomes and activities contained in the project PDD. The key themes include: output based approach, public-private-partnership, climate change and gender equality and social inclusion.
- Review the policy documents to see whether these themes are mentioned.
- Analyze the relevance of the WOBA project and these policies, thereby assessing how the outputs and activities of the WOBA project support WASH-related strategies and planning in Vietnam.

3.2.2 Phase 2. Focus groups and survey with partners and stakeholders

3.2.2.1 Focus groups

Instrument. The focus groups involved WOBA's partners in the water and sanitation component to obtain different perspectives in the following topics (see Annex 7 for the focus group question guide):

- points of decision making, bottle necks, missing networks
- perception of the strategic priorities and activities of WOBA through the partnership approach
- inclusive approach of WOBA, in terms of the process of selecting people to the program, priorities to address inclusion in WOBA
- enablers and barriers to making the networks more effective and efficient in implementing OBA, responding to climate change, COVID-19 through WASH delivery.
- partners' perception of vulnerabilities experienced by the poor/GESI communities, and the degree to which they perceive the current situation as intolerable or needing change.
- the extent to which the training provided by WOBA Vietnam are relevant and influence their attitudes about gender and social inclusion, have improved their knowledge and skills to implement and monitor OBA for poor/GESI households, adaptive to climate change.
- other factors that they feel could enable or hinder sustainable OBA implementation in WASH.

Sampling. Seven group discussions were carried out by consultant team, comprising one national level discussion, five provincial level discussions including Nghe An (2, one for water and one for sanitation component), Thanh Hoa (1 combined water and sanitation) and Ben Tre (2, one for water and one for sanitation component), and one group interview at district level (Nga Son) in Thanh Hoa with two WU staff who could not attend the FGD.

Overall, there were 37 participants (national level - 6, Thanh Hoa - 8; Nghe An - 11; Ben Tre – 12) in the FGDs. The participants to the FGDs were decided by the WOBA program team who provided the list to the evaluation team. At the national level, the FGD had representatives from the NCERWASS, NWU, VIHEMA, and DRD. At the provincial level, the FG had representatives from the PCERWASS, PWU, DWU, CDC, private water operators and sanitation suppliers. Annex 4 lists the participants that participated in the FGs.

All focus groups were conducted using Vietnamese without any interpreters. The consulting team also used audio recorders during the FGDs. All FGD participants provided consent to participate in the FGDs. The recordings are used for the research only and ensure anonymity for the FGDs. During the FGDs, the consultants also took quick notes of main points.

Location. For national level group discussions, the discussion was conducted at the EMWF office in Hanoi; for provincial level group discussions in 3 provinces, the discussions were conducted at the meeting room of Province/District Women’s Union, the meeting room of Provincial Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation. In all group discussions, there were only two consultants and the participate who were invited, without the involvement of other ones during the discussion.

Field notes: (i) Some group discussions were conducted in a relatively large meeting room, hence the exchange of information between the parties was limited; (ii) the office location of the unit which selected to conduct the group discussion is located right near the traffic road so it is quite noisy and sometimes difficult to hear the information of the respondent; (iii) at some group discussions, the number of participants increased more than initially expected (Nghe An); (iv) some members were busy so they did not attend the group discussion by going out for phone call, texting messages (Ben Tre, Thanh Hoa); (v) in Nga Son district - Thanh Hoa province, the district WU have to hold Party Cell Congress therefore they don’t attend group discussions at the provincial level so that the research team had to conduct a private group discussion with the district WU in the late afternoon but did not have much time for consultation; (vi) many members with different specialties participate in the group discussion therefore some of the exchange content may be fragmented and is not the expertise of some participants, so it leads to a situation that there will be many opinions; (vii) in a short time but had to work with many WOBA teams at the same time caused some units to be less interested in the fact that they had to spend time in group discussion with the evaluation team.

3.2.2.2 Survey

Instrument. At the end of each focus group, the participants were asked to complete a short survey. The survey aimed to elicit information about 1) the nature and perceived outcomes of the WOBA partnership structure, 2) perception of the WOBA partnership mechanisms, 3) partner’s main activities in the WOBA project, and 3) overall experience in the partnership. Demographic information was also collected including gender and the organisation they are from. The survey was also intended to triangulate with the focus groups responses (see Annex 12 for the survey questionnaire).

Field notes. The survey was programmed in both English and Vietnamese using Qualtrics platform. The Vietnamese version was tested prior to its implementation. All 37 FGD participants completed the paper survey, which was checked by the consultant who transferred the responses to the Qualtrics Platform.

3.2.3 Phase 3. Semi-structured interviews with household beneficiaries

Instrument. The aim of this phase is to understand the extent to which WOBA services are relevant to and effective in meeting the needs of the target beneficiaries. The interview questions were designed to gather information about the following topics:

- WASH needs of disadvantaged households in rural Vietnam generally and in relation to COVID-19 and climate change, and their coping and adaptation strategies to meet these needs.
- perception of rights and entitlement to basic WASH services and/or assistance to access basic WASH services.
- understanding and ownership of the WOBA project in providing access to latrine.
- experiences of WOBA Vietnam in building latrines and the extent to which the acquired latrine has impacted on their WASH needs and other aspect of their lives.
- perception of WOBA's inclusive approach in terms of accessibility to WOBA information and other WASH related information, and subsidies received.
- other WASH-related services or assistance.

Sampling. The sample size is 30, 10 from each province. The sample size was decided in light of the short time frame for the MTR, restrictions in travel due to COVID-19, and to not overburden the beneficiaries. The sample was selected based on the list of households that had built latrines up to December 2020 in the selected communes. 15 households were selected in each province, a total of 45 households to allow for cases where the household members were not available. The districts were chosen by the WOBA program team mainly for ease of travelling. The sample was also purposively selected to include poor and GESI households, persons with disability, and to achieve similar numbers of men and women. See Annex 4 for list of household participants that participated in the interviews.

The consultants conducted 30 interviews of which 12 interviews (4 in each province) were about clean water and 18 (6 in each province) interviews were about sanitation. The split between sanitation and water was also decided by the WOBA program team. All interviewees were informed in advance by the WU focal points in the villages to ensure they stayed at home when the consultant came to interview.

Field notes. In all 30 interviews, the representatives of Women Union (commune or village level) visited the beneficiaries with the consultant. They waited there until the interview finished. Most of them only listen to the conversation between the consultant and respondents, and did not interfere with the conversation after the initial introduction. In Ben Tre, beside the members of the women's unions/village heads, according to the local regulation, the commune police also went with the consultant to the households, but they only waited outside watching the interviews with the beneficiaries.

All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese without any interpreters. The consulting team also used audio recorders during the interviews. All interviewees provided consent to participate in the interviews. During the interviews with the households, the consultants also took quick notes of main points. In some cases, the consulting team took some photos and recorded some observations about the latrine and water source) and tasted the water sources that they were using.

There are some limitations encountered during the interviews. (i) Some representatives of the households participating in the interviews were old, so they could not hear clearly, and it was difficult to convey the meaning of some questions; (ii) Each region has its own accent and dialect; therefore, interviewers and interviewees sometimes did not fully understand each other which prolonged interview time; (iii) Some interviews ended late at noon/late afternoon, in the time that the households (especially women) had to

cook and take care of their children, so they did not feel comfortable; (iv) In Ben Tre province, although the WU and the police only listened, they may have influenced the interviewees' responses as these interviewees sometimes looked at the WU staff or police while answering.

3.2.4 Phase 4. Semi-structured interviews with WU members

Instrument. The aim of this phase is to understand the extent to which participation in WOBA has changed their attitudes, knowledge and skills in delivering WASH service for disadvantaged communities, and empowered them to be change leaders in their communities. The interview questions were designed to gather information about the following topics:

- perception of themselves as change agents in WASH sector and for poor and GESI communities
- changed knowledge about WASH and health, knowledge and skills in applying OBA to deliver WASH services, gender issues in WASH
- belief in their own capabilities to implement activities of WOBA particularly in taking on entrepreneurial and market-based approach
- understanding and ownership of the WOBA project in providing access to WASH for disadvantaged households.
- perception of WOBA's inclusive approach in terms of accessibility to WOBA information and other WASH related information, and subsidies received.
- extent to which there are increased opportunities for them in employment and leadership role in WASH sector as a result of WOBA.
- extent to which their leadership, and decision making are supported through the WOBA partnership structure and processes.
- perception of the impacts of WOBA on improving capacity of partners and stakeholders to ensure WASH investments benefit men and women equally or respond to women's priorities.

Sampling. The sample size is 18, 6 from each province, including 7 interviews with Chairwoman of CWUs, 2 interviews with Vice Chairwoman of CWUs and 9 interviews with WU staff at village level. The sample size was decided in light of the short time frame for the MTR, restrictions in travel due to COVID-19, and to not overburden the beneficiaries, and in light of the completed study on WU's hygiene promotion in WOBA's COVID 19 response. The sample was selected based on the list of WU women members provided by the program team, that were from the same districts in Phase 3. However, there were replaced interviewees with WU at village level because they were busy with their individual matters. See Annex 4 for list of WU members that participated in the interviews.

Field notes. All interviews were conducted by the consultant team in Vietnamese without interpreters. The consulting team also used audio recorders and took some notes of the main points during the interviews. All interviewees provided consent to participate in the interviews.

Interviews with the Chairwoman or Vice Chairwoman of WUs were conducted at the office of the Commune People's Committee. Interviews with the village WUs were conducted at their home. In some interviews with the WU staff at village level, the WU staff at the commune level (CWU) sat next to the interviewees, which may have influenced these interviewees' responses. For example, they often looked at the CWU staff when they answered the questions or shared their experience of the implementation.

Some limitations were encountered: (i) Some interviews did not get through all the questions per the interview question guide because the interview started late, and the consultants needed to travel to another

interview. Some interviews were re-scheduled time (at mid-noon) to fit with the time of WU staff; (ii) Some women were nervous and confused a bit at the beginning of the interviews, and were scared of giving the wrong answers. Some interviewees prepared some notes relating to the project information on the paper in advance, so the interviews lost frankness and fluidity. Sometimes, the CWU staff (in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An more than Be Tre) did not answer questions directly tried to answer circuitously, especially on questions which they did not have much information; (iii) Some interviews ended in late afternoon, at the time that these women had to cook and take care of their children, so they did not feel comfortable; (v) the CWU staff were very busy, so the interviews were interrupted sometimes due to the phone calls and the requirements from the leaders of CPC.

3.2.5. Phase 5. Semi-structured interviews with private sector water operator and sanitation suppliers

Instrument. This phase involved interviews with private sector operators in water and sanitation to understand the nature and activities of their involvement in WOBA, and the extent to which their participation has improved their capacity to conduct sustainable business operations in the disadvantaged communities. The interview questions were designed to gather information on the following topics:

- perception of business capacity to deliver WASH services in rural areas, for poor, non-poor and GESI households, and factors that enable and hinder their capacity.
- changed knowledge about WASH and health, knowledge and skills in applying OBA to deliver WASH services, gender issues in WASH.
- understanding and ownership of the WOBA project in providing access to WASH for disadvantaged households.
- perception of WOBA's inclusive approach in terms of accessibility to WOBA information and other WASH related information, and subsidies received.
- extent to which their decision making and involvement are supported through the WOBA partnership structure and processes.
- perception of the impacts of WOBA on improving capacity of partners and stakeholders to ensure WASH investments benefit men and women equally or respond to women's priorities.

Additional business information was collected from the three operators subsequent to the interviews to compile two case studies on water supply operator and the sanitation supplier.

Sampling. Two private sector operators were selected from the list provided by the program team, which only had 1 sanitation company and 4 water companies (one of which was a PCERWASS state-owned enterprise). This leads to limited sampling and moreover, they were also participants in the FGDs. Although the evaluation team had selected a representative from one private water supplier, it was rejected at the last minute by the PCERWASS focal point. The two interviews were conducted with (i) Water Supply Enterprise is Branch headquarter Environment Technology and Invest Consultant Joint Stock Company which is located in Hoa Son commune, Do Luong district, Nghe An province; (ii) Environmental Sanitation Enterprise is Tan A Dai Thanh Environmental Sanitation Company in the southern region.

Field notes. The interview with water supply enterprise was conducted at their office. The interview with the environmental sanitation enterprise was conducted after a group discussion on the topic of sanitation at the meeting room of PWU in Ben Tre city. These are the only interviews in this MTR that had no other people besides the consultant and the interviewee present.

The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. The consulting team also used audio recorders and took notes during the interviews. All interviewees provided consent to participate in the interviews.

Some limitations were encountered: (i) The water supply enterprise interviewee was constantly on the phone with someone during the interview. The sanitation enterprise interviewee had to go to another province. Both interviewees appeared to be uncomfortable and in a hurry during the interview. Both held high position (Manager) in their enterprise so the interviews were constantly interrupted so they could receive the phone calls during the interview; ii) given that both interviewees also participated in the FGDs with other partners which happened prior to the interviews, their responses might have been influenced by the FGDs.

3.4 Analysis

Multiple analyses were undertaken to answer the key evaluation questions for each phase of data collection as formal evaluation component, and then integrated in the summative evaluation component.

First level of analysis was conducted for data collected from each phase. In this stage, the review of the policy documents was conducted using content analysis. Focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis to generate key themes for each phase 2, 3, 4. Themes and categories were elicited from an analysis of the qualitative data using NVivo 12 as a data management and coding tool. The consultants and the evaluation leader coded few transcripts independently and met to assess the consistency of their coding. Another round of coding took place prior to agreement on the final coding structure. Descriptive statistics were conducted by the consultant to analyse the survey responses.

Second level analysis involved comparative analysis across the four phases of data collection and three provinces to identify similarities or differences within and between differed stakeholder groups and beneficiary groups. This was conducted by all coders. First and second level analysis informed the formative evaluation component of the MTR.

Third level analysis involved combining interview and focus group data gathered from the evaluation fieldwork and monitoring indicators gathered by the project M&E unit independent of the evaluation team. This step was conducted by the evaluation leader. Annex 11 lists the information collected from program team including M&E unit. Where data was available, it was disaggregated by sex, GESI categories to ensure that perspectives of men and women, and of different groups are transparent, and respectively inform the evaluation findings. The aim was to triangulate results from each data source to ensure rigorous evidence in responding to the key evaluation questions.

The final level of analysis involved applying the concepts of CFIR, theory of partnership and ADB's gender dimensions to the themes derived from first three levels of analysis as the evaluative reasoning to address the objectives of the evaluation and inform the lessons learnt from the evaluation. This synthesis process was conducted by the evaluation leader to reach overall evaluative judgements to be made about the implementation activities and the project design and to make recommendations. The results of this step were discussed with the consultants to ensure consensus in the conclusions reached.

Annex 3 set out the links between key evaluation questions and sub questions, data collection tools, data sources and analytical method.

3.5 Ethical practice

The team was guided by Australian Evaluation Society guidelines for ethical conduct of evaluations.⁸ The evaluation team carried out the MTR to ensure ethical review and approval of the evaluation. The team

⁸ Australasian Evaluation Society (2013). Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations. Retrieved from https://www.aes.asn.au/images/AES_Guidelines_web_v2.pdf?type=file

adhered to the principles for ethical research and evaluation in development⁹, and ensured that the ethics principles of human research of merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect were applied.

All participants provided consent prior to participation in the focus group, survey, and interviews. All recorded materials were transcribed by the consultants, only accessible to the evaluation team, and not used for any other purposes besides this MTR. The full list of participants is included in Annex. None of their names are mentioned in the presentation and discussion of findings and citation of quotes.

Contact with participants followed Vietnam's regulation of providing official letters to the PPC, WOBA's focal points, listing the participants, itinerary of the field visits and the questions that will be asked during the field visits. The team also adhered to the requirement of having the WU and police accompanying the consultant team in travelling to and present at the interviews with households.

3.6 Limitations

There are several acknowledged limitations to the evaluation which were addressed through the evaluation design.

1. Timeline to carry out data collection and analysis is short with little time for detailed analysis and sense making. This is mitigated by sampling strategy which:
 - considered selection of beneficiaries and provinces based on practicality of travel and logistics within evaluation timeline
 - preparation of evaluation focus areas of inquiry based on WOBA's theory of change and strategies to test assumptions and inform the understanding of the project's effectiveness and efficiency
 - employed the CFIR framework that is based on implementation science to ensure consistent application of domains of implementation research, particularly the qualitative data constructs which have been used and validated by many implementation evaluations in the health care sector. Auxiliary partnership theory and ADB's gender dimensions provide an analytical framework for evaluating WOBA's partnership and gender activities and outcomes.
2. Potential bias in the data collected through interviews and focus groups. This is mitigated by the mixed methods data collection and rigorous analysis using four levels of analysis.
3. Wide range of stakeholders who cannot equally participate. This is mitigated by the sampling strategy (see above). The findings are also considered in light of findings from other studies conducted by or for EMW in relation to WASH.
4. Availability of participants. This mitigated by identify stakeholders early and schedule consultations and advising local authorities and focal points to ensure the timing was appropriate to their schedules. Field interviewing with the beneficiaries and WU in provinces were prepared well in advance, and included discussion between the lead evaluator who designed the evaluation methodology and data collection instruments, and the consultants to ensure any replacement of participants were done appropriately. However, there were few replacements of participants during fieldwork due to their unavailability.

⁹ Australian Council for International Development (2017). Principles and guidelines for ethical research and evaluation in development. Retrieved from [https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID_RDI%20Principles%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20ethical%20re search12-07-2017.pdf](https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID_RDI%20Principles%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20ethical%20research12-07-2017.pdf)

5. Potential for learning is lost due to the short evaluation time and multiple phases. This is mitigated by having formative evaluation feedback at the end of the second level of analysis. The use of prior studies and monitoring information from the program team also enabled lessons learnt to be highlighted.

Despite these mitigation measures, there are inherent limitations with the methods used, sampling, execution of interviews and focus groups, lack of baseline data, and the context of evaluation of a donor-funded project, which risk selection bias given that the program team supplied the list of stakeholders and reporting bias given that partners and stakeholders have an inherent interest in receiving subsidies and incentives from the project. Reliance on the monitoring information also bears inherent limitation of the data without appraisal of the M&E system. The implications of these limitations should be considered in interpreting the findings of this report.

3.7 Evaluation schedule

A detailed schedule for the evaluation is provided in Annex 5.

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1. KEQ1: To what extent has WOBA aligned with the government of Vietnam's policies in WASH in rural Vietnam? (Relevance)

4.1.1 *List of documents and brief abstract of each document*

Six¹⁰ policy documents were reviewed. They include:

- Decree No.117 /2007/ND-CP on clean water production, supply and consumption
- Decree No.124/2011/ND-CP on amendment and addition to a number of articles of the GoV's Decree No.117 /2007/ND-CP on clean water production, supply and consumption
- Decree No.57/2018/ND-CP on mechanisms and policies to encourage enterprises to invest in agriculture and rural areas
- Decision No.131/2009/QĐ-TTg on a number of preferential policies to encourage investment, management and exploitation of rural clean water supply works
- Decision No. 543/QĐ-BNN-KHCN is on the Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and vision to 2050
- Decision 6105/QĐ-UBND.NN on approval of the rural WASH plan in Nghe An to 2020 and orientation to 2030, that was issued in 2015 by the Nghe An PPC
- National Strategy on Rural Water Supply 2020 approved by the Government in Decision No. 104/2000/QĐ-TTg dated August 25, 2000, to be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

All of these policy documents were in use by the government at the time of the review. Among those, there are two policy documents (Decree No.117/2007/ND-CP and Decree No.124/2011/ND-CP) with the same

¹⁰ The report also refers to Decision 681/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 4 June 2019 on issuing a process for implementation of sustainable development goals to the year 2030 and Decision No.6847/QĐ-BYT issued by Ministry of Health on 13 November 2018 on approval of communication projects on improving personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, rural clean water use in 2018-2025 and a vision to 2030

content on clean water production, supply and consumption. The Decree No.124 is to adjust and supplement some issues for the Decree No.117. Below is a brief summary of the contents of each document:

- Decree No.117 /2007/ND-CP and Decree No.124/2011/ND-CP are on clean water production, supply and consumption apply to domestic organizations, individuals and households and foreign organizations in activities related to clean water production, supply and consumption in the Vietnamese territory. They provide the rights and obligations of these entities. They also provide for activities in the domains of production, supply and consumption of clean water once the concentrated/piped water supply system has been completed in urban, rural areas and industrial parks. These decrees stipulate the operating principles and policies on development of the water sector nationwide. They include the encouragement mechanism to invest the development and management of water supply activities. They provide the regulations on water supply planning and investment for water supply development, connection and water supply service contract, water tariff, rights and obligations of water supply units and water-use customers, assurance of water supply safety and state management of water supply.
- Decree No.57/2018/ND-CP deals with a number of additional incentives to investment and procedures for giving incentives to enterprises investing in agriculture and rural development sector. This Decree applies to the Enterprises that are eligible to receive incentives and subsidies, duly established under the Law on enterprises and have investment projects. The Decree provides the regulation and list of sectors which can acquire the investment incentives and subsidies. The decree stipulates the subsidies, funding sources and subsidies mechanism for the rural water supply enterprises.
- Decision No.131/2009/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister is on a number of investment preference and promotion policies and the management and exploitation of rural water supply works. This Decision prescribes the preferential, support and incentive policies applicable to investment projects on construction of clean water supply facilities (including projects on new construction, renovation and upgrading) and the management and exploitation of clean water supply works in piped water systems in service of daily-life activities and other purposes of rural population communities (excluding the small and single water supply facilities). It applies to enterprises operating under the Enterprise Law, public non-business units, cooperatives, cooperative groups and individuals (below collectively referred to as organizations and individuals) that conduct activities of investment, technology transfer, exploitation management, production and trading in the provision of services on rural clean water.
- Decision No. 543/QD-BNN-KHCN is on the Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and vision to 2050. This decision aims to strengthen the capacity of the agriculture and rural development sector to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to reduce impacts from climate change, and to promote sustainable development. The five main objectives of the decision are: (i) Stabilise, ensure safety for residents of the cities, regions, particularly the Mekong river delta, the Northern delta and the Central coastal zone; (ii) Ensure stable production of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and salt towards low emission orientation and sustainable development; (iii) Ensure food security, maintenance of 3.8mil. ha of paddy land, of which 3.2mil. ha with 2 crops per year at least; (iv) Ensure safety of the dike system, civil works, technical and economic infrastructure, that meets the requirements for natural disaster prevention and mitigation and; (v) Keep the sector growth of 20%, poverty reduction rate of 20% and reduction of greenhouse gas emission at 20% in each 10-year period.
- Decision 6105/QD-UBND.NN is on the approval of the rural WASH plan in Nghe An to 2020 and orientation to 2030, that was issued in 2015 by the Nghe An PPC. The target of the this plan is: (i)

to manage and direct the effective implementation of the program on domestic water and sanitation in rural residential areas of Nghe An province; (ii) Ensure that by 2030, complete the targets of water supply for domestic use and environmental sanitation treatment in rural areas in the province; (iii) Integrating and promoting capital sources of related programs and projects, socialized resources for investment in the development of domestic water supply and rural environmental sanitation treatment; and (iv) Exploit, protect, use properly and sustainably develop water resources, ensure safety and hygiene of living environment, improve quality of life and health for people, contribute to socio-economic development. There are some implementation solutions mentioned in this plan, including: community participation and IEC, the technological- technical models on WASH, the resources mobilization, the investment organization and post-investment management.

- The National Strategy on RWSS up to 2020 is implemented via the National Target Program on Clean Water and Rural Sanitation through 3 phases: 1998-2005; 2006-2010 and 2011-2015. Since 2016, the implementation of the National Strategy on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation has been integrated in the National Target Program on New Rural Development.

4.1.3 Key priorities of the documents

These policy documents focus on some key priorities: domestic water supply, sanitation and climate change.

i. Domestic Water Supply - Encouragement of PPP development

The domestic water supply is mentioned in all six policy documents. It is relevant with the 6th sustainable development goal to 2030 of the Vietnamese government that *“Ensure adequate supply and sustainable management of water resources and sanitation systems for all: By 2030, ensure adequate and equitable access to safe drinking water and living, within the affordability of 95-100% of the people”*.¹¹

Decision No.117 provides the regulations of clean water production, supplying and consumption. In this document, the public-private partnership (PPP) model is focused on and shows the state encourages the private sector to participate in the domestic water supply. It is said that *“all economic sectors and social communities are encouraged to invest in the development and management of water supply activities”* (Item 6, Article 3), and *“Encouraging and creating conditions for organizations and individuals to actively research and register as investors of investment projects on water supply development”* (Item 4, Article 3). It also mentions the partnership among the Ministries to issue the specific guidance to implement: *“The Ministry of Planning and Investment shall coordinate with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and concerned ministries and sectors in providing guidance on specific incentive mechanisms for water supply projects encourage the enterprises to produce and use domestic specialized materials and equipment”* (Item 3, Article 30). In this decision, the water supply for the poor and the extremely difficult areas is also mentioned twice. The first time it is mentioned in the Article 3 that: *“Water supply activity is a type of production and business activity that is controlled by the State to ensure the legitimate rights and benefits of water providers and water users, including consideration of support for water supply for the poor and extremely difficult areas”*. Another one is mentioned in the water tariff calculation *“Clean water tariff must be ensured for water supply units to maintain, develop and encourage service quality improvement, contributing to saving water use, considering the support for the poor”* (Item 3, Article 51).

In Decree No.57, private sector participation is encouraged through the provision of regulations of additional incentives to investment and procedures for giving incentives to enterprises investing in agriculture and rural development sector – including the water supply enterprises in the rural area. Water supply is one of 19

¹¹ Decision 681/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 4 June 2019 on issuing a process for implementation of sustainable development goals to the year 2030

categories of sectors and occupations with investment incentives in agriculture and rural areas. In Article 13 “Support businesses to provide public services and invest in agricultural and rural infrastructure”, it is said that “Enterprises having projects to supply clean water to rural areas are supported as follows: (a) Support 3 million VND/m³/day and night of capacity for new construction or 02 million VND/m³/day and night of capacity for upgrading and renovating clean water plant; (b) Support up to 50% of main pipeline costs leading to residential areas with 10 or more households” (Item 1). The post-investment supporting mechanism states: “The State budget provides the post-investment support: when the project's investment items are completed and accepted, 70% of the support budget will be disbursed according to the investment items; After the project is completed, accepted and put into production and business, 30% of the remaining support capital will be disbursed” (Item 3, Article 15). It is similar to WOBA’s output-based approach wherein the enterprises invested the domestic water supply first, the state will provide the support after the construction is completed and operated.

Decision No.131 provides some investment preference and promotion policies and the management and exploitation of rural water supply works. The PPP model is mentioned as one of the models for management and exploitation of rural clean water supply works (Item 4.1, Article 5).

At the local level, in the Decision No. 6105 issued by Nghe An PPC, relating to PPP model, it is said that “Solutions for mobilizing resources: Mobilizing socialized resources through the direct contributions of users (by labor, cash, preferential loans for rural water supply and sanitation of the Vietnam Social Policies Bank, Women’s Union, ...) and the capital of the Enterprises participating in investment in the form of PPP (BOT, BT, BTO, O&M, ...)” (item c, Article 3).

In summary, the policy documents aim to develop the domestic water supply systems, and development of PPP model is considered as a solution for mobilizing resources.

ii. Sanitation and hygiene – priorities for PPP model and OBA approach

Sanitation and hygiene are also specific goals to the year 2030. It is a key target of Ministry of Health that “Open Defecation is completely eliminated” by building and using the hygienic latrine.¹² Among six policy documents, two mention sanitation. The first document is Decree 57 that outlines the mechanism of incentives to enterprises investing in agriculture and rural. It is said that “The enterprise has a project to collect and treat domestic waste and domestic wastewater in rural areas; Waste treatment for craft villages and rural areas is supported 60% of the cost of buying equipment, building a treatment system, the level of support does not exceed VND 05 billion per a project” (Item 1, Article 13). It means that the private sector is encouraged to invest to rural sanitation and hygiene.

The second document is at the Decision No. 6105 issued by Nghe An PPC, which sets the rule at the provincial level. Similar to domestic water supply, PPP model is one of the models for the solution of resources mobilization “Mobilizing socialized resources ... through the capital of the Enterprises participating in investment in the form of PPP (BOT, BT, BTO, O&M, ...)” (item c, Article 3).

In summary, regulations in these policy document show that the PPP model is one of the priorities to improve the rural sanitation and hygiene. Output-based approach is a method used by the state to support private enterprises.

iii. Climate change

Vietnamese government considers climate change resilience and adaptation to be one important goal in the sustainable development goals to the year 2030. Goal 13 is to respond promptly and effectively to climate change and natural disasters, and strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change-related risks, and

¹² Decision No.6847/QĐ-BYT issued by Ministry of Health on 13 November 2018 on approval of communication projects on improving personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, rural clean water use in 2018-2025 and a vision to 2030.

respond to natural disasters and other disasters.¹³ The climate change is also mentioned in the Decision No.543 on the Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and vision to 2050. It is said in Task 2: Saving water in production and living by *“Reviewing the planning, upgrading and constructing saline prevention works, water supply and water drainage works; especially for the Red River Delta, the Mekong River and the coastal area to be protected against sea level rise with the scenario in each phase”* and *“Strengthening rural infrastructure: Ensuring the safety of roads, schools, markets, rural water supply and sanitation works in case of climate disasters.”* (Item d and f, Article B). Task 3 aims to implement Task 2: *“Raising awareness, responsibility for participation of all levels of sectors, fields, localities and communities on climate change”*.

International cooperation helps to strengthen the capacity and resources for climate change adaptation. *“International cooperation with governments and international organizations to mobilize resources, knowledge, experience and funds to implement the sector's action plans to respond to climate change”* and *“Objectives to mobilize the international resources to promote the implementation of the Action Plan, focusing on financial and technical assistance from bilateral, multilateral, global and international non-governmental organizations”* by *“developing proposals on programs/projects on climate change to call for funding from international organizations”*.

In general, in the Decision No 453, water supply works are to be protected against sea level rise with the scenario in each phase of climate change resilience and adaptation.

4.1.4 Alignment of the WOBA activities and outcomes to these priorities

The five WOBA outputs and activities focus on: (i) implement and sustain inclusive output- based aid WASH approach (outcome 1); (ii) Strengthen private sector in both sanitation and water supply (outcome 2); (iii) Improve access to and use of equitable WASH services (to reach the poor, the GESI, marginalized community members) (outcome 2 and 3); (iv) Improve gender empowerment (outcome 4); (v) climate change and disaster resilience (outcome 1). From the policy documents, WOBA outcomes are clearly aligned with the policies in Vietnam. All five themes are mentioned and are the focus of the policy documents reviewed.

According to the draft National Strategy for RWSS to 2030,¹⁴ *“despite achieving remarkable results, rural clean water supply and sanitation activities according to Decision No. 104/2000/QĐ-TTg in many regions are still limited, and the effectiveness is not commensurate with the resources invested as well as desires and aspirations of the people. Many areas still do not have clean water and standard sanitation facilities. The number of inefficient works is still high and contains many unsustainable factors. Rural clean water supply and sanitation are facing and will continue to face many challenges: Water sources are depleted, degraded and polluted; clean water quality is not yet safe; unstable water supply system; clean water production and consumption costs are still high, water quality management is still overlooked, and safe water supply is almost not implemented; rural sanitation still faces many challenges.”* The Strategy sets the objectives for 100% of rural households to have hygienic latrines, and 75% of rural population in disadvantaged areas to use clean water with minimum use of 60 liters per person per day, by 2030. WOBA’s goal of providing access to improved sanitation and piped water to poor and GESI households aligns with the National Strategy’s objectives.

Output based aid WASH approach is mentioned in the Decree 57 about the post-investment supporting mechanism: *“The State budget provides the post-investment support: when the project's investment items are completed and accepted, 70% of the support budget will be disbursed according to the investment items; After the project is completed, accepted and put into production and business, 30% of the remaining support capital*

¹³ Decision 681/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 4 June 2019 on issuing a process for implementation of sustainable development goals to the year 2030

¹⁴ Draft National Strategy of Rural Supply of Water and Sanitation to 2030, 6 May 2021.

will be disbursed" (Item 3, Article 15). It means the enterprises invested the WASH works first, then the state will provide the support after the construction is completed and operated.

Strengthening private sector in both sanitation and water supply (PPP model) is mentioned clearly in Decree 117 and Decision No. 6105 of Nghe An PPC, and the National Strategy of RWSS to 2030. The private sector is encouraged to participate in the domestic water supply. It is said that *"all economic sectors and social communities are encouraged to invest in the development and management of water supply activities"* (Item 6, Article 3), and *"Encouraging and creating conditions for organizations and individuals to actively research and register as investors of investment projects on water supply development"* (Item 4, Article 3), and *"Implement socialization, attract investment resources for rural water supply and sanitation from all economic sectors, especially households - users, the private sectors and enterprises"* (National Strategy, section 3.3.2, p. 14). The Strategy specifically lists ODA capital and NGOs support for clean water supply and rural sanitation in disadvantaged areas. which positions EMW and WOBA as an appropriate intervention and EMW as an actor in the National Strategy.

WOBA's expected outcome of improving access to and use of equitable WASH services for rural marginalized households is relevant to the decision No.117, which mentions water supply for the poor and the extremely difficult areas in Article 3: *"Water supply activity is a type of production and business activity that is controlled by the State to ensure the legitimate rights and benefits of water providers and water users, including consideration of support for water supply for the poor and extremely difficult areas"*. Therefore, the water tariff calculation should be considered to *"ensure for water supply units to maintain, develop and encourage service quality improvement, contributing to saving water use, considering the support for the poor"* (Item 3, Article 51).

Although, the GESI, social inclusion and gender equality are not mentioned directly, but, in the 6th Sustainable Development Goal to 2030 of the Vietnamese government that *"Ensure adequate supply and sustainable management of water resources and sanitation systems for all: By 2030, ensure adequate and equitable access to safe drinking water and living, within the affordability of 95-100% of the people"*¹⁵. Moreover, the Vietnamese gender equality law always focus on men and women having equal access to resources.¹⁶

WOBA's climate change initiative is relevant to the Goal No.13 of the sustainable development goals of Vietnamese government which is to respond promptly and effectively to climate change and natural disasters, and strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change-related risks, and respond to natural disasters and other disasters.¹⁷ The climate change is also mentioned in task 2 of the Decision No.543 on the Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and vision to 2050 that saving water in production and living by *"Reviewing the planning, upgrading and constructing saline prevention works, water supply and water drainage works; especially for the Red River Delta, the Mekong River and the coastal area to be protected against sea level rise with the scenario in each phase"* and *"Strengthening rural infrastructure: Ensuring the safety of roads, schools, markets, rural water supply and sanitation works in case of climate disasters."* (Item d and f, Article B).

From this analysis, it can be said that the outcomes and activities of WOBA align with the Vietnam's WASH policies.

¹⁵ Decision 681/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 4 June 2019 on issuing a process for implementation of sustainable development goals to the year 2030

¹⁶ Article 5, Gender Equality Law, 2006.

¹⁷ Decision 681/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 4 June 2019 on issuing a process for implementation of sustainable development goals to the year 2030

4.1.5 Potential contribution of WOBA short term and long terms outcomes to these priorities and components in short term and long term

Since the outputs and activities of WOBA align with Vietnamese policies, WOBA's achievements will contribute to support the development strategies in WASH in Vietnam.

The policy documents reviewed suggest that the output-based aid approach is considered by the government of Vietnam as a highly effective approach for reaching marginalised groups. WOBA thus has the potential for expanding the OBA model to the phasing-in GoV budget, where the government does not pay in advance for investment, rather by phases of construction. For example, 70% of investment is paid when construction finishes, and the remaining 30% is paid when the system is in operation. In some cases, the government only pays the full cost when the system is in operation.

The National Strategy of RWSS to 2030 states the responsibilities of the various ministries in implementing the Strategy. It states the specific responsibilities of the Provincial People's Committee in assigning and authorising specialized agencies and lower-level People's Committees and local mechanisms to implement the Strategy, as well as promulgate policies and technical regulations on rural clean water supply and sanitation. In working with the PPC as the key authority of governance in WOBA, WOBA follows the Strategy and has legitimacy within the government system.

Further, the Strategy denotes *"in disadvantaged areas, the State has policies to support and compensate for prices to ensure the interests of customers and water supply units as well as ensuring social security."* (National Strategy, pg. 30), which suggests that the co-financing component of WOBA to be arranged with the PPC aligns with the Strategy's direction.

Since 2015, the GoV has embraced a new policy to encourage private sector engagement and investment in rural water and sanitation. WOBA develops the partnership network among the private suppliers and the WUs. That helps to strengthen the private suppliers' capacity to access to the WASH market, especially to the marginalised household groups, people with disabilities, the poor, the elderly, etc. This contributes to enhance the social inclusion for the marginalised group to ensure they have equal access to WASH services.

WOBA contributes to create the enabling environment for women's participation and empowerment in three ways: through targeting women as beneficiaries, through actively engaging them in WASH initiatives as change agents, and through empowering women with increased decision-making and gender empowerment outcomes in the household and public sphere.

WOBA's focus on climate resilient water safety planning and FSM through its pilot and capacity building of local government partners and private sector partners are aligned with the government's considerations of disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as overall natural resource management and protection as seen in the policy documents.

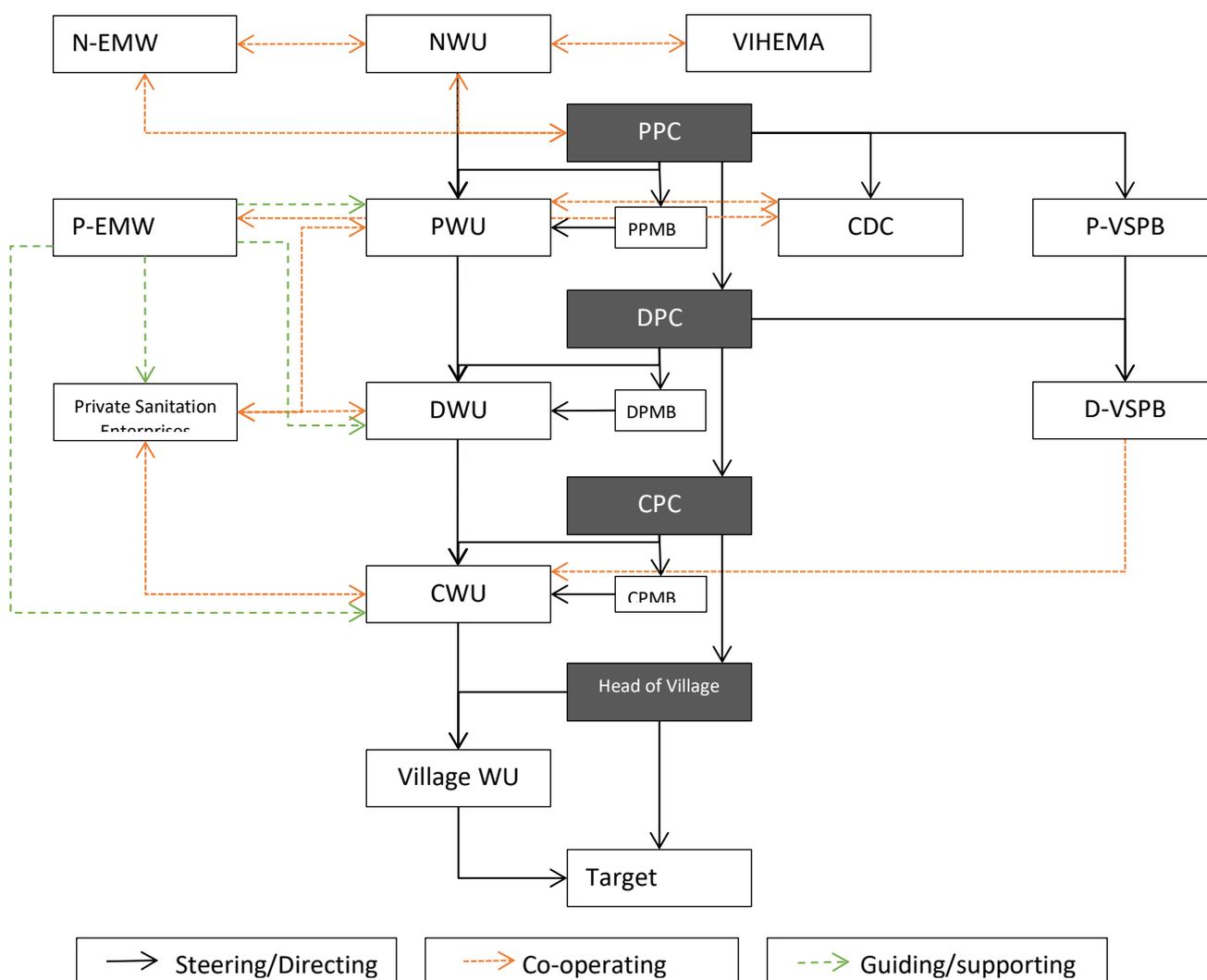
4.2. KEQ2. To what extent has WOBA Vietnam implemented its activities in an effective and efficient way? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

- i. Are the program's governance structure and implementation arrangements appropriate and proportionate to the outcomes sought? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

4.2.1 Governance structure

WOBA's implementation activities are conducted under two operational structures, one for sanitation and water components. The main difference between the two structures lies in the organisation who has the power to make decisions and direct implementation activities. In sanitation, as shown in Fig 1, the PPC is the main agency that governs WOBA's implementation activities by directing the PWU and the CDC. The PPC established a Provincial Project Management Board to coordinate the implementation of WOBA. The WU plays an important role from the national to village levels in cooperation with other partners. The Vietnam Bank for Social Policies (VSPB) provides financial loans for households to build latrines also under the governance of the PPC. The PPC operates in accordance with its political structure, which is a hierarchical structure of governance from the provincial, to district, commune, and village. At the village level, the CPC has authority over the head of village and the village Party cell. VIHEMA is responsible for technical assistance at the national level and has developed technical guidelines for latrines for persons with disabilities.

Fig 1. Map of Governance Structure – Sanitation Component



considered this as a contributing factor to the partnership’s function of directing activities downward to the village level,

“This project has the existing inheritance from the central to the local partnership structure. The vertical and horizontal relationships are good. We have known each other very well before.”

All stakeholders who participated in the FGDs said that this partnership mechanism is suitable with the context. A participant in the national FGD said,

“Basically, CHOBA has reached the phase 3 (it means WOBA), so the cooperation is very smooth, creating a mechanism among partners at central level as well as provincial levels is smooth. At the provincial level, department of the CDC is responsible for technical supervision, so the WU only focuses on mobilizing households to build latrines.”

From this quote above, it appears that the participant considered WOBA as an extension of CHOBA rather than a separate project, which is a misunderstanding of WOBA given that it is a different design and outcomes to CHOBA.

4.2.2 Information flow and decision making

Figure 3. Map of Information Flow- Sanitation Component

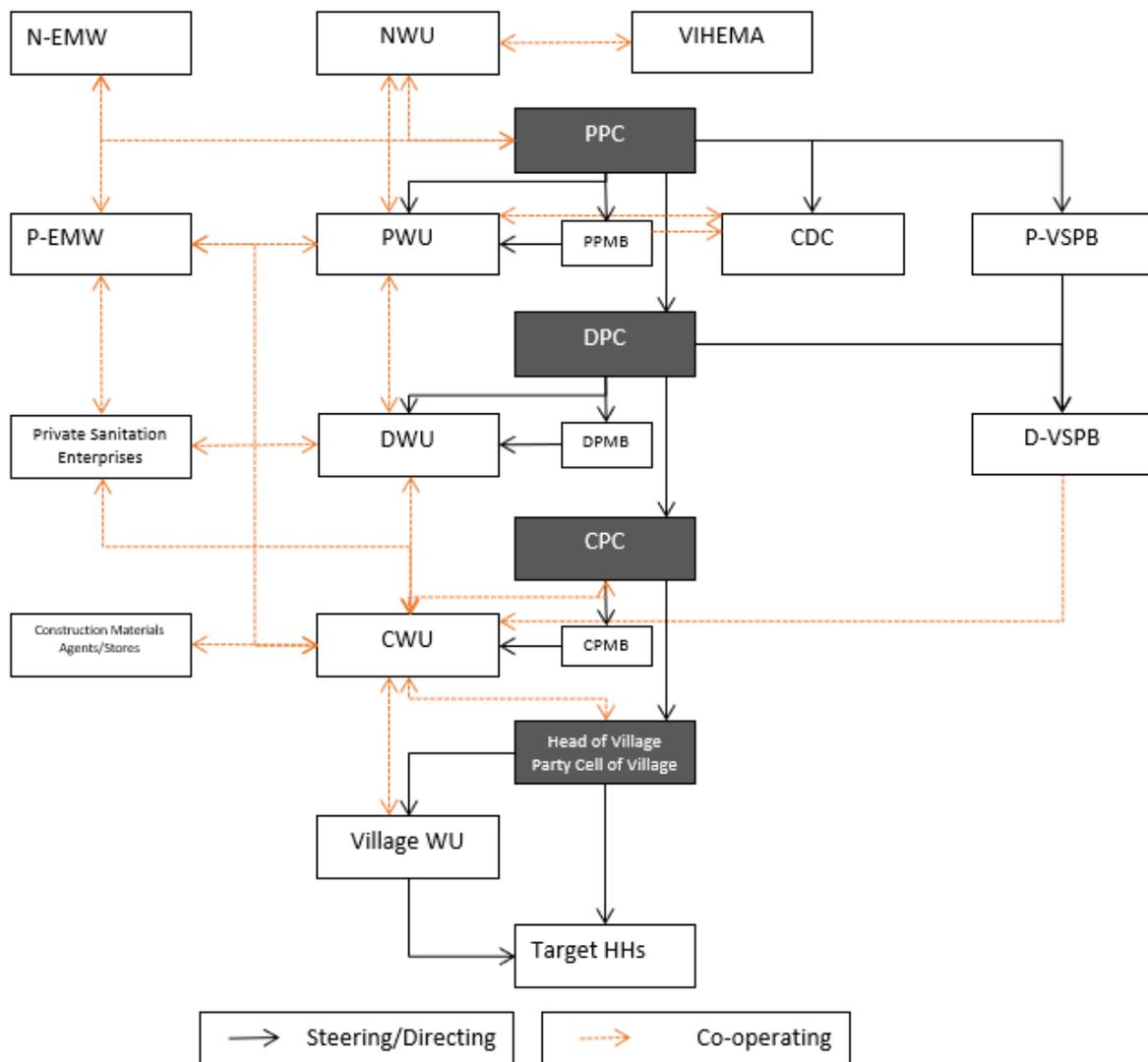
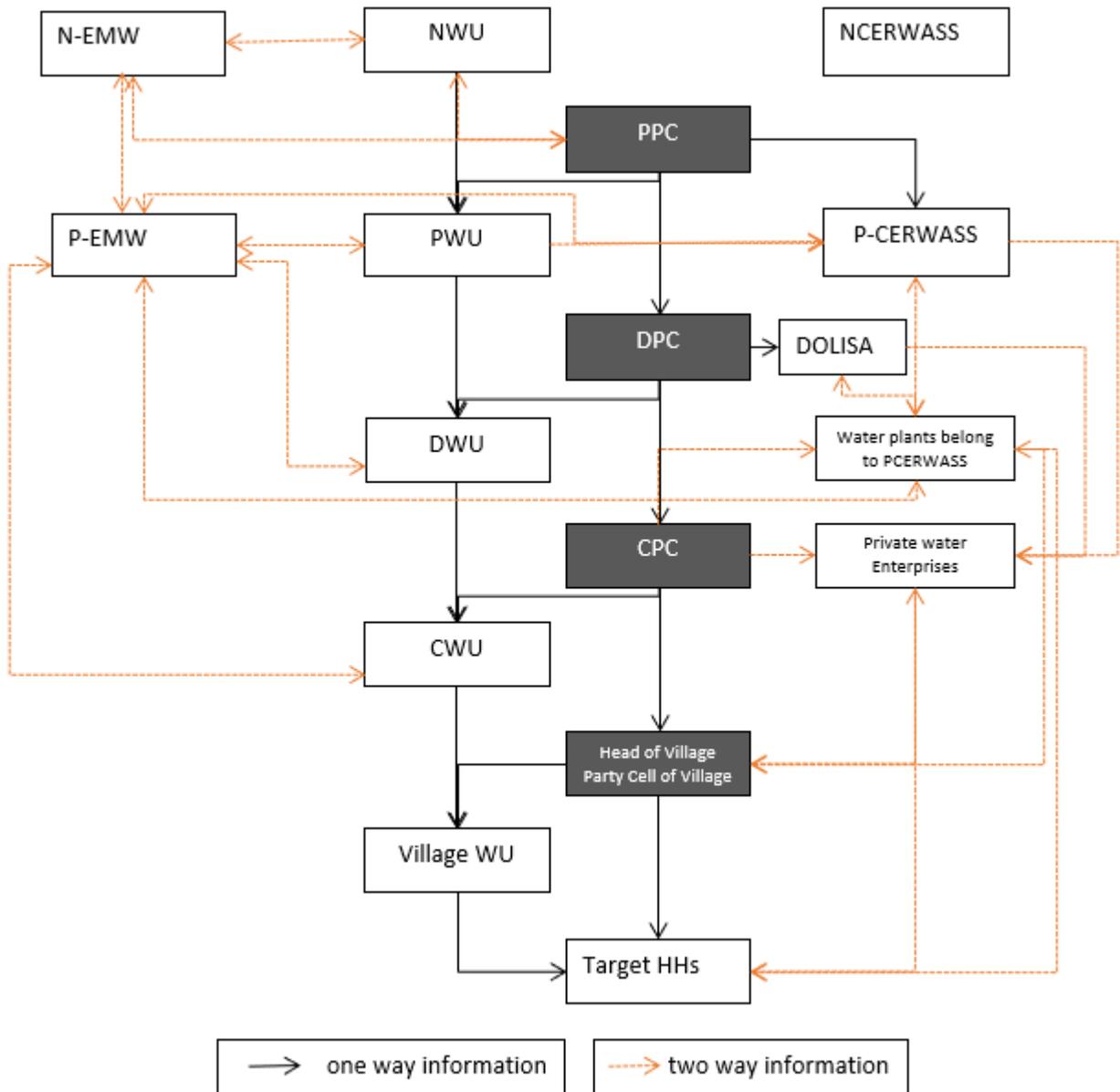


Fig 3 and 4 shows the information flow in the sanitation and water partnership structure respectively. Since WOBA leverages existing government structure by using the PC as key authority for operation, the information flow in WOBA is one way from the provincial level downward to village authorities, and from the PC to WU to ensure the WU comply with the PC's decision and agreement. Among other stakeholders, there are almost two-way communication of providing information, discussion, and feedback. There is information exchange between the CWU and construction materials agents or stores in relation to purchases of latrine materials. The CWU guarantees some households with limited resources to enable them to buy materials on credit from construction material stores so they can build latrines first, and pay the stores when they receive subsidies from the project.

It seems that there is little information exchange between the WU and water enterprises at the district and commune levels. Most water enterprises directly work with the CPC and head of village to identify target beneficiaries. However, the WU is in charge of implementing the IEC activities on WASH – especially on using tap water. Both WU and water enterprises said that it is more effectively if there is information exchange between them.

Fig 4. Map of Information Flow- Water Component



At the central level, the NWU, VIHEMA and NCERWASS shared WOBA's vision of improving access to sanitation and clean water for marginalised households because it aligns with the National Strategy of WASH, which they have a role in the implementation. In this way, WOBA leverages the broader policy context (see 4.1) to encourage these partners' participation in WOBA. As one FGD participant in the national FGD said,

"In the water and sanitation strategy, we (WU, VIHEMA, NCERWASS) are members of the steering committee from phase 1 to phase 3, and in the New Rural Development Program as well. This mechanism has been established even before the project."

The NWU developed a private program relating WASH sector called "5 Without-s, 3 Clean-s"¹⁸ which has been operationalised nationwide for over 10 years. One WU member said in the FGD at the national level,

"In relation to our activities on sanitation, there is a communication campaign of "5 No, 3 Clean". 3 clean include: clean the house, clean the kitchen, clean the alley/road. Because of this result, house cleanliness including bathrooms, latrines and hygienic water supply facilities are considered as the criteria of New Rural Development Program".

At the national level, the information flow is mainly horizontal where EMW plays the role of coordinating among the national stakeholders such as NWU, VIHEMA and NCERWASS. Due to established relationships between stakeholders from previous projects, communication among these stakeholders appears to be simpler with less time spent on producing and sending official letters. As said by an FGD national level participant,

"Everything in principle must be in writing. But now it only needs a monthly phone call to prepare the report. For example, when the CDC goes field visit, they already know that they have to prepare the report. If there is any problem, all will solve it immediately."

At the provincial level, the PPC makes all decisions in relation to implementation activities including participation in WOBA, co-financing of households' latrine construction costs, and steering and directing stakeholders to implement the project activities. Without the PPC's agreement, WOBA cannot be implemented in the provinces. As participants of the FGD in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa provinces said,

"There must be the involvement of the Communist Party and the authorities which is from the Provincial People's Committee (PPC). There must be a written official document from the PPC to direct the relevant stakeholders at all levels."

"According to the PPC, only when they assign the tasks for which organizations that those organisations will do it. The direction from PPC is the legal basis for departments and organizations to implement and explain it easily."

EMW and NWU worked with the PPCs to inform them about WOBA and invited them to the project, but some provinces did not meet the project requirements for co-financing. One WU in the FGD national level commented,

"When we worked with Tra Vinh PPC, they couldn't respond, so they had to stop. Although there was a very good relationship with PPC in Tra Vinh in CHOBA 2, they did not meet WOBA's requirements. I was afraid that they were not able to do it and they didn't have counterpart funds."

In the sanitation component, the WU plays the role of implementing and others cooperate with the WU during the implementation. According to one of the FGD participant at the national level, the role of the WU is mainly in mobilising households as the CDC is responsible for technical aspects of WOBA. In the water component, the role of WU is less clear, and the water enterprises play the key role in the implementation. Below are exchanges in the FGD in Ben Tre for water,

¹⁸The VWU's campaign of building the family of "5 Without-s and 3 Clean-s" 5 Without-s: Without poverty, violation of law and social evils, domestic violence, violation of population policies, and having malnourished and school drop-out children; 3 Clean-s: Clean house, kitchen and surrounding streets has been launched since 2010. WASH is under the 3 Clean-s, it shows that the role and responsibility of women with the activities in water use, sanitation and hygiene. This campaign has been highly appreciated by the Communist Party of Vietnam, authorities and the WU members have participated in this campaign all over the country

“Q: In the water component, what is the role of the WU?”

A: The WU is not the key implementer, the WU coordinates to implement only. Water enterprises are mainly responsible for implementing.”

The WU and local authorities were concerned about the project targets at the beginning of the project. They recognized that without the significant involvement of the WU and authorities, the subsidy provided through the project is not sufficient to achieve set targets. Thus, implementation has focused on the target beneficiaries and subsidy payments. The WU and local authorities mobilise the target beneficiaries to build their latrines in their own ways. For example, the WU and local authorities have made many efforts to find different resources (in addition to WOBA’s subsidies) to support the target beneficiaries to build their latrines because they considered it is the WU’s political responsibility, especially WU at commune level, to do so. Therefore, the WU at the village level and the beneficiaries were not concerned with WOBA’s implementation approach or the implementation process. Their main concern was which households can be selected to be target beneficiaries and what are the subsidies for these beneficiaries.

According to the project design, the WU staff (village, commune) is the contact person with households to provide them with subsidy information before they decide to purchase latrine, during the process of building latrine, the verification process, and the process of receiving the subsidy. However, the beneficiaries interviewed also mentioned the village heads as their contact persons in addition to the WU in all these steps. Two beneficiaries in Ben Tre said,

“The village head and women union staff come here 2-3 times to persuade us to build latrine, because building a house, you also have to build the toilet as well.”

“In general, these women [WU] and Uncle Ut (village head) reminded me, so I finally agreed.”

Some beneficiaries only knew the head of their village and not the WU staff. Some said that they only knew the village head who conducts propaganda activities about WASH and thought that the WU is responsible for other issues. One beneficiary said,

“I registered to connect to water supply system with the village head. No women or anyone else came here to say anything about clean water. The WU was different. They just talked about loan management, but the village head go to meetings more, so they knew more about my household, and they helped us.”

In addition to subsidy information for latrine construction, the beneficiaries interviewed were also provided with the latrine design so they can understand and comply with technical aspects of latrine,

“They asked me to make a double vault latrine with a vent because I couldn’t afford a septic tank. I have to do as they required from the beginning. If I make a mistake, I will correct it. If I don't do it right, they won't accept it. The WU said to build 2m in height, so I built 2m high as they say.”

After building latrines or connecting clean water systems, households were rarely visited by the WUs or village officials to instruct on how to properly maintain latrines or how to use clean water effectively and efficiently.

In general, there is no clear evidence for information flow between the water and sanitation sector in WOBA. At the national level, partners seemed to be interested in both water and sanitation. However, at the provincial level down, the information flow about subsidy and target beneficiaries are separate, with the WU as the key mobiliser of information in sanitation and the water operator in the water component. In some communes, the WU interviewed did not have any information relating to water connection because according to them, the water operator worked with the CPC only, and CPC did not communicate with the WU and vice versa. Both the WU members and water operator interviewed felt that it would be better if they

cooperate with each other to mobilize households to access WASH services, because both sanitation and water components have same target beneficiaries.

4.2.3 Survey responses on the effectiveness of partnership structure

The survey responses support the FGD discussion about the operation of the partnership structure. Table 1 below summaries the main activities that FGD participants reported doing in WOBA. Table 2 summarises the FGD participants' survey responses (n=37) in relation to their organisation's activities in WOBA on a scale of 1 to 10. Generally, the involvement tended to be at the medium to higher end with scores of 5 and above for engagement, level of interaction, scope of activities, strategic value and importance of partner organization to the WOBA structure. The partnership appears to be varied from simple to complex reflecting the purpose of the partnership for output achievement and following existing vertical structure of governance.

Table 1. Partners' main activities in WOBA based on survey responses

	Number of respondents
Planning	2
Identifying beneficiaries	2
Advising for the superior	2
Conducting subsidies payment	2
Providing technical support	3
Monitoring	3
Training and guiding	5
Verification	7
Implementing propaganda	9
Coordinating	13

Table 2. Involvement with WOBA partnership structure

	Respondent's Score									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Level of partner's engagement with WOBA (1=low, 10=high)				2	6	1	5	10	3	9
Importance of partner organisation to WOBA (1=peripheral, 10=central)		1	1		6		5	8	9	7
Value of resources partner received from WOBA (1=low, 10=high)		2	2	1	5	4	7	6	6	4
Scope of partner's activities in WOBA (1=narrow, 10=broad)		1	2		7	2	6	6	7	6
Level of interaction between partner and WOBA (1=infrequent, 10=intensive)				1	3	2	2	7	8	10
Level of complexity of partnership with WOBA (1=simple, 10=complex)	3	4	5	3	5	3	4	6	4	
Strategic value of partnership with WOBA for partner (1=minor, 10=major)		1			4	2	2	9	9	10

Fig 5 summarises survey respondents' perception of the nature of their organisation's partnership in the WOBA partnership structure. About two thirds of the respondents strongly agreed and one-third agreed with the statements that "the partnership is mutually beneficial", "our organization has an equal voice in the partnership", "our partnership is built on a shared vision of WOBA", "trust has been built between EMWF and our organization through the partnership" and "the overall level of communication with EMWF is satisfactory". No one disagreed with these statements. However, only a half of respondents strongly

agreed with the statements that “EMWF shares its resources with our organisation (include monetary and non-monetary resources such as skills, training, mentoring, use of building etc” and “The overall decision-making process in the partnership is satisfactory to implement WOBA activities efficiently”. As discussed earlier, this might reflect the concentrated decision-making position of the PPC in relation to participation in WOBA, amounts of subsidy for target beneficiaries, and directing the stakeholders to involve in the project, with less autonomy for local partners to make decision. Paradoxically, because of the PPC role within Vietnam’s government structure, without the decision from PPC, it is also difficult for the local partners to participate in the project because there is no legitimacy for them to do so. Thus, on the one hand, leveraging the PPC to implement WOBA may enable access to the rural communities to conduct implementation; on the other, it compromises autonomy and decision-making capacity of local partners. According to some respondents in the focus groups, EMW can work directly with the DWU rather than through the PPC or high level of WU.

Fig 5. Survey responses to the “Nature of partnership with WOBA”

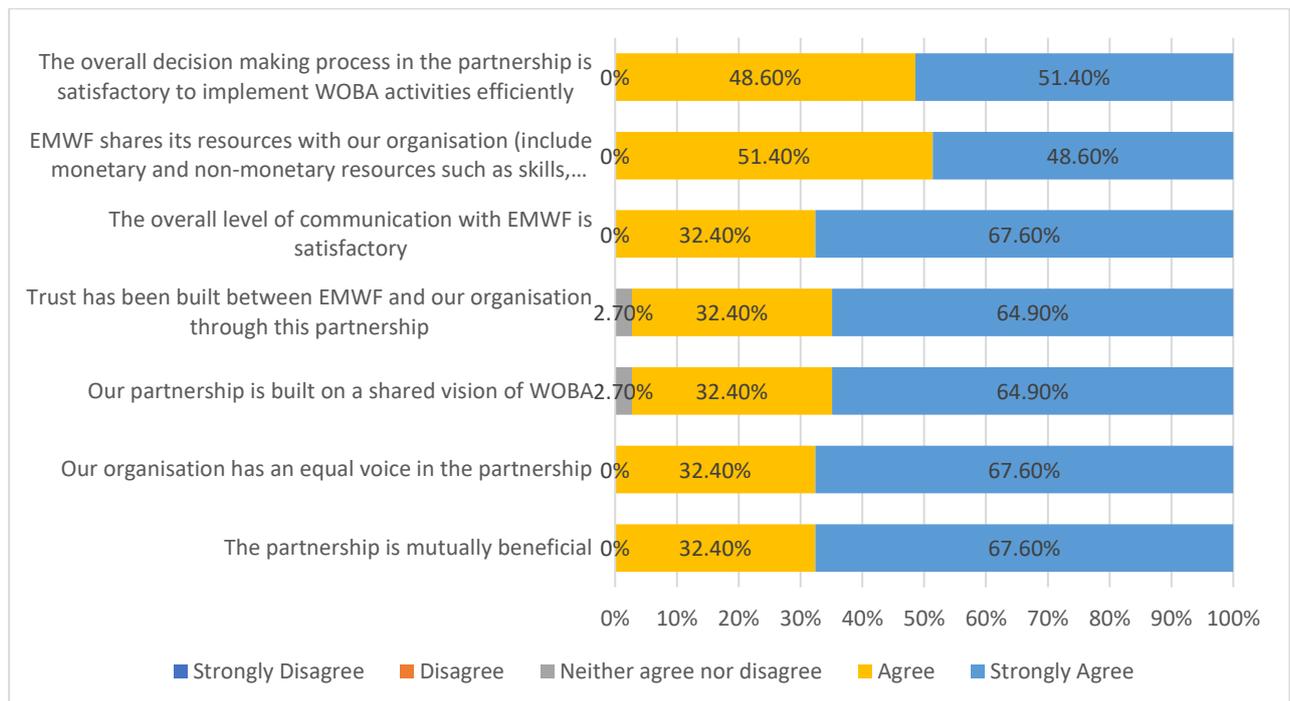


Fig 6 shows the survey respondents’ view of the WOBA, with 100% of respondents viewing WOBA favourably in terms of inclusive approach.

Fig 6. Survey responses to “how your organisation views WOBA”

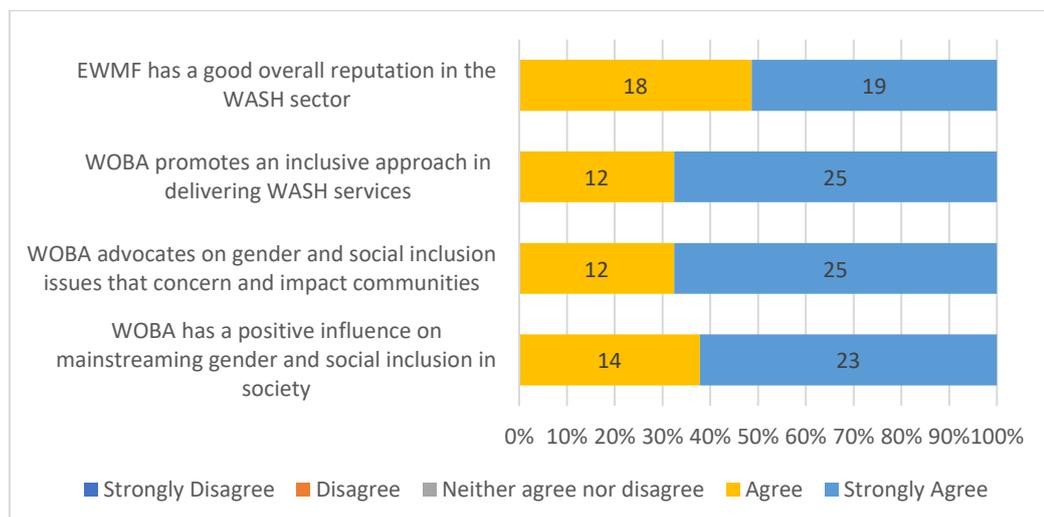
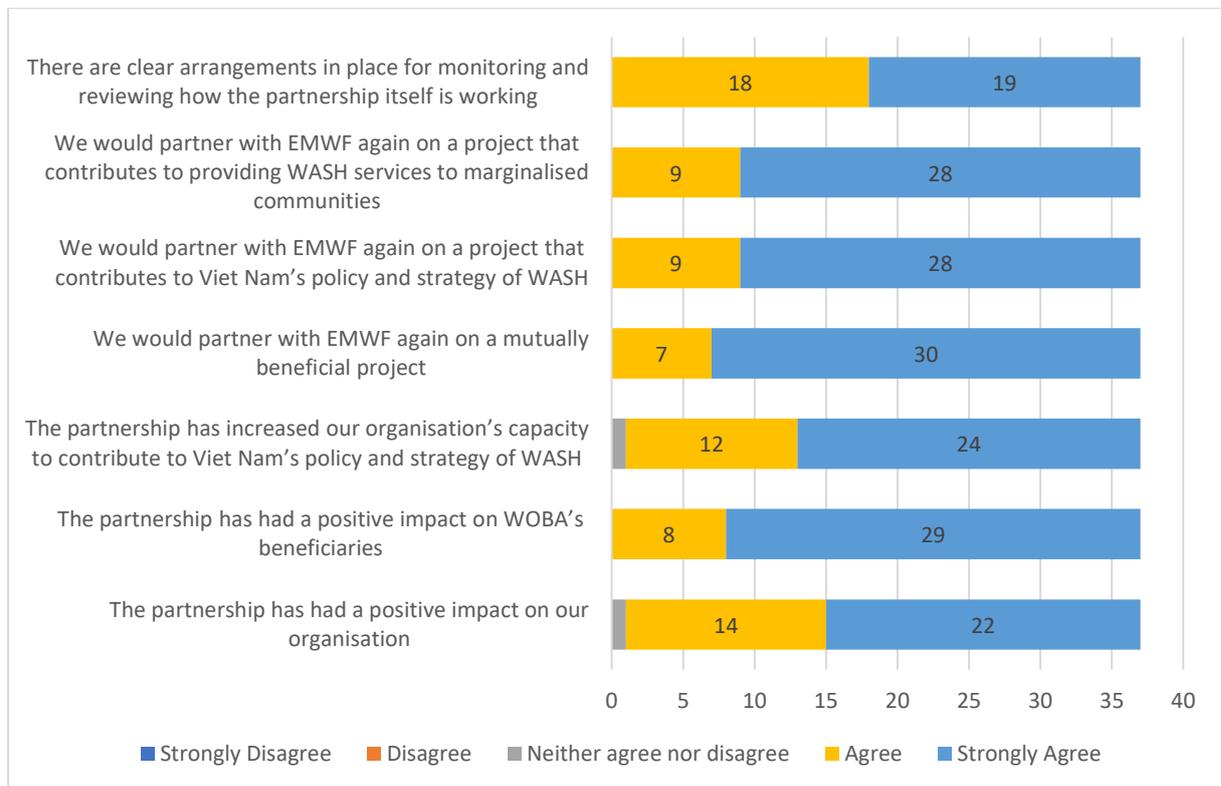


Fig 7 shows the survey respondents' perception of the outcomes of their organisation's partnership with EMWF in WOBA. Although 100% agreed or strongly agreed with all statements, "clearer arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how the partnership is working", "partnership has had a positive impact on our organization", and "partnership has increased organisations' capacity to contribute to Vietnam's policy and strategy of WASH" received less strong agreement. Again, this might reflect the focus of WOBA partnership on achieving WASH targets rather than institutional or system change, or the result of leveraging existing structure of authority rather than changing or advocating for change at the system level.

Fig 7. Survey respondents' perception of outcomes of WOBA partnership



The issue of "clear arrangements in place for monitoring and reviewing how the partnership itself is working" or accountability of each partner can be further understood through the FGDs. Some FGD participants felt that the roles and responsibility of the members or agencies involved in WOBA must be clearly defined. For example, EMW will act as the general coordinator; Department of Health/CDC will carry out the survey, evaluation and monitoring of sanitation works; VBSP will play the role of lending; the Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation will take the role of mobilizing households to connect; the Department of Finance will be responsible for allocating counterpart funds; the PPC takes the responsibility to the donor and will direct through Official Letters about the role of each partner involved. This is quite surprising as the guidebook for both sanitation and the water components clearly outline these roles and responsibilities, which suggest the information may not fully communicated or that some partners have not read these guidebooks or access required information through the relevant PMB meetings.

"The Department of Health has to inspect and monitor so that the households must build according to the process and technical requirements. The Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation must check, monitor and mobilize the households to connect and use clean water. Funding support for poor household, disadvantage group are responsibility of Vietnam Bank for Social Policies." (Ben Tre FGD - Sanitation)

The issue of capacity building is also worth noting given that there have been many training workshops provided to partners at provincial, district and commune levels in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, safe water supply and climate change, project management, development of project plans,

approach to working with persons with disabilities, using mobile software, propaganda, and study tour. The FGD participants were impressed with the training on disability or models of building latrines for PWDs. For example, a FGD participant in Thanh Hoa said,

“The training in Quy Nhon – Binh Dinh by Mr.Cu gave information about disabled people, which I was very interested. I was amazed with the disability barriers amazing. We also took a study tour of the disability model which they have implemented.”

His comment was echoed by another participant in the national FGD,

“Supporting to build latrine for disabled people but thinking in a way that are built for a normal people without specifications for disabled people.”

Some FG participants felt that WOBA could share other resources such as video clips related to WASH, communication by images, case studies of harmful effects of not using hygienic latrine to enable changed attitude and behaviour.

Despite saying that there were many trainings and that they were necessary and useful, most WU interviewees and FGD participants could not remember exactly the content of the training. Many WU staff at all levels were already very familiar with WASH issues because of their involvement in famous movement “5 No, 3 Clean” in the country (see earlier discussion) or in prior projects. Some WU staff said that the knowledge provided in the training organized by the WOBA is not new information for them. The types of information they require is how to mobilise target households to build latrines, particularly in communication content, for example, what should be said to whom (the head of households or relatives/friends etc) in each specific case.

It can be observed that all partners commit to WOBA’s goal of providing access to improved sanitation and water, by provision of counterpart fund by the PPC for poor, near-poor, GESI households in building latrine. The PWUs and CWU were aware of the co-financing commitment written in the MOU between EMW and the PPC. For other agencies, their commitment is in accordance with the organisation’s functions and tasks. The WU is clearly performing the communication, propaganda and baseline survey, connect the parties, especially connection with private suppliers in the field of sanitation. The Centre for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation, CDC demonstrate a commitment to their professional and technical responsibilities. At the grassroots level, the commune/village WU members have carried out propaganda and mobilization to achieve the target number of households that their unit has committed to,

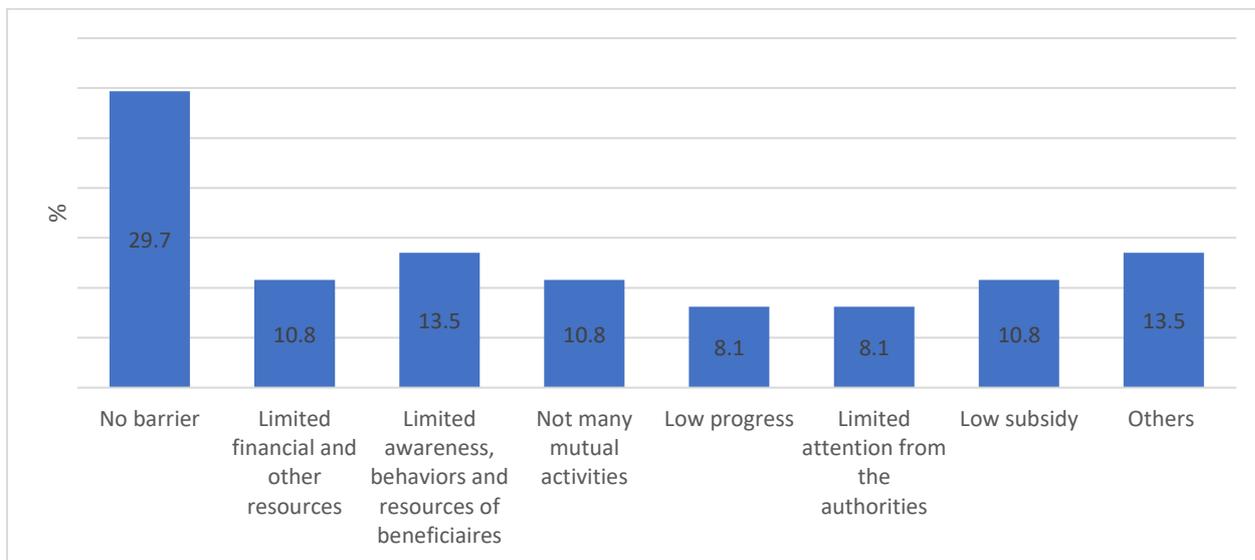
“In this project, we play the role of technical assistance. When the locality submits the potential list that we will immediately evaluate the reality and respond to EMW and will show the reason to choose the work to participate in the project. This is the confidence of the expertise of the Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation when support EMW to deploy the project.”
(National FGD participant)

“Thanh Hoa must commit to allocate the counterpart funds. When signing the minutes of agreement, there must mobilize the counterpart funds of the locality, community and households. This project is socialization, not just from the fund of the WOBA project.” (Thanh Hoa FGD participant)

Although committed, some partners felt that organisational commitment is not the only factor affecting WOBA implementation effectiveness. The critical issue is households’ financial resources to pay for building latrines, or other factors such as climate change that impact access and use of latrine and water. Fig 8 summarises the barriers that FGD participants perceived with WOBA; 29.7% reporting no barrier, 13.5% reported key barriers to be limited awareness, behaviours and resources of beneficiaries, and 8.1% reported the barrier is the limited attention from the authorities. It means that the engagement of the authorities at all levels is very important for the government organization to participate and implement the project activities. One of the reasons is that WASH is under the Criterium No. 17 of the New Rural Development Program which has been implemented nationwide. In order to get the buying and cooperation of local partner, direction of the upper level of authorities are required. Low subsidy is another barrier which reflects partners’ concern

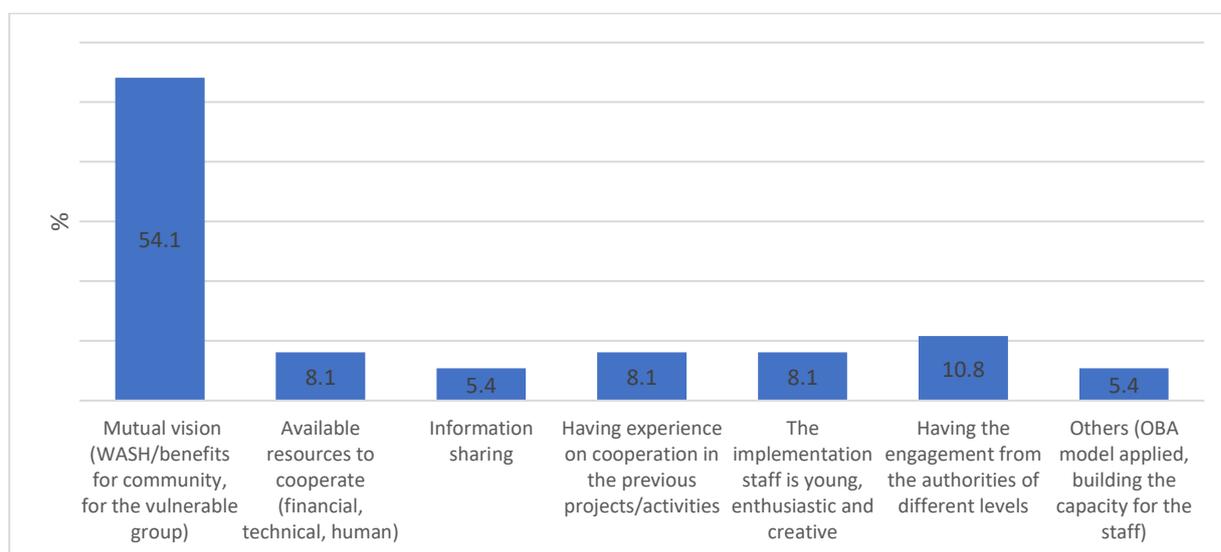
about households' lack of financial means. The barrier of "not many mutual activities" seems contrary to the result of 100% of survey respondents reporting that WOBA is mutually beneficial for their organisation and EMWF.

Figure 8. Key barriers for WOBA based on survey responses



As shown in Fig 9, among the strengths of the partnership in WOBA, "mutual vision (on WASH, benefits for community, the vulnerable groups)" ranked the highest followed by "engagement of authorities at all levels". This is not surprising given the discussion so far. It is worth noting and somewhat surprising that "OBA model and building capacity for staff" ranked lowest considering OBA is aimed to be institutionalised through WOBA, and capacity building is one of the main activities to promote changed attitude, knowledge and practices of partner organisations.

Figure 9. Strengths of WOBA based on proportion of survey respondents

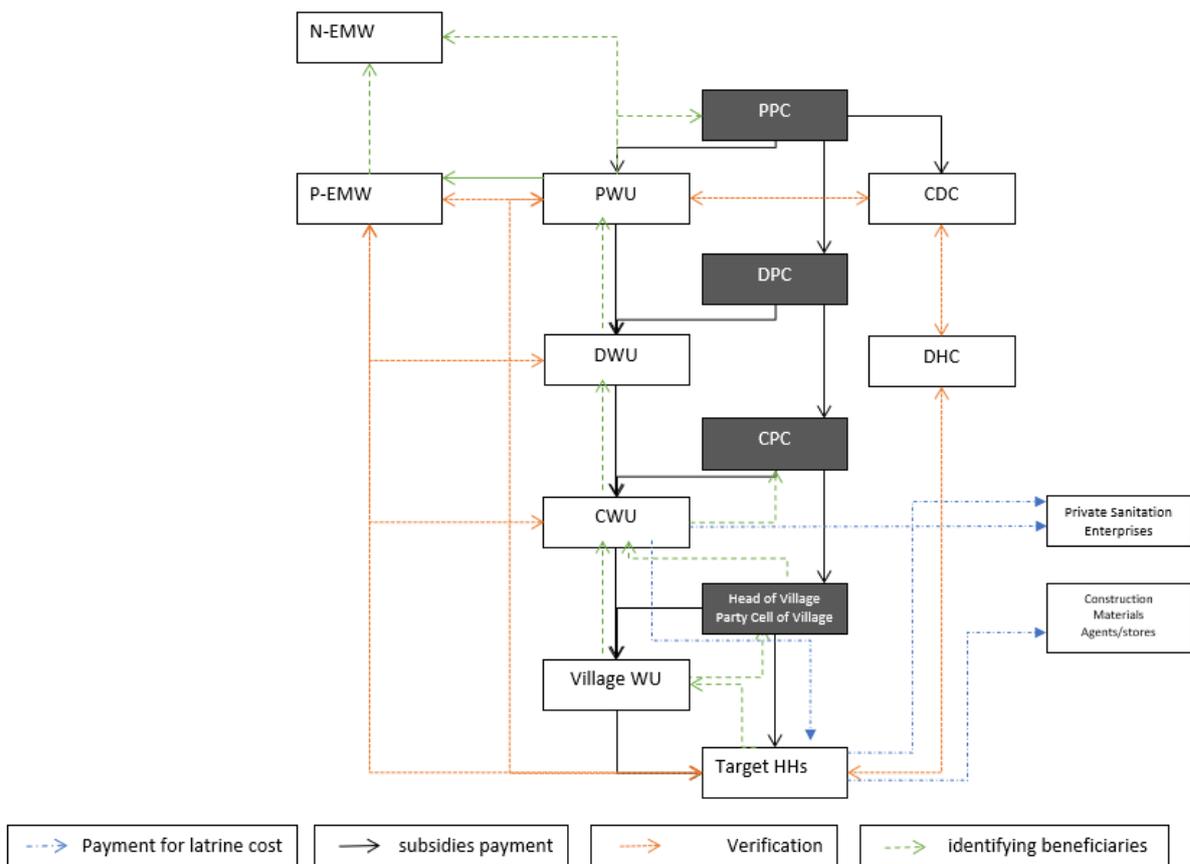


ii. How has WOBA Vietnam’s baseline data collection, identification and selection of beneficiaries, operational monitoring and verification arrangements affected the quality of outputs delivered and outcomes achieved? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

4.2.4 OBA process

There are four processes for OBA delivery in WOBA: (1) baseline data collection and identification and selection of beneficiaries, (2) verification of WASH products, (3) subsidies payment, and (4) payment for latrine cost. Fig 10 shows the sanitation component and Fig 13 shows the water component.

Fig 10. OBA Map – Sanitation Component



The review and selection of target households in the project have been carried out according to the guidelines of the project. The WU from village and commune levels is responsible for surveying and making the list of target beneficiaries and send to the CPC who decides which households are the WOBA’s target beneficiaries. If the CPC disagrees with the list, the CWU must revise it. Households are invited to a meeting to hear about the benefits and conditions of the project when they are eligible to be in the target group of the project which is poor or near poor, and GESI groups without having a toilet or having access to clean water. All the beneficiaries interviewed knew the subsidy amounts or “reward” they were entitled to if they choose to build latrines. As one beneficiary said,

“Yes, the message is that poor, near-poor households, vulnerable people and people with disabilities are entitled to that project. My daughter is poor and single, so she is entitled to get the bonus of VND 1.8 million.”

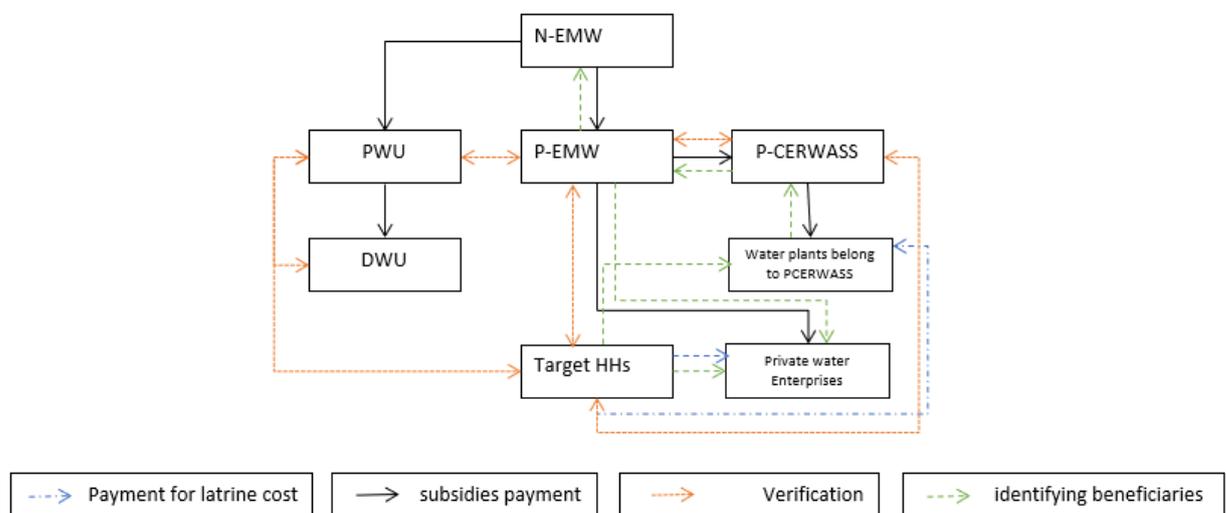
According to the CWU interviewees, after receiving training by the project, they began to meet with village WU staff to identify which households in each village satisfy the criteria of target beneficiaries. The CWU then used the information to compile the baseline list and submit it to CPC and WU at higher level. Then, the WU and head of village assess each household to determine whether they have enough resources beside the subsidy from the project to build a new latrine. Then the CWU, village WU staff (and may be head of village) visit households to introduce the subsidy and mobilise Households to build latrine. Addition of households to the baseline list is impossible, which as discussed above, can lead to perceived and actual exclusivity by those who meet the criteria.

In the water component, apart from the issue of “missed” households in the list provided by CPC (similar to the sanitation component), the baseline data collection is conducted by the water supply companies in collaboration with the CPC. Therefore, the households in the list of GESI households (which is managed by the district) could have been easily "omitted". It is also difficult for the water companies to collect comprehensive baseline data because the list only includes names of household and commune names, not villages’ names so some households in the list cannot be identified. This is a problem for accurate and comprehensive baseline data capture, which is further compounded by limited human resources of water enterprises who do not want to spend much time in identifying beneficiaries.

“The job is to collect the vulnerable households in the commune, survey all baseline and verification. The survey process is very boring for the enterprise. They don't want to do it, there is not anyone to do that. (Participant in FGD Thanh Hoa)

The project design states that the verification is conducted by the CDC and EMW verify some of the CDC’s verification as well as other latrines. In practice, according to the interviews with WU and FGDs, the CWU only plays the role of initial verification if the built latrine meets the requirements of WOBA. Beside CWU, other parties including DWU, PWU, CDC and P-EMW verify the newly built latrines. Although DWU, PWU, CDC and P-EMW only verify randomly, some latrines have been visited five times for verification. According to FGD in Thanh Hoa, this could place a lot of burden on households. This finding is also supported by some households who said that they had to welcome many different parties to check or verify their newly built latrines.

Fig 11. OBA Map – Water Component



Subsequent to verification process, payments for the subsidies are made. Payment for the cost of building latrines is paid by households directly to the private sanitation enterprise and construction materials agents or stores. In some project areas, the WU acts as an agent of the private sanitation enterprise to sell the sub-structure of the latrines, and would collect the money from households who buy the substructure from the private enterprise, then pay this money to the private enterprise.

According to the FGDs, PCERWASS and EMW are in charge of verification of the water connection. The WU is also in charge of conducting the customer satisfaction survey with households who have connected to water systems.

Subsidy payments (from EMW) in the three provinces accord with the project guidelines shown in Table 3. These amounts were decided by the PPC of the provinces. The highest subsidy for the GESI households is 1.8 million (Thanh Hoa), 1.5 times higher than the lowest one (Ben Tre 1.2 million). Similarly, Nghe An has the lowest subsidy for poor/near poor households (800 thousand), 1.65 times smaller than the highest one (Thanh Hoa 1,320 million). Only in Thanh Hoa, in the first-year implementation, in 2019, the People's Committee of Nga Son district decided to provide another further support for these target households with VND 500,000/household. However, since 2020, this support from the District People's Committee has been no longer available due to the limited budget.

Table 3. Subsidy payment to households for latrine construction based on program information

Subsidy paid to HH	Subsidy from EMW (VND)		Co-financing from PPC (VND)		Total subsidy (VND)	
	Poor/near poor	GESI	Poor/near poor	GESI	Poor/near poor	GESI
Hoa Binh	400,000	750,000	400,000	750,000	800,000	1,500,000
Thanh Hoa	320,000	800,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,320,000	1,800,000
Nghe An	400,000	750,000	400,000	750,000	800,000	1,500,000
Ha Tinh	400,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	1,150,000	1,500,000
Ben Tre	450,000	600,000	450,000	600,000	900,000	1,200,000
Average					994,000	1,500,000

The co-financing payment from the PPC was not verified by the evaluation team as the PPC was not part of the evaluation's participants. Based on information provided by the program team, PPC's co-financing payments are disbursed every 6 months or once a year based on output results sent to them from the WU, who received latrine completion information from EMW. The WU also is responsible for working with the PPC to allocate budget so the WU can disburse to households when output results are available. EMW has tried to audit the disbursement of the PPC's co-financing amounts. As of June 2021, no audits or spot checks with household have been completed and the co-financing for latrines completed have not been verified as paid.

Table 5 and 6 show the performance incentives due to the partners of WOBA and volunteers for each latrine constructed and each water connection. The evaluation did not investigate the process

for paying these performance incentives, although it appears that it follows the same process of paying subsidies to households which is after verification is completed.

Table 4. Subsidy payment to households for water connection based on program information

Province	Subsidy from EMW (VND)
Thanh Hoa	1,400,000
Nghe An	1,500,000
Ha Tinh	1,500,000
Ben Tre	1,200,000

Table 5. Performance incentives paid to partner/stakeholder per latrine built based on program information

Partner/stakeholder	Poor/near poor	GESI	Non poor/ SANOBA
Volunteer mobiliser	70,000	100,000	70,000
Management Board Commune	70,000	70,000	50,000
WU province	15,000	15,000	15,000
WU district	15,000	15,000	15,000
CDC	30,000	30,000	

Table 6. Performance incentives paid to partner/stakeholder per water connection based on program information

Province	NCERWASS/PCERWASS	WU
Thanh Hoa	100,000	100,000
Nghe An	100,000	100,000
Ha Tinh	100,000	100,000
Ben Tre	70,000	100,000

There is a working process for verification of latrine and water (as described above), and verification data is collected using Akvo software which the verifier uses or trained to use. EMW also uses Akvo Lumen to display some visualisation of the progress of latrine and water uptake against targets. This information of latrine completion and water connection achieved is communicated to the field staff for confirmation and to the WU, and to compile the subsidy payment list and co-financing payment list.

There are no other M&E processes and tools to capture activities and results and outcomes for the other strategies areas of WOBA such as partnership networks, women participation, GSI outcomes, training, or WOBA's communication activities. Although there is data collected in the verification surveys that relate to households for example use of latrine and water sources, loans and family savings, cost of latrine, decision making, types of latrines, water quality, use of latrine, etc., there is little analysis to understand the situations of households that could influence their decision to take up WASH and impacts of having these services.

Except for baseline data for sanitation and water connections in the services areas of the water schemes that joined WOBA, no other baseline data has been considered in terms of capacity, relationships and networks, resources flow, or gender indicators that are necessary for understanding change or what change WOBA intends to influence. Only one CSS had been

conducted as of June 2021 for water companies. Indicators for capability building and GESI have not been developed. Since March 2021, additional process and output indicators were developed to capture other activities, although there has not been any analysis of these indicators besides progress of sanitation and water targets. This is partly because the focus of the implementation is on outputs rather than outcomes which reflects implementation approach of previous WASH projects like CHOBA. In fact, many EWM field staff and WU members consider WOBA as CHOBA 3.

It is important that M&E framework and processes is developed to consider and capture indicators and qualitative information for the various activities and their expected results and outcomes at the baseline, throughout the program implementation, and at the end of a program. WOBA will be better placed to report on the outcomes the project desires in a meaningful way during implementation, and to allow for adaptive management approaches that are responsive to the experiences (positive and negative) of implementation by various stakeholders.

iii. Has WOBA Vietnam sufficiently identified and managed risks that can affect its outputs and outcomes achieved? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

4.2.5. Risks management

There are some challenges for WOBA that can affect its outputs and outcomes achieved. These challenges are different for each partner or stakeholder. From the opinion of the partners in the focus groups, there are some challenges for WOBA to meet the needs on WASH of the poor, near poor and GESI groups. First, there is limited water supply service coverage and limited investment by the government to extend the water pipeline networks, which limits households to connect to water without paying huge costs for piped networks to be near their houses. This is more challenging for vulnerable households who tend to live far away from the main water pipeline. As one partner in Ben Tre mentioned,

“The demand for clean water is high. However, provision of piped water in the area does not have enough reach because some households live far from the main pipeline is far from households. The water supply plant requires that 50 households must be located on the main pipeline to be more convenient for the scheme. This is a limitation of the project.”

“Impacted by the climate change, many areas in Ben Tre are becoming saline area. Therefore, the demand for piped water and fresh water is very large. The pipeline is not completely covered. The demand is great, but it is difficult to achieve the targets.”

Second, the monthly water consumption of the poor, near poor and GESI groups is still low, about 3-4m³, because they are using other water sources to save money. Thus, it is a challenge for the water enterprises to invest in these households because the revenue from the water consumption is not enough to meet their operation and maintenance costs. As one water operator noted,

“The poor and non-poor households use only 3-4 m³/month for drinking and eating only, but for bathing purposes, they also use many alternative water sources in the family.”

Third, in relation to sanitation, some WU FGD noted that although the project target has been achieved by 2020, it is more difficult to achieve the target of latrines by the end of the project due to affordability. Households who could mobilise the resources to build latrine would have already built latrines, and it is difficult to mobilise the remaining households who have no financial resources to do so. In addition, the COVID-19 has resulted in reduced income for many households especially vulnerable ones. Thus, the targets for some areas, are not feasible to achieve and should be shifted to other areas, as noted by one WU at the FGD in Nghe An,

“Some of the targets by 2020 have been achieved. From now to 2022 it will be more difficult because the easier part has already been done. In the implementation process, I still have to pay attention to the identifying target beneficiaries. Based on the consultation with the steering committee and the recommendations from the units that ‘by 2022, we should transfer a part of our target [of latrines] to another unit.’”

“The project is also impacted by Covid-19 pandemic. In Nghe An, parents often rely on their children. Like this last New Year, most of the children who live and work far away from home don't come back, so they send money to their parents for Tet. Without the children, the parents don't dare to buy anything (for Tet), so trading activities also decrease. In Nghe An, it must be seasonal, the climate is harsh and hot. Extreme heat, extremely hot in summer and extremely cold in winter. The rainy season is stormy, so latrines can't be built at that time. When the children go to work far away from home, the parents are still waiting and relying on their children to build the latrine. The children still have support for their parents to build latrines. In this pandemic situation, this is also a difficult period. The income reduces, so the support for their parents also decreases. This causes a lot of negative impacts.”

From the perspective of private enterprises, there are also some challenges in delivering WASH services generally, and for WOBA's target beneficiaries specifically. In selling sanitation products, the private sector supplier thought that the community prefers to build the substructure of the latrine by brick or concrete although the cost is higher than using the plastic septic tank for the latrine, although the durability of these materials is not confirmed. So, although the plastic septic tank, which WOBA promote, can be a better financial choice for the poor households, changing households' mindset requires more effort, time and appropriate information to convince the households. Some sanitation suppliers said that the subsidy amount only covers about 10% of the value of the latrine, which excludes many households from capacity to build a hygienic latrine.

Another issue is limited awareness and behaviours of beneficiaries, which has resulted in lack of use of hygienic latrine or not maintaining the latrine (as discussed earlier), which impacts both take up of latrine as well as impact of latrine access in improved hygiene and health.

The challenges in communication of information arises from changes in the administration border among the villages and communes, and changes in the government officials after election. In these situations, the enterprises have to meet, explain and persuade the new elected leaders in the authorities to understand and support them to implement the expected activities. Since identification of beneficiaries rely on data obtained from the authorities, change in authorities' personnel could lead to some target households being missed in the baseline.

Another challenge for private operators is the lack of community trust in private operators' services which means they need to have guarantee from the WU and the authorities in order for them to decide to connect to piped water. Households believe the authorities more than the enterprise. The authorities can protect the households if the water enterprise violate the terms in the contract, such as stop supplying water without any reasonable reason. Further, household complaints about water services are made to PCERWASS rather than the water operators so they need the authorities' guarantee. Private operators thus need to engage with local authorities to gain access to their customers and acquire their trust. It can be observed that in Nghe An, the relationship between water supply enterprise and WU is not as tight as in Ben Tre. In Ben Tre, the water supply enterprises seem to know about their customers better than in Nghe An.

The issue of limited attention from the local authorities is raised in the survey and is further explained in the group discussion by the CWU as limiting the legitimacy or support for the CWU or

village heads up to implement the project activities. The direction of the local authorities is critical in enabling other local mass organizations, villages to cooperate with the WU to mobilize households to build latrines.

There are other challenges encountered at the WU level. First, the WU at the village level do not see themselves as marketing agents, nor do they appreciate the nature of market-based approach of OBA. In the context of the government's commitment to engaging the private sector in delivering WASH services and reduced state spending, the WU members are encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills. However, the incentives payment and allowances are not enough for the WU staff (especially for village WU staff – who do not have monthly salary from the state) for travelling and contact. Further, the WU do not prioritise financial benefit and participate in the project generally because of their political responsibility of the WU.

Second, there is limited capacity of WU at village level in terms of learning and creative mobilisation, and agility due to old age. As the WU interviewees claimed, it is difficult to find the suitable women to be heads of WU at village level, because the young, nimble and enthusiastic women often go to work away from home.

Third, there is a lack of experience of the DWU and CWU in working in development projects. Some are afraid of the 'strict requirements' from the project. The WU interviewees felt that having to collect baseline data information and conduct verification in a consistent and timely way, and having to use Akvo software to verify completed latrines is time consuming and creates a lot of burden for them.

Fourth, some of the project communes and districts are located in remote areas, and difficult for the WUs to organize the regular meetings and visiting each other to share the experience and knowledge. In addition, the cost of travelling is high so the PWU or even the CDC are not able to go there to monitor regularly. This also affects information flow of WOBA and monitoring process post latrine completion.

The project identified the risks and mitigation measures at the beginning of the project and has been updating the risks and the risk management plan. The risks were identified by the project at the macro level and did not account for risks encountered at the community and local authorities at commune or village level as discussed above. In addition, it seems that the mitigation measures in relation to identifying beneficiaries has been actively applied for the sanitation component, but not for the water component.

iv. Has WOBA Vietnam allocated enough resources and technical expertise to implement appropriate capacity development strategies that are responsive to the needs of different beneficiaries and stakeholders? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

4.2.6. Resources for capacity building

According to the partners including the NCERWASS, VIHEMA, PCERWASS and CDC, the support from the project including financial and technical support has been adequate for them to implement the activities that they agreed with EMW. However, many seemed to be unaware of the OBA process as a market-based approach, and that the intention of OBA institutionalisation is for the government to engage with the private sector systematically during WOBA and post WOBA. They considered the participation of private suppliers in WOBA as a factor of 'market' rather than important actors in the market. Some FGD participants were quite adamant that they themselves were not participating in WOBA with a market-based approach or intention. Given the intention of WOBA is to

institutionalise OBA and engaging the private sector to apply, activate and systematise OBA as a market for WASH services, it appears that the resources provided from WOBA are limited in the context and needs of its partners to apply OBA as market strategy for the project's poor and GESI beneficiaries. Partners' perception of OBA as donation and beneficiaries' perception of OBA as state support are clearly contrary to the premise of OBA modality in WOBA's ToC and its expected outcome of developing public-private partnerships.

As discussed above, the implementors – the WU and local authorities - focus on the outcomes of “improved access to and use of equitable WASH services, especially among marginalised community members” with the specific target of households connecting to the piped water schemes building the latrines. Although the project partners rated in the survey that the information has been provided promptly and sufficiently, they seemed to be referring to information about targets rather than other broader outcomes of WOBA such as institutionalising OBA and private sector strengthening as a modality of WASH delivery or gender empowerment. This suggests that the communication activities in WOBA partnership and stakeholder management have been limited in this regard.

Similarly, the training activities seem limited given that the WU staff, and other partners, said that they participated in different trainings provided by the project, but they could not remember the content of the training or what they have acquired from the training. They carried out propaganda activities and mobilised households to build latrine using knowledge on WASH acquired prior to WOBA from other EMW projects or projects in WASH generally. The WU staff interviewed were confident of their knowledge on WASH and skills to mobilise households that they had before because without the project, “we still have to propagandize this information”.

Most of the beneficiaries interviewed did not have an active agent in the community to mobilise others to access the WASH services. With the provided information, the target beneficiaries thought that the subsidies they received are ‘rewards’ from the state. In addition, the information provided to households after they completed the latrine or water connection was still limited to promote hygienic practices using latrine and maintaining the latrine.

It seems that households' lack of resources to build latrine means that many WU women needed to learn or seek additional resources to help households to build latrines. These skills come from activities in WOBA. These comments below by the WUs exemplify the necessity of capacity building,

“A simple latrine also costs VND 2-3 million, but the subsidy is only VND 800000, it is not enough. Then the WU had a meeting with commune project management board to estimate that some Households can't build the latrines by themselves, so we (WU) have to build it for them. Then, we (WU) decided to build latrines for the Households in my village.”

“We support them our labour. The WU staff have built latrines for many households. I mobilized my husband to build latrines for them as well. In the social distancing period due to Covid-19 pandemic, everyone stayed at home, but we had to go their houses to build latrines for themselves.”

Although encouraged to join WOBA, the training or support received by private sector operators also seem limited. Both interviewees from the private enterprises said that they did not participate in many training courses from EMW. For example, in the group discussion, the sanitation enterprise said that he had not attended any training course of WOBA/EMW due to his frequent business trips. However, he was impressed with WOBA when he had a field visit with a staff of WOBA, and he learnt about the knowledge on advantages of under structure of septic tank latrine,

“I went with Mr Duy (the field staff or WOBA) and understood how the plastic septic tank can be applied in other projects or in other provinces. And advantages of septic tank for the environment.”

The water supply enterprise representative attended a workshop on water supply safety planning and climate change at Nghe An PCERWASS which involved surveying project with the water centre and WOBA staff. So, he knew more about the requirements of safe water supply and the cooperation mechanism between the water enterprise with the local authorities to protect the water supply system. The private water enterprise expressed that he had a better understanding about the standards of safe water supply since he received training on safe water supply from EMW,

“Actually, I just attended one workshop on safe water supply and climate change adaptation. During the workshop, firstly, the experts also shared with participants regarding safe water supply; how is the coordination between the water supply plant and local authority in case of pipeline problem or how to cooperate and protect the pipelines. We see that our capacity is fully qualified because our enterprise is an independent financial organization. We have met the requirements of safe water supply. And the number of enterprises who can do that is very limited. In addition, the water quality is checked by CDC internally and externally, and all the water quality test results are met. Everything is good.”

Pre and post training survey conducted at the water safety plan training workshops indicated some improved knowledge about water safety plan. However, observations of these workshops suggest there are “critical gaps in developing and materializing climate resilient water safety plans (CRWSP) among water suppliers, especially rural small scale water schemes. The gaps are attributable to the lack of qualified staff who have a good understanding of climate-related issues and are capable to conduct climate-induced risk assessment and adaptation.”¹⁹

The project information provided to the private enterprises also seems restricted. The Hoa Son Water Supply Company did not know the WOBA partnership and their position within the WOBA operational structure. They also did not have much contact with the WU, and thus did not seem to be aware of the role and responsibility of WU in the project besides propaganda activities. This could be because their main counterpart is PCERWASS who oversaw the implementation activities of the water component (see 4.2),

“I don’t remember exactly (who provided information relating to WOBA), but the PCERWASS sent me an announcement, then our enterprise contacted with PCERWASS and sent them the application. Then, we received some official letters (from the project) about the requirement for the commitment in this project in respect to support the poor, the water tariff and the support for the connection fee.”

“I understood that WU is in charge of propaganda activities only. So, the PWU can guide the DWU to implement those activities. Then, the DWU assign those tasks to the CWU, and CWU broadcast some propaganda on the loudspeaker system, that’s all.”

Thus, one of the areas that the private sector water operator thought he could benefit from additional training and support is communication with households to extend their service area combined the propaganda of the local authorities.

¹⁹ Pham, L and Dam, H. (2021). Challenges in designing and implementing climate resilient water safety planning (CRWSP): initial observations from a CRWSP pilot in rural Viet Nam. Learning note, presented at the Vietnam RWSS May 2021 workshop.

These findings from the interviews and focus groups support the survey responses which indicated training and sharing resources are areas that received comparatively less agreement on effectiveness (see 4.2). It also suggests that the capacity building component in WOBA has been limited to achieving target latrines and water connections rather than broader objectives of building capacity on OBA principles for market approach implementation, planning, monitoring and evaluation particularly for the water supply operators. With regards to the training workshops that EMW delivered, the lack of baseline data and M&E processes (except for verification of outputs) makes it difficult to assess change in skills, knowledge and their application, and the extent to which these changes are impactful and sustainable. It is noted that some pre and post survey for training workshops were carried out by EMW. However, the data was not made available to the evaluation team. Only the results of the pre and post survey for two training workshops on the water safety plan in October 2020 were provided and these had not been analysed by EMW.

4.3 KEQ3. To what extent is WOBA Vietnam's approach inclusive and is reaching the poor and marginalised (GESI) communities in rural Vietnam to improve their WASH conditions? (Effectiveness/Impact)

4.3.1 WASH needs

All partners in the FGDs at national, provincial and district levels said there is a significant demand for WASH, especially for the poor, near poor and GESI. According to the data provided in the FGDs, in Vietnam, 20% of households are without hygienic latrine. This percentage is higher in the rural area, especially in the mountainous area.

“According to the government's data, there are still 20% of Households who do not have latrines, and we also go to the border communes, 60% -70% of Households do not have latrines and the demand for latrines is large.” (Participant in National FGD)

“The biggest demand for Nghe An is in mountainous and rural areas with low access to latrines. WOBA focus on the poor, near poor, people with disabilities which are the majority in Nghe An province. Because their demand for building latrine is high, but their economic conditions and awareness may be limited, they have limited access to water and sanitation. When we surveyed Quy Hop district, there were many unhygienic latrines. About 60% of households have latrines, 40% are defecation indiscriminately, do not use the latrine.” (Participant in Nghe An FGD, Sanitation)

“10 out of 13 communes in Mo Cay Bac district have demand to participate in the project. The rate of household not using latrines in Mo Cay Bac is still high. Currently only 70-80% of latrine is hygienic and the rest is not. Because the environmental budget is very little, every year the district mainly distributes money to the communes for new rural development program. The remaining communes do not have the funds for sanitation. For poor households, people do not have enough money to build a latrine like the current project support. Funding support is not enough to build a complete latrine.” (Participant in Ben Tre FGD, Sanitation FGD)

“Thanh Hoa's hygienic latrines rate reached 73% of the national average.” (Participant in Thanh Hoa FGD, Sanitation)

The ratio of households using piped water is also limited while the other water sources which many households rely on such as drilled or dug well water, stormwater, are compromised due to climate change. As this comment below indicates, the issue of water security is challenging for people with disabilities whose population has increased;

“The demand is very large, as I said in Yen Thanh District, the population is large, the percentage of households using clean water is high but only 34% of the population is using tap water. With the current situation of weather, rainwater sources and well water are not guaranteed. In my opinion, there is a large need for WASH services. The project’s target beneficiaries are poor, near-poor and disabled people. The number of poor and near-poor have reduced in Yen Thanh to 1,600 households, but households with disabilities have increased dramatically. Currently, we have 9,000 households with disabled people that have received monthly allowance support. These are the severely disabled people, excluding the mild disabled people. So, the number of people with disabilities is big, and suddenly increased.” (Participant in Nghe An FGD, Water)

Interviews with beneficiaries found that they mainly use rainwater for cooking and drinking. When rainwater runs out, they buy bottled water for cooking and drinking. Other water sources are used for bathing and other daily living. Beneficiaries acknowledged that the quality of the water sources is not good especially water from dug wells or drilled wells in the geological conditions of the provinces. According to beneficiaries in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa, water colour is yellow or brick colour and contains limescale. In Ben Tre, the water is often salty. They were also concerned that the water they are using causes diseases like kidney stones or cancer, as seen in this comment,

“Throat cancer, and a lot of people have lung cancer. My husband has a malignant tumour, and the man next door has a tongue cancer. The man, who came here to taste the water said that there would be many people getting cancers. I think he was right.”

In relation to sanitation conditions, some households use dug latrines in their gardens, or their neighbours’ latrines. Others use double vault latrines, which is more popular in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An, or fish-pond latrines (“cau ca”) which is common practice in Ben Tre,

“Now there are always latrines, that is, squat latrines, but the latrines are unhygienic, they stink. Yes, the neighbour’s latrine is close to my house. Whenever they stool, the smell pervades to my house. That’s annoying.” (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

Habits and economic factors are the main reasons that make many households in Ben Tre still use temporary fish-pond latrines,

“Temporary fish-pond latrines are comfortable and cool. We use the ponds to raise catfish and tilapia.” (Beneficiary, Ben Tre)

Septic tank latrines are considered the most luxury latrine by households, especially for poor, near-poor households and vulnerable groups. Almost all beneficiaries interviewed wanted to build the septic tank latrines, but could not afford it so they built double vault latrine,

“In general, it is difficult to build septic latrines so they are still using two compartment-latrines which are inconvenient and unhygienic for children but we have to accept it. We wanted to build septic toilets but we couldn’t pay the cost which is about VND 50 million to be built one toilet with bathroom.” (Beneficiary, Nghe An)

The WASH needs are further impacted by climate change. Thanh Hoa and Nghe An are extremely affected by drought and flooding, while Ben Tre suffers from salinity intrusion, tides, erosion, subsidence. All of these factors are affecting their WASH needs and quality of living. Many households believed that these incidents have been occurring more frequently for five recent years, and destruction of natural resources is also one of the causes of climate change. Many spoke about the shortage of water due to the climate change and an increasing need in the communities for improved water access,

“We are affected by climate change. Many areas in Ben Tre are becoming saline area. Therefore, the demand for piped water and fresh water is very large. The pipeline is not completely covered. The demand is great, but it is difficult to achieve the targets.”
(Beneficiary, Ben Tre)

“In the rainy and flood season, the water quantity and quality from these sources are unstable. There is one upland area, they use rainwater depending on the capacity of the tank. In drought season from April to July before the rainy season, there is no water. Especially in May and June of the lunar calendar, there is a shortage of water in the areas. It happened in the past, but in recent years the problem is more serious.” (Participant in FGD, Nghe An)

“In the past, the forest was not destroyed by people. There were more trees and more water from natural sources. Now land and forests are divided and people grow acacia and melaleuca instead natural trees, so it's dry. In the past, forest wood was not exhausted.”
(Beneficiary, Nghe An)

These above-mentioned climate change impacts were also noted by water scheme operators who attended the water safety planning workshops by water scheme operators.²⁰

Households coped with depleted water and saline issues by sharing the water with the neighbour, shifting to other which could be worse water sources, buying bottled water to drink, or buying drilled-well water tank.

“Last year the water here was too salty, so people had to ‘exchange water’ with well water in Thuan An area which is a bit sweeter. I exchanged my pay for field ploughing to take water, so they carried me every 80,000/1 truck/2m³ for each of my field ploughing shift. In the peak months, we took 2 trucks each month” (Beneficiary, Ben Tre)

4.3.2 Access and use

Thus, for beneficiaries’ improved access to sanitation and piped water through WOBA has certainly addressed their WASH needs. The WOBA has given the poor, near poor and GESI households an opportunity to access to hygienic latrine due to the subsidy and the mobilisation of the WU and local authorities. Most beneficiaries were aware of the benefit of owning and using a hygienic latrine to improve cleanliness and health. Having latrine also brings self-esteem for these households as well as convenience. In some cases, it contributes to reduce the workload (often for women) to care the elderly and children in the family. In Ben Tre, using latrines also brings the safety for women and girls when avoid being peeked during using the Cau Ca (fish bridge latrine),

“The first benefit of this WOBA project is that households who do not have a latrine are able to build a hygienic latrine, it is good for the health of the people and the surrounding environment.” (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

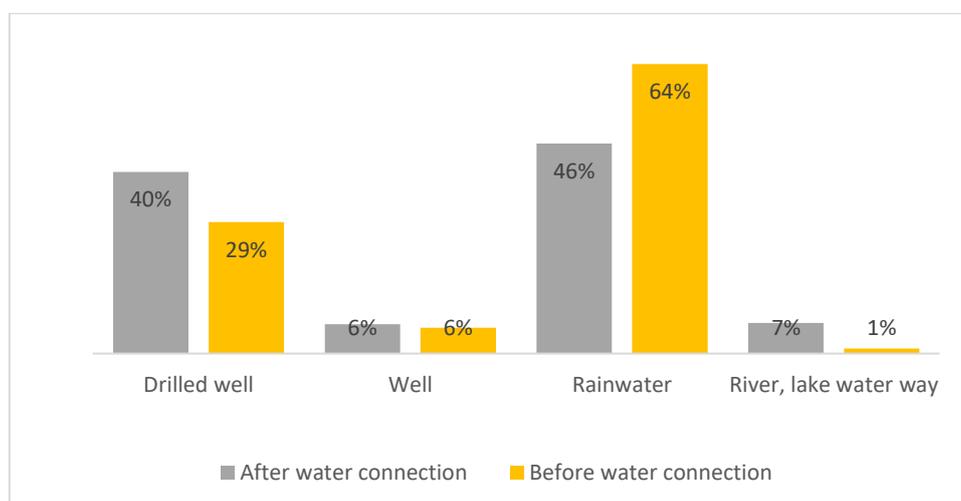
“Now they have built latrines, they don't have to defecate along the stream like before.”
(Beneficiary, Nghe An)

²⁰ Pham, L and Dam, H. (2021). Challenges in designing and implementing climate resilient water safety planning (CRWSP): initial observations from a CRWSP pilot in rural Viet Nam. Learning note from the CRWSP training workshops presented at the Vietnam’s RWSS workshop in April 2021.

“In general, the latrines help the elderly and girls to be safer, reduce social evils. It also reduces that gynaecological disease, for example, when they defecate in open air, it's not clean. In case the elderly, small children or disabled people want to answer the call of nature, the carers have to stop working, go back home to serve them. It takes much time to clean faeces or urine. Some people even have to quit their jobs and stayed at home to care the elderly, small children or disabled people.” (Beneficiary, Ben Tre)

All beneficiaries interviewed felt that their latrine and water use have improved compared to their WASH conditions prior to WOBA. However, they still rely on a range of water sources for household use such as water from dug wells, drilled wells, rainwater, canal water, river or stream water, bottled water, and bottled water. Fig 12 shows the use of water sources before and after water connections, based on Customers Service Survey result data as of May 2021 (n=2147). 83% of respondents to the CSS reported using piped water, and 27% were not. Although rainwater has reduced, drilled well and use of water from river, lakes and other water ways have increased.

Fig 12. Household use of water sources before and after piped water connection, based on verification survey



Access to piped water has lessened the burden of looking for the water sources. Table 7 below shows the persons in household responsible for fetching water and time taken to do so before water connection. It shows that the number of men fetching water is only slight less than the number of women, with little difference between time taken proportionately between the two gender groups.

Table 7. Time spent fetching water based on verification survey

Time spent fetch water	Husband/Father	Son	Wife/Mother	Daughter
< 10 minutes	462	85	520	32
10-20 minutes	332	64	427	27
20-30 minutes	41	4	48	1
30-60 minutes	5	3	36	1
>1 hour	17	8	32	
Total	857	164	1063	61

The interviews indicate that saving of time spent on fetching water is more for those experience issues of water security or saltwater intrusion due to climate change,

“The domestic water was in the shortage in summer some years ago. But now, due to the clean tap water), it is not in shortage anymore.” (Beneficiary, Nghe An)

Some beneficiaries felt that the quality of tap water was better than other water source that they were using,

“I've wanted to install the tap water for a while, because I used to use well water, I often find it dirty. For well water, when it doesn't rain, it's ok, but it's turbid when there is rain. Although tap water is not clean, it's still cleaner than my dug well water.” (Beneficiary, Nghe An)

Many beneficiaries noted issues about the quality of the tap water such as chlorine smell, worse taste for drinking compared with rainwater, saltiness which is unsuitable for cooking and drinking, turbid water which leads to doubts about consumption, salinization of water particularly in Ben Tre. According to the CSS results, only 1% of 2,147 households surveyed reported that the water had strange taste or cloudy.

According to the household interviewees, fear of supply cut off, and due to habit, water storage including plastic containers of storm water or tap water is still popular in most of beneficiaries' households,

“I always use the tank to pump water into it! Or use both water sources! When we use tap water completely, and if water is cut off, we don't have water to use!” (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

The use of tap water of the households in Ben Tre also seems to be less than that in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa. In Ben Tre, they usually use 1-5m³ of water/month/household in average, while in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa, the average amount of tap water used by the households is 5-10m³ of water/month/household or more. According to the Nghe An PCERWASS in one of the training workshop on water safety planning, up to 80% of over 500 water schemes in Nghe An has yet to charge water tariff.²¹

The issue of cost also emerged in the use of hygienic latrine. Beneficiaries were concerned with additional costs with using hygienic latrine such as water, toilet papers, toilet detergent.

“Using this latrine costs more money because we have to use a lot of water, toilet papers, and mirrors, but my family has not yet installed one mirror, and the electricity bill is also increased.” (Beneficiary, Nghe An)

One beneficiary noted that the latrine handed to them did not have roof and door so they could not use the latrine at once. The often-lengthy period of waiting for latrine verification also delayed their use of latrine.

“I just wondered why the latrine was built but 2 panels of metal roofs could not be bought for me. They told me to ask someone for metal roofs or bought a canvas. The door was not there too, I had to ask for a window curtain to cover it. For a couple of months, I heard that it was

²¹ Pham, L and Dam, H. (2021). Challenges in designing and implementing climate resilient water safety planning (CRWSP): initial observations from a CRWSP pilot in rural Viet Nam. Learning note from the CRWSP training workshops presented at the Vietnam's RWSS workshop in April 2021.

waiting for acceptance, so just let it be. I still could not use and had to use that old latrine.”
(Beneficiary, Nghe An)

The latrines are especially useful for the households with elderly people,

“It's convenient at night, my elderly mother can go to toilet at night conveniently, if she goes to toilet outdoors at night and catch cold without anyone's notice, it's dangerous for her. Many families have outdoor latrines, which are dangerous, so I had to build it right away in my house for convenience. (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

Besides the direct benefits for the vulnerable households, WOBA also meets the needs of the poor, near poor and GESI groups by changing their awareness and attitude on WASH and hygiene behaviors.

“Meeting the needs is obvious. Initially, the baseline survey tells us who does not have latrine. The difficulty is the awareness of the knowledge, what households do not know and what they want. Their hygienic latrine needs are well met.” (National FGD)

There was no information provided to beneficiaries on how to maintain latrines especially those with septic tank. Many did not know how to maintain the latrine such as using the self-destructing toilet paper, or suitable detergents for latrine to avoid killing the useful bacteria in the septic tank, or avoiding using the “hard water” to clean or flush the latrine.

4.3.3 Inclusive approach

Affordability is the main barrier for households to take up latrines and connect to piped water system. The subsidies from WOBA support them and is an important factor for them to decide to take up latrine. The subsidy in water connection fee enabled them to connect to the water scheme, but the lack of pipe network is still a major barrier for connection, and water consumption is restricted because of the lack of financial resources to pay for water tariff.

The WOBA payment model is different from the previous support models of other projects for the poor households in these local areas. In the previous support models, the subsidies were provided to households before construction. There are some disadvantages of these pre-paid models when families could not implement and follow through their commitment. Thus, results-based management or subsidy payment after construction is thus considered to be applicable with the local context because it encourages beneficiaries to commit to building latrines for themselves. In reality, because many households do not have enough money to buy the materials for building latrines, the CWU plays the role of a guarantor for the household to borrow without interest the materials or hire masons for building latrines from the local construction material agents or those suppliers who know both the household and the CWU very well. The household repay the debt when they receive WOBA subsidy or support from relatives. All beneficiaries interviewed paid the construction material agents or masons as soon as they received the WOBA subsidies. Table 8 below shows the average costs of building latrine in the five provinces, and subsidies. The average cost is calculated using information households provide during verification process. As the table shows, the subsidies are a lot lower than the cost of building latrine, ranging from 8% (Ben Tre) to 2% (Nghe An) for poor/near poor households, and 10% to 4.5% in respective provinces for GESI household.

Table 8. Average cost of latrine and family savings used to pay latrine (per verification data)

	Average cost of building latrine (million VND)	Average family savings used to pay latrine (million VND)	Total subsidy for poor/near poor (million VND)	Total subsidy for GESI (million VND)
Ben Tre	12	10	0.9	1.2
Ha Tinh	25	23	1.15	1.5
Hoa Binh	13	10	0.8	1.5
Nghe An	33	30	0.8	1.5
Thanh Hoa	32	32	1.32	1.8

In some cases, although the subsidies from the project were paid after latrine completion, the CWU looked for other sources to support households such as donations or other local assistance programs. However, these households often misunderstood that the support is from the government or did not care where these supports were from, and did not understand the nature of OBA model. According to the WU interviewees, all subsidies from the project up to now has reached the right people and met their needs on WASH. However, the OBA model should be applied for those with enough resources to build their latrines with the subsidies from the project. Many poor/near poor or GESI families hesitated to register with WOBA because they did not have sufficient resources to build latrine. The WU introduces the loans with low interest from the VSPB to some households during their mobilisation but because the VSPB's fund for this loan in many communes is limited, it has not adequately supported all households with needs and interest in latrine take up. In addition, households without any income sources besides monthly allowances from the State, could not access the VSPB's loans.

As shown in Table 8 above, the subsidy for GESI households is higher than that for poor and near-poor households, because according to WU, GESI households are often already poor and near-poor households, and they often have to care for family members with disabilities, elderly people who unable to work. Therefore, the economic conditions of GESI households are even more difficult than those of poor and near-poor households. The WU interviewees felt that the subsidy amounts are not adequate to build the "basic" septic tank latrine, the preferred latrine type, which costs on average VND 10- 15 million (not including the septic tank latrine combined to bathroom). These subsidies also equal to a half the cost of a standard double vault latrine estimated which is about VND 3 million. Although WU members believed that this support also contributes to encouraging households to build latrines, many households who do not have financial resources or cannot access appropriate financial resources. Therefore, if only one type of subsidy is applied to all poor and near poor households, it is difficult for all of them to build latrines. According to one WU interviewee,

"The authority only supports 1 million or 2 million for a latrine for example, but a household is spending VND 30-40 million to build latrine, so the subsidy is so small. There are families who also want to build latrine, but that amount of support is small, so they can't do it."

Due to the target of annual poverty percentage reduction of the New Rural Development Program²², some households were removed from the list of poor households as part of the commune's reduced

²² Item 4 in NTP of New Rural Development: target Satisfying criteria No. 11 on poor households in the National Criteria for New Rural areas. By 2020, 60% of communes will meet criterion No. 11 on poor households; reduce the average poverty rate of the whole country from 1.0% - 1.5%/year (particularly in districts and communes with special difficulties, it will decrease by 4%/year) according to the national poverty line in the 2016-2020 period.
<https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Van-hoa-Xa-hoi/Quyet-dinh-1600-QD-TTg-chuong-trinh-muc-tieu-quoc-gia-xay-dung-nong-thon-moi-2016-2020-320132.aspx>

target of poverty. This means that the authorities decide who would be on the list of poor/near poor households at different periods and the list of eligible households to WOBA can change from the time of mobilisation to the time of latrine completion. The baseline data for WOBA thus is not fixed which is a problem for monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the WOBA baseline households lists can be expanded to include new poor households overtime but cannot eliminate households who were already in the list but not in the government list.

“Now, the village has eliminated the real ‘poor and the near-poor’.” (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

Thus, from the perspectives of households the process of identifying WOBA target beneficiaries is not inclusive because there are those with needs and desire to connect the water supply system or build the hygienic latrines and have not been able to access WOBA.

As discussed above, the WOBA baseline list may not capture all households who are poor and without latrine. For these households, the subsidy amount is not enough to build a basic 2 double vault latrines. Many had to ask family members to help build latrine. Many also had to meet extra costs of materials such as roofing sheets, vent pipes, which they do not have the resources to pay,

“Those who are healthy get VND 800,000 of subsidy. But I am not healthy, so I got VND 1,500,000. But that’s not enough. I had to spend more money, about VND 300,000-400,000 to buy the temporary roof sheet.” (Beneficiary, Nghe An)

Table 9 summarises the water connection costs, subsidies and net payment by households to connect to the water schemes based on the schemes’ documentation supplied to NCERWASS. According to interviewees in Ben Tre and Nghe An, they did not have to pay water connection costs, which is consistent with Table 9. Therefore, most of them were very satisfied with the WOBA's support. In Thanh Hoa, households had to pay 680,000 VND per connection, which is also consistent with the information for Hau Loc scheme. Compared to connection fee of about VND 2 million/connection, VND 680,000 is much lower, so many poor/near poor and GESI households agreed to connect to the water supply system.

Location of water meters is also the barrier to connect to water supply system. The poor/near poor households often live far from the main road where the water pipelines have been installed. The long distances also add to connection cost, which according to beneficiaries interviewed, vary from 1.8 to 4 million VND,

“The water meter is anchored right at the electricity pole there. I had to take a detour for it because if I connect the pipe across the road, it is not possible, so I had to pull a detour and costed VND 1 million more to bring water home. I wish that the sponsors run the pipelines everywhere.” (Beneficiary, Ben Tre)

Some households had to spend additional money, about 300,000 to 1.5 million VND, which is a significant cost, to buy more water pipes or spare parts to install water pipe in the house. They were prepared to pay for these additional costs because it is much less than the connection fee. In addition, the monthly charge of water means additional spending, which is difficult for many households,

“We would like to request the State to reduce the water charge for people, so that our life is less difficult and can be used water comfortably. (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

Many households have not paid water tariff since they started using water which could be because they have not reached the usage cost of 1.5 million VND (minimum consumption for tariff charge).

But they were worried about their water consumption and costs of having to pay for it. This could be the reason why many are still relying on other waters sources.

Table 9. Cost of water connection and subsidies (in VND) by schemes

Scheme	Province	Connection cost per connection	Subsidy from EMW	Subsidy from scheme	Payment by HHs
* PCERWASS schemes	Ben Tre	2,200,000	1,200,000	1,000,000	Nil
Tan Phong	Ben Tre	3,218,790	1,200,000	2,018,790	Nil
Kenh Lap	Ben Tre	3,269,820	1,200,000	2,069,820	Nil
Average cost, subsidy, payment	Ben Tre	2,969,808 (186.85 AUD)	1,200,000 (75 AUD)	1,789,608 (111.85 AUD)	Nil
Bac Cam	Ha Tinh	2,300,000	1,500,000	500,000	300,000
Loc Ha	Ha Tinh	2,300,000	1,500,000	500,000	300,000
Thien Loc	Ha Tinh	2,300,000	1,500,000	500,000	300,000
Average cost, subsidy, payment	Ha Tinh	2,300,000 (143.75 AUD)	1,500,000 (93.75 AUD)	500,000 (31.25 AUD)	300,000 (18.75 AUD)
NS and NCERWASS	Nghe An	2,000,400	1,500,400	500,000	Nil
Hoa Son	Nghe An	2,952,000	1,501,000	1,451,000	Nil
Hoang Mai	Nghe An	3,280,000	1,500,000	1,780,000	Nil
Average cost, subsidy, payment	Nghe An	2,744,133 (171.51 AUD)	1,500,467 (93.78 AUD)	1,243,667 (77.73 AUD)	Nil
Nga Son	Thanh Hoa	2,180,000	1,400,000	Nil	780,000
Hau Loc	Thanh Hoa	2,182,000	1,400,000	100,000	682,000
Average cost, subsidy, payment	Thanh Hoa	2,181,000 (136.31 AUD)	1,400,000 (87.50 AUD)	50,000 (3.13 AUD)	731,000 (45.69 AUD)

*According to the program team, there were several water operators under PCERWASS which the PCERWASS calculated the average costs, rather than asking each private water operator to submit the table of average costs as they did with the private water operators. PCERWASS determined the overall average costs of these schemes. This process diverges from the procedures set out in the Water Operators procedures, and suggests that PCERWASS has the authority to implement processes in the ways they deem appropriate.

i. Have the OBA subsidies been effective in reaching the poor and GESI-poor households in both sanitation and water supply? (Effectiveness)

4.3.4 Subsidies and WASH services for target beneficiaries

The subsidies have been effective in reaching WOBA's targets of poor/near poor and GESI households' latrine uptake and water connections. It helps improve the environmental sanitation in the community. It also helps the community to achieve the target on environment of the New Rural Development Program. Fig 13 shows the results of latrine completion (total of 12,767) for all provinces as of June 2021. Fig 14 shows latrine completion against WOBA targets, and Fig 15 shows

the increased in sanitation coverage for the target groups in five provinces. As of June 21, 2,588 GESI households completed latrines, of which there are 1,994 PWDs.

Fig 16 shows results in water component against target and baseline. The baseline target is higher than baseline because it was set before the baseline data collection (see 4.2). This means that the target for all provinces except Ben Tre will not be able to be met, unless they are revised to align with the baseline information.

In the case of sanitation, as the WU interviewees suggested, the baseline was not based on affordability and many poor and GESI households cannot enter WOBA due to limited resources, which means it could be difficult to achieve the target for GESI in Ben Tre, and for poor/near poor in Thanh Hoa (with less than 50% latrines results). In both water and sanitation components, the target should be revised based on demand and household affordability.

Fig 13. Number of households that built latrine, by household type and province

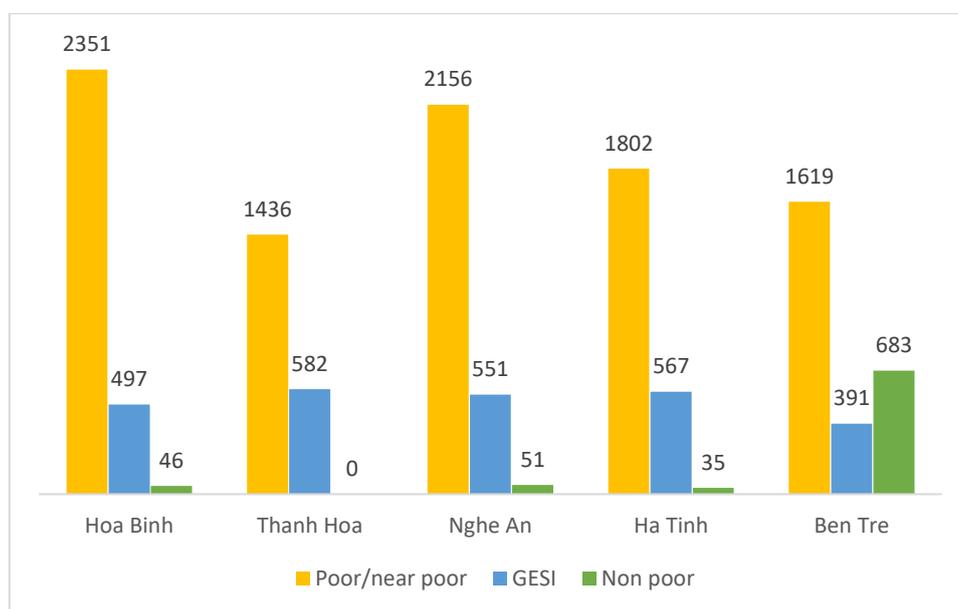


Fig 14. Completion of latrines against target by household type and province

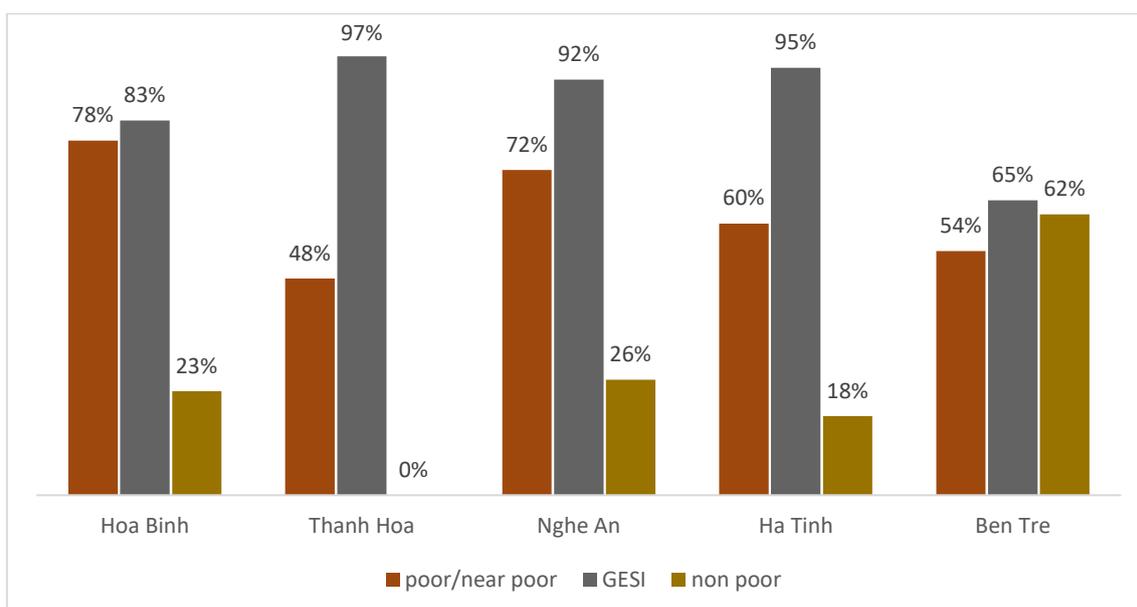


Fig 15. Increased % of sanitation coverage for all poor/near poor and GESI households by province

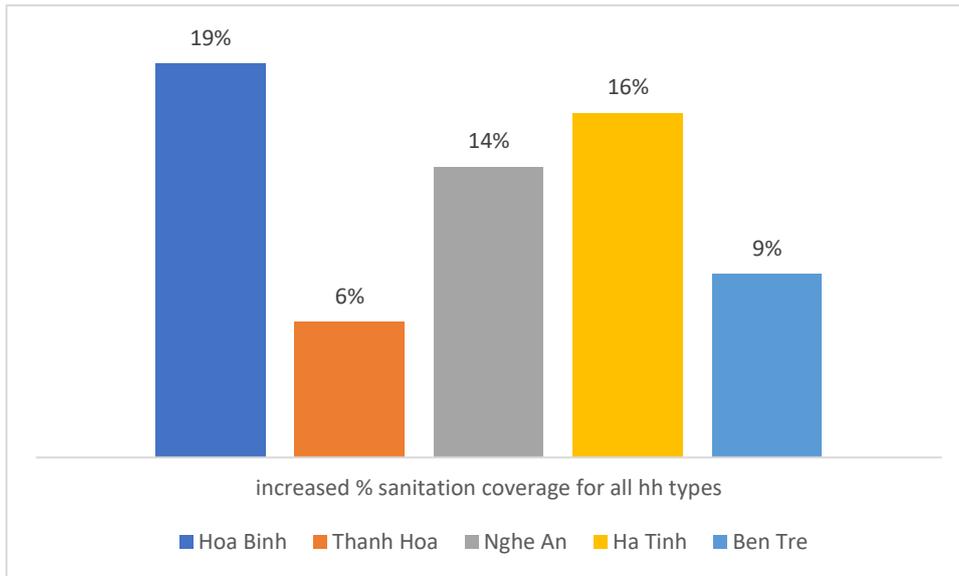
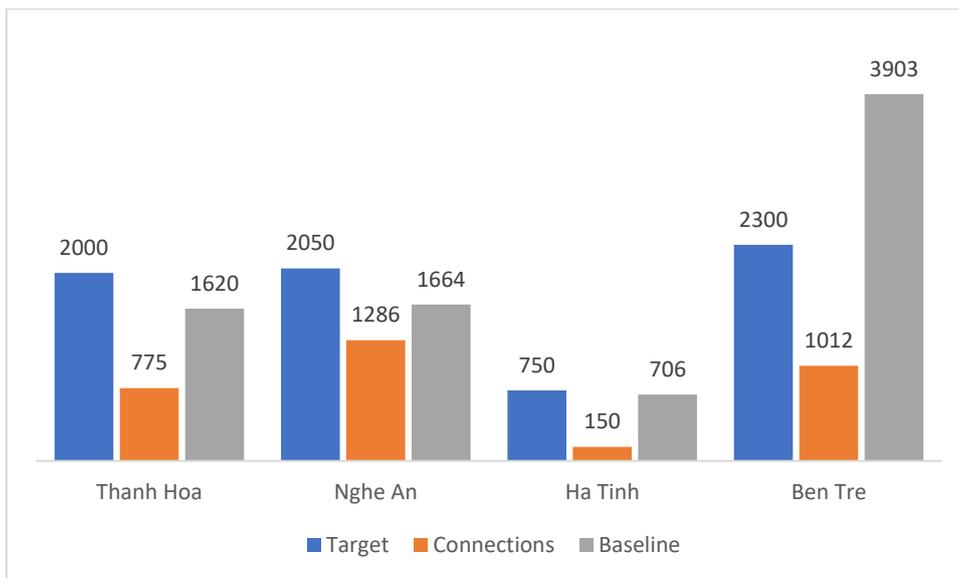


Fig 16. Number of households connected to water against target, and baseline



The subsidies and performance incentives paid as of June 2021 are summarized below in Table 10. As the comments below of the partners in focus group suggest, improved access to sanitation and water is ultimately beneficial,

“Helping the disadvantaged households to improve access to clean water and sanitation. Helping poor households who cannot afford to build latrines, the project partially supports women, helping women have latrines to reduce wastewater discharge that made the environment polluted.”

“Since the project implementation have helped the poor, poor and near-poor households to access sanitation facilities and septic toilets, this is the implementation of new rural development program according to 17 criteria. And this is effective.”

Table 10. Subsidies and incentives paid as of June 2021 based on EMW finance information

	USD	AUD
Performance incentives to WU - sanitation	268,134	383,049
Performance incentives to VIHEMA -sanitation	19,161	27,373
Total incentives - sanitation	287,295	410,421
Subsidy for poor Households - sanitation	186,624	266,606
Subsidy for GESI Households - sanitation	92,300	131,857
Total subsidy - sanitation	278,924	398,463
Performance incentives to WU - water	10,787	15,410
Performance incentives to VIHEMA - water	18,145	25,921
Total incentives - water	28,932	41,331
Subsidy for poor/GESI - water	160,544	229,349
Total subsidy - water	160,544	229,349

ii. **To what extent is there ownership of the results among targeted beneficiaries, particularly the poor/GESI households (Effectiveness)**

4.3.5. Awareness of WOBA

Of 30 interviewed beneficiaries in whole three provinces, only two heard of the term “WOBA” in the community meetings, however, they did not remember what “WOBA” is. The rest did not know what WOBA or who East Meets West is. Some people even expressed their surprise and curiosity about WOBA when they were asked about the program. Exchanges with beneficiaries from Nghe An exemplify,

“Q: Have you ever heard about WOBA yet?

A: What is WOBA?

H: You have never heard about WOBA, haven’t you?

A: I’m hearing now, but what is it in reality?”

“Q: Do you know the program of WOBA or EMW about water supply and sanitation program?

A: No, I don't know what you just said. I only know the Women's Union came to say about water connection and that’s all.”

Most of the beneficiaries considered the free water connection or the subsidy for building latrines as the support from the State not from development partner or organization in both water and sanitation component,

“The State installed the water meter for me, a poor household.” (Beneficiary, Thanh Hoa)

In summary, although the beneficiaries did not know about WOBA, EMW, DFAT, they knew the subsidy and appreciate the subsidy scheme. It seems that this is the only information provided to them. Ownership of WOBA seems indirect through acknowledgement of the subsidy schemes, and

this could be due to methods of awareness raising and educational content. Although the results of latrine uptake may suggest that ownership of WOBA may not have a strong influence in the contexts of these communities, it may however impact on scaling and replication of WOBA in other provinces or sectors at the village level. It is strongly encouraged that mobilisation activities at the household level are strengthened to include health benefits of WASH, maintenance of latrine, and information about the project donor and implementation agencies not just subsidy amounts and target beneficiaries.

4.4. KEQ4. To what extent has the WOBA's approach to gender empowerment through the involvement of WU has resulted in greater understanding of gender issues and improved gender empowerment for WU and other stakeholders? (Effectiveness/Impact)

i. To what extent has there been a greater understanding of gender issues and women's empowerment among key stakeholders? (Effectiveness/Impact)

4.4.1 *Understanding of gender issues and women's empowerment*

According to the project partners, it is practical to enhance the women's role through WOBA because the WU is the key implementor in the project. The logic provided is that since the WU's mandate is to serve women, the WU's activities prioritise women. Moreover, these partners consider women to be in charge of housework tasks relating to WASH in the family and responsible for taking care of health issues in the family. There is an inherent match between the role of the WU in delivering messages about WASH benefits for women. In this way, these participants presuppose the traditional role of women within the domestic boundary and the role of the WU as an enhancer of that traditional role. Their idea of gender equality comes from a gendered view about household women, the WU and WASH. As said by one participant in the FGD in Thanh Hoa,

“The approach of WOBA is new which creating the gender equality. For women, the ability to communicate is more advantageous. Our target is disadvantaged, affecting women and they also play a decisive role in family.”

This view in this quote echoes other partners' view in the group discussions in other provinces. They felt that the WU is appropriate to mobilise households because they already have embedded networks within the community (see report on COVID-19 study on WU hygiene promotion and study by ISF on the WU²³) and have developed communication and propaganda skills due to their WU work. However, none of the CWU and WU at the village who actually delivered the mobilisation activities shared this view. Similarly, the private sector enterprises did not share this view either, mainly because often worked with the head of households who are mostly men and they worked with head of hamlet to provide and get information to and from households.

Overall, there is no clear evidence to suggest that WOBA has helped to increase capacity of WASH stakeholders and their organisations to consult with women and men to respond to women's priorities. As mentioned in 4.2, some private enterprises felt that they needed more support in improving communication skills with households.

²³ Leahy, C., Dao Ngoc N., Tran, N., Davis, G., Grant, M., Lijung P. (2017) 'Women's empowerment in Vietnam through rural sanitation partnerships: The Community Hygiene Output-Based Aid Program (CHOPA), Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

ii. To what extent has WOBA effectively engaged the WU in delivering WASH services for the poor and GESI communities? (Effectiveness)

4.4.2 WU's motivation

The WU interviewees described their role in the WU and WASH sector generally as “communication” and “mobilising”. Their salaries are very low, even for those with presidency role, to support their family’s basic living needs and need to find other sources of income. The Chairwoman of WU is in charge of most of the tasks of the WU. The heads of the village/hamlet WU implement the activities of the WU at the village level under the direction of their superiors, the CWU. However, the heads of the village/hamlet Women's Unions do not have a monthly salary or receive any monthly allowances. They voluntarily participate in WOBA for the community’s benefits. The people who take the role of the head of village Women’s Union are often middle-aged or older because they have more free time to implement the tasks of WU than the younger women who have to generate income for their life. Although most WU interviewees are motivated to join WOBA, there are some broad differences between provinces. In Thanh Hoa, they are motivated by the opportunity to:

- Transfer some of knowledge and information learnt from WOBA’s training to beneficiaries
- Understand more about the life of households in the villages
- Achieve the project targets assigned to them
- Improve life of their WU members who are poor and vulnerable
- Contribute to the goal of the New Rural Development Program

In Nghe An, they are motivated by:

- Improved hygiene conditions of the disadvantaged groups with no open defecation
- Duty and passion of the WU to help their WWU members
- Fulfil their assigned task
- Gain more knowledge
- Provide subsidies to the beneficiaries
- Provide support to those living in remote areas that seldom have opportunities.

In Ben Tre, their motivation come from:

- Health of the community
- Protecting benefit of women
- Supporting people in need
- Fulfil their assigned tasks.

The WU interviewees made many efforts to achieve WOBA targets set for their commune or village including propaganda activities, encourage and advise the beneficiary households to understand the benefits of using clean water and building hygienic latrines, provide information about the subsidies, develop and review the list of beneficiaries, support women with difficult economic conditions to access existing local funds such as loans from Vietnam Bank for Social Policies (VBSP), provide other resources such as the WU’s economic development funds, connect and act as household guarantor with construction material suppliers to help them buy materials on credit from these suppliers to build latrines.

“For the difficult households, the WU also has to support the loan procedures, coordinate with the material supplier agent then become the guarantors for the unsecured loans of construction materials to build the latrine.” WU, Thanh Hoa

As discussed above, one of the drivers for the WU’s participation in WOBA is their responsibility for their community, which stems from the WU mandate. With that role, they have to take directions from the Party, the PPC, and the WU at higher level. Their sense of obligation to carry out the task assigned by the supervisor is strong although many felt weary with the pressure of achieving target. As said by WU interviewees in Thanh Hoa,

“I participate in the project because the superiors assign my tasks.”

“I participate in the project because of my political responsibility to provide benefits for the people as well as to contribute to achieving the criteria of 90.2% hygienic latrine by 2020 and 92.5% by 2021.”

In their opinion, the project is an opportunity for them to help their community members improve the quality of living condition as well as to let their own locality reach the destination of the New Rural Development Program with environment criterium No.17²⁴ soon.

“As a leader, I expect 100% of households to have hygienic latrines, do not defecate in open air or in a dug pit. It is very polluted.” WU interviewee, Nghe An.

Three factors seem to influence WU’s perception of their role, duty and commitment to WOBA. First, WU’s responsibility. Second, benefits of community including the vulnerable groups. Third, providing benefits of their own WU members. Among those, providing benefits of the WU staff is cranked lowest.

“The reason that I participated in the project is to get the benefits to the local people who can access to the clean water and hygienic latrine to ensure their health.” WU, Ben Tre

“I see the project is useful, and I want to get the allowances from the project for our WU members. We get the knowledge and shared experience for the communication in the community.” WU, Nghe AN.

At the beginning of the project, most of WU staff at the commune level thought that it would be very difficult to achieve the target of built latrines (set by the project and authorities) for poor, near poor and GESI families. They were concerned about the target groups because they felt that the poor, near poor and GESI Households could not build their latrines by their own resources. For them, WOBA targets can be daunting,

“It’s very hard to encourage households to build latrines. It is very difficult for my commune to implement WOBA.” WU, Ben Tre.

Due to that pressure, the WU focused on communicating with households about household eligibility criteria to enter WOBA and subsidy amounts to push households and local authorities to

²⁴ Objective: to meet the requirements of criterion No. 17 in the set of national criteria for new rural program ensure adequate supply of clean and hygienic domestic water for the population, schools, health stations, offices and public service areas; fulfill the requirements of protecting and improving the ecological environment in the commune. By 2015 35% of communes will meet the standard and by 2020 80% of communes will meet the standard

Source: <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Van-hoa-Xa-hoi/Decision-No-800-QD-TTq-approving-the-national-target-program-on-building-109978.aspx>

build latrine. They were not concerned about other information such as the approach applied in the project. The concerns or feedback among the WU staff were often around the target beneficiaries and the subsidy which has led to different methods of mobilising target beneficiaries to build latrines across communes, and relied on the capacity and “creativity” of the local CWU staff and the local authorities.

Most of CWU interviewed were satisfied with the engagement with other WU members during implementation activities. When CWU staff had any concerns, they asked the DWU or EMW field staff and received the responses timely. However, there are some outstanding issues raised by the CWUs that have not been resolved. For example, some elderly households were told that they were entitled to receive subsidies from the project when they built their latrines; however, when they completed their latrines, they couldn't get the subsidies because the criteria of beneficiaries from the project had been changed or their names have been dropped off the list of target beneficiaries (see 4.2). To keep the promises with these households, the CWU (in An Thanh commune Ben Tre) used her own money to pay the households in lieu of the subsidy. Another example is that the CWU (in Anh Son commune, Nghe An) erroneously marked a person with hygienic latrine on the baseline list when they did not have a latrine. They have not been able to fix this error although they had raised this with the project. This type of issue contributes to the feeling among the households about unequal access to WOBA and for the WU, a loss of reputation with the community.

It should be noted that some CWU interviewees, although having been involved with WOBA for nearly three years of project implementation, did not know that the project is funded by DFAT, or knew of EMW as the organiser. This explains why the beneficiaries did not now know about WOBA, DFAT as funder and EMW.

“In general, from the training, I know this project is funded by New Zealand.”

“I am not sure who is the organization in charge of the project.”

In some communes where CHOBA 1 and CHOBA 2 projects were implemented, the CWU interviewees understood WOBA as the third phase of CHOBA. It is because both CHOBA or WOBA are related to WASH service delivery applying OBA with the WU as key local partner. This suggests that WOBA needs to engage with WU, with more information about the project beyond just target and subsidies amounts.

iii. To what extent has the program's strategy of partnership with and capacity building for women in the government partners, WU at all levels further empowered them and championed their roles as leaders in the sector? (Effectiveness)

4.4.3 Women as change agents

Knowledge about WASH and health is not new for all WU interviewees because they often have to propagate these contents, which is one of their main roles. Some felt excited with what they learnt from the WOBA training such as 3- compartment latrine, double vault latrine, hygienic latrine or clean water. Some felt there is no new knowledge because these knowledges are all known, although the training materials were similar, and some forgot what the training was all about.

“I know what a hygienic and unhygienic latrine is. I used to think all latrines were hygienic. The double vault latrine must have ventilated pipes”. (WU, Nghe An)

“Without training, I really didn’t know that the water collected from the asbestos cement roof is poisonous. I and others who live around here still use the rainwater from asbestos cement roof for cooking. I realized that it wasn’t safe after the training. (WU, Ben Tre)

Some WU interviewees felt that participation in WOBA has changed their mindset and behaviours. They understood more about the life and needs of each household. Based on that, they can give advice to the CCP, CPC to support those with difficult conditions. As with partners, the WU seem to have developed a consciousness about people with disabilities, and the necessity in providing latrine that accommodate their needs and the needs of their carers. They understand the importance of enabling those living in poverty to live a more equal life with others in society, which is the purpose of the project, and that women have the rights and benefits in the project. They also felt that they have improved their way of communication and can listen more to understand the lives of beneficiaries before and after the projects. Their sense of being a change agent come from the belief that they have been able to recognise their own changes and enable change in the communities and beneficiaries.

“I want to make people with disabilities see that there is no social difference between them and others and how they can get along with everyone in the community. (WU, Thanh Hoa)

“The purpose of training on gender equality is for women. They are a disadvantaged group, and they need to get benefits from the project. (WU, Nghe An)

The CWU interviewees described OBA as the scheme of paying subsidies to households and incentives to the WU after households’ completion of latrine or water connection. They thought this practice encourages beneficiaries to be responsible for their choice. In some communes, this approach is strange with the WU members, but in other communes where this model was applied in other projects, the CWU have been familiar with it. In general, the WU at the provincial and commune level supported the OBA delivery model is because it can help the WU staff at the lower level to be more active, creative, and responsible for their assigned tasks.

The WU interviewees employed different methods of mobilization to adapt to different types of households. For example, with single woman households, they mobilise their relatives or neighbours to support them in building latrine. With other households, they mobilize both wife and husband to build latrine. Many WU interviewees had to persuade all family members and relatives of the beneficiary households to build latrines.

“I persuade the target beneficiaries as well as their relatives to support them to build latrine. After being mobilised, their relatives say that if those households can’t build latrines, their relatives will contribute to support. (WU, Thanh Hoa)

The capacity of mobilisation among the WU staff seems varied. Due to pressure of achieving latrine target by the WUs at the higher units and CPC, the CWU tried different approaches and recommendations to the CCP and CPC to improve mobilisation practices. All the commune’s staff were involved in communicating with households as well as finding ways to help households with financial resources. For example, some WU members collected recycle materials like bottle, paper to sell and use the money to make loans to households. The PWU in Nghe An also worked with the VSPB in Nghe An to allocate 400 million VND toward the VSPB’s rural WASH program. This enabled up to 10 million VND to be lent to households in Nghia Dung for a term of 3 years and low interest rate of 0.55%.

Beneficiaries can choose to build latrines themselves or hire masons. Masons are farmers who do this kind of work in non-harvesting period. If building themselves, then they need to buy construction materials from suppliers. For those households without money to buy the material, some WU acted as their guarantor for the purchase. Some WU interviewees refer to this as additional skills of negotiation with private sector suppliers.

“If the beneficiary requires, they can register with the CWU for us to connect them with the material suppliers to have support households.” (WU, Thanh Hoa)

The practical activities that the WU involved in WOBA seemed to have enabled change in their knowledge, skills and attitude more than the training provided by WOBA. The broader context of WOBA’s intervention regarding addressing needs of disadvantaged groups in society and working with local authorities’ expectations have also enabled the WU’s consciousness and legitimacy. In each project area, the WOBA field staff have provided the WU guidance and explanation to help improve their knowledge,

“When I do not understand, WOBA staff explain, so my knowledge is improved.” (WU, Thanh Hoa).

As a result of these activities in WOBA, some WU interviewees felt an improved sense of self-efficacy and confidence in mobilising households to take up WASH services. Although most WU had a lot of mobilisation experience having worked in the WU for a long time (9 years per person in average), they encountered challenges at the early stage of WOBA for example households’ lack of resources, small subsidies, high target of latrine. However, as they were able to persuade households to build latrine, they felt happy and proud that they could contribute to bringing the benefits for the disadvantaged households.

“Before I was very nervous. I was unsure if the people would construct or not. Some people were very poor, and they did not have money. I was also worried and sad. I visited some households many times and tried to find out how I could help them to build latrine. Now, I feel very confident and very happy because I have mobilized these Households to build latrine.” (WU, Ben Tre)

Most WU members at the village level did not earn income from mobilisation work. The only money they received from WOBA work is incentive paid by the project and some allowance to travel to the household. As said in 4.2, the WU thought that the travel allowance is too small and insufficient to cover the travel costs. They thought that small incentive is important and should be paid in a scale relative to the number of households that they mobilised. These village WU members were adamant that they were carrying out mobilisation work because of their political and social responsibility.

“I just know that I need to help the community under the New Rural Development Program, the support from WOBA is just enough for mobile phone cost, I can contribute to making the village more beautiful, but it is not for my own benefit.” (WU, Ben Tre)

Although WOBA may not have created economic opportunities for the WU members. It has created job opportunities and income for auxiliary workers including female mason, who earn about VND 200-300 thousand a day. It takes 3 working days to construct a latrine. For a latrine including a bathroom, it takes about 5-7 working days, especially for constructing a house including a latrine can take 2-3 months.

According to the WU interviewed, WOBA has increased the WU's reputation significantly. Their participation in implementing WOBA activities has made leaders of CPCs and other socio-political organizations appreciate and support them more,

“The leaders of the commune have appreciated us much more, and they have assigned us more important tasks”. (WU, Nghe An)

The gratitude and increased trust from the community has also led to increased membership in the WU,

“The community thank the WU for having a program that benefits the WU members. They respected and admired us. (WU, Nghe An)

The comment above is interesting and align with beneficiaries interviewed who though the project is an initiative of the WU and the subsidy is state support (see 4.3). This outcome is intended and has provided the WU with determination to implement WOBA. Although their participation in WOBA is not voluntary, but under the direction of the WU at higher level and the authorities according to the WU's political responsibility of a propaganda arm of the government, their achievement seems to have both a personal dimension and institutional dimension. The

“No matter how difficult it is, we try to implement the project.” (WU, Nghe An)

The role of the WU in the water component, particularly with enterprises is ambiguous because the water supply enterprises directly connect with the CPC and village heads.

4.4.5 Women and leadership

As discussed in 4.2, WOBA leverages the government structure in which the CWU is subordinated to the PC in both the Project Management Board (CPMU) and in government structure. The CWU advises the CPC in the decision making and does not have any right to make the final decision. All CWU interviewees said that they participated in the project because of their political responsibility as a member of the CWU, and with that, they accepted that they have to be directed by the Commune Communist Party, CPC and DWU. All participants in the FGDs in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa agreed that any decision they make must be approved by the PPC. The WU can only carry out activities if the PPC has issued an Official Letter to direct the assignment of roles and responsibilities of the WU. Even at the district or commune level, the WU's activities must be approved by the district/commune People's Committee. This structure applies for any activities of departments and agencies. Because of this structure, these women have less influence on decision-making, resources and budgets within the WOBA project.

“WU only takes the role of an advisor, the Provincial WU must be approved by the PPC before deploying any activities rather than directly connecting with the private units by themselves.” (NA_P2_Provincial_Sanitation FGD)

“The Party and the Government consensus on the policy, then WU will deploy it. If they do not consensus on the policy, it will be difficult for WU implement the project.” (TH_P2_Nga Son District_FGD_DWU)

It is clear that the WU members, as individuals, did not have leadership role in WOBA due to the structure of the WU within the political governance, which WOBA leverages rather than intends to transform. Although the WU in sanitation component have gained some sense of self improvement

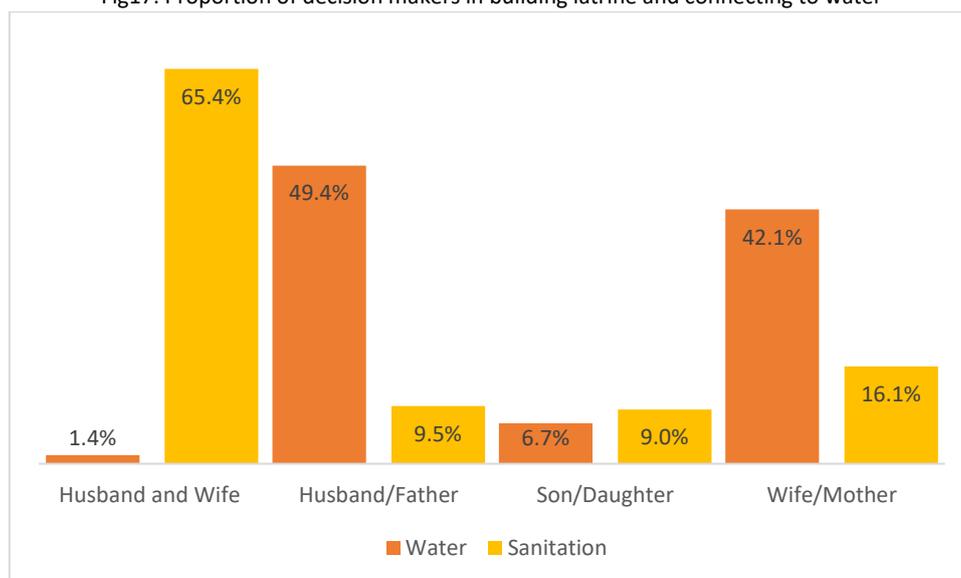
as a result of their mobilisation activities in WOBA, the increased reputation for the WU maintains their traditional role of a socio-political propaganda arm of the government. Alongside the perception of the WU as skilled and legitimate people to protecting the rights and interests of women, and WASH is a women’s issue bounded within the domestic domain, it is hard for the WU to be empowered as women leader with decision making and autonomy in the workplace. In WOBA’s annual report to the Fund, 690 was reported for indicator 3 (women in leadership position) which is the number of women in the project management board from the beginning of the project at all levels. The high number reflects the various levels of the government and WU in which the women hold their positions and responsibility which is already established, rather than results of WOBA.

iv. How has gender analysis been incorporated in the monitoring, verification, and learning activities? (Effectiveness)

4.4.6. Gender analysis

At the household level, the project design states that there is tailored messaging to household women to encourage decision making by women at the household level. The latrine verification survey (n=3284) and water verification survey (n=2157)²⁵ ask households who made the decision to build latrine or connect water. Fig 17 shows the percentages of household member group that made the decision for all survey results up to May 2021, indicating that there was slightly higher proportion of husband/father compared with wife/mother and only 1% had joint decision making in water connections. In sanitation, more than half of the surveyed households jointly decided with slightly higher proportion of wife/mother made the decision compared with husband/father. The proportion of children who made decision is similar in both components. Without baseline data, and knowing who makes decision in other household and non-household related matters, it is not possible to assess whether WOBA has increased decision making for women in households. In addition, interviews with the WU did not reveal any different type of messaging to women compared with men at the household level.

Fig17. Proportion of decision makers in building latrine and connecting to water



²⁵ Latrine verification survey only includes EMW’s verification; water verification survey only includes water operators’ verification.

Collection of other sex-disaggregated data has only started in March 2021 thus gender analysis has not been conducted to date. The following are some information relating to women extracted from the monitoring of the workplan activities:

- Number of women attended the training provided to PCERWASS and water operators to improve O&M capacity, including climate resilient water safety planning 32
- Number of WU members and women water operators attended training to improve capacity for mobilizing and supporting the poor and GESI households 32
- Number of WU members trained to serve as demand generators in the SANOBA component 219
- Number of WU women that attended the training online as part of COVID response plan 44

4.5 KEQ5. To what extent has WOBA Vietnam strengthened the capacity of national and sub-national WASH systems to implement and sustain inclusive output-based aid WASH approaches in rural Vietnam– achieved through a government co-financing requirement. (Effectiveness/Efficiency/Impact)

i. What is the nature of the project’s engagement with government partners and how effective is it? (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

4.5.1 Engagement with partners

As discussed in 4.2, WOBA utilises the available partnership structure of the government and the previous projects of EMW. Project activities have been much depended on the agreement and direction of the authorities (PC) at all levels of which the PPC plays a key role. Although the close cooperation among the partners is not evident from the FGD and interviews, according to the partners in the survey, the partnership structure of the project is effective and efficient. This is because the structure and tasks are carried out based on the direction of the PPC. And these duties are also within their area of expertise.

The partners were quite confident that they had prior knowledge about WASH and health because of their experience and participation in many WASH projects and programs for many years. As with the WU, the most impactful training was on disability in raising their understanding of different types of disabilities including physical or mental. From such understanding, they developed awareness about different types of support that different conditions of disabilities require and consciousness about rights of PWDs to access suitable latrines. However, this knowledge and attitude have not yet been applied much in the WOBA because the cost to build a latrine for PWD is high, and the subsidy only covers about one tenth of the actual cost for a new latrine. As one participant in FGD in Nghe An said,

“The project has taken into account PWDs, but to ensure their needs is difficult because of limited funding, it takes more money to build latrine for PWDs households.”

The training on disability has also resulted in the partners' changed perception and attitude about gender and social inclusion. As with the WUs, they recognised the needs to support GESI groups in accessing improved WASH services to improve social equality, and the extent to which GESI group support is needed ensure equality in WASH.

“At first, we thought that demand of PWDs was little, but after initial survey we found that their needs is large.” (Participant, FGD National FGD)

They also realised that the list of poor and near poor which is used as primary information for baseline data is not always accurate representation of disadvantaged households,

“In Tan Ky, the initial survey shows that there are really wealthy households, but they are listed in poor household. The Provincial WU had to discuss with EMW to set other criteria for the poor and near-poor. At the end of 2019, the target had changed.” (Participant in FGD, Nghe An, Sanitation)

Echoing the beneficiaries' view, the group discussion members said that there are still poor households who really want to participate in the project. Those households that were removed from category of poor and near poor as per the New Rural Development Program have been excluded from WOBA, and thus need to be brought into the project.

Knowledge about the WOBA varied among the project partners, the WU interviewees and the beneficiaries. Those partners at national and provincial levels such as NWU, PWU, DWU, CDC, were knowledgeable about target beneficiaries, project targets of latrines and water connections, there is a focus on climate change, subsidies payment mechanism or verification, the roles of their own organizations in the project. They also knew the project is funded by DFAT, but primarily referred to WOBA in terms of WASH targets,

“This project is supported by DFAT's through the EMW targeting the disadvantaged, poor, near-poor, GESI and the implementation approach is the output- based aid.” (Participant, FGD National)

“The project has a clear approach that brings practical results as outputs. The second one is to address the general concerns, gradually moving towards addressing climate change in terms of sustainability rather than specific thing.” (Participant, FGD, Nghe An, Water)

As with the WU interviewees, most partners considered WOBA to be the third stage of CHOBA,

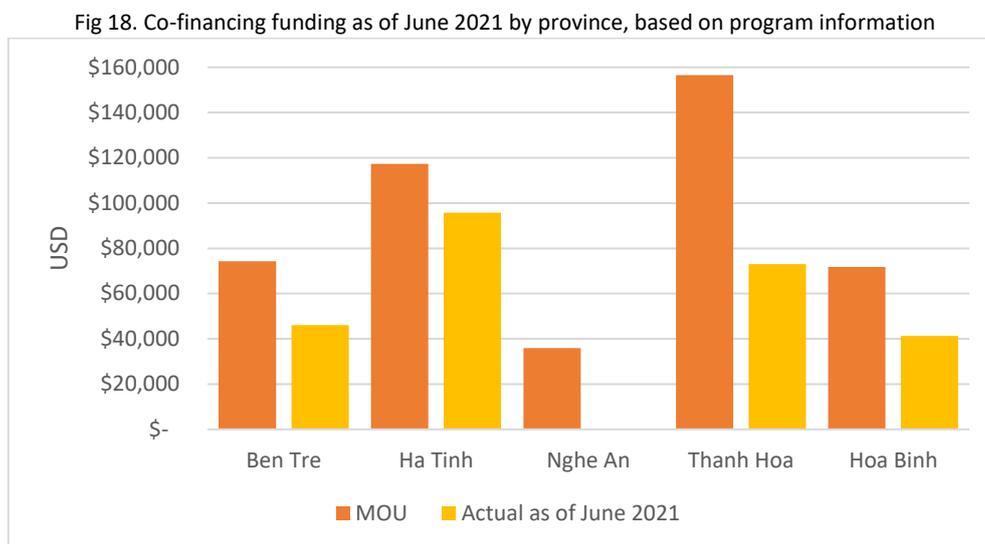
“Actually, it's the CHOBA project. But W-O-B-A is difficult to call, CHOBA is easier to call, they are the same project. The difference between CHOBA 1 and 2 and this project is to deliver the subsidies. Other projects pay money in advance, but this one is based on results to pay subsidies. Subsidy payment after the completion aims to encourage the households to protect their facilities.” (WU, Thanh Hoa)

None of the partners thought that WOBA intends to or has the capacity to make system changes in WASH sector. This could be because they did not have decision making authority in the system and/or because the project is designed to coordinate them to implement the OBA rather than explicit strategy on influencing changes at the institutional and system level. Moreover, the participants said that the barriers for WOBA is the lack of policy or legal regulation in WASH. Although WOBA contributes to achieving the target on water and sanitation under the criteria No 17 of the New Rural Development Program, its limitation is lack of influence on policy or legal regulation in rural WASH.

ii. **Is the approach of co-financing by government leading towards institutionalisation of OBA approach in government systems (Effectiveness/Impact/ Sustainability)**

4.5.2 Co-financing and institutionalising of OBA

WOBA signed agreement with the PPC to co-finance latrine subsidies for households. Fig 18 shows the amount of co-financing committed as of June 2021 by the PPC for each province.



According to partners in the FGDs, co-financing fund enhances the responsibility and engagement of the authorities in the project. Without the counterpart fund from the government, funding from the donors can be considered as the donation, and thus difficult to get the government to be involved in the implementation. When there is a requirement for government co-financing, the PPC has to direct the related parties to participate in the project activities, monitor and push their implementation. In this way, co-financing by government in WOBA may not change the institutional structure in the government system in the short-term but it can help to promote the participation of stakeholders in the implementation process of OBA approach.

In the national group discussion, it was said that the WOBA is not the first project applying OBA but many donors have also implemented this method such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank. Moreover, some partners recalled the application of OBA in previous projects of EMW like CHOBA 1 and 2. However, the OBA delivery model appeared to be new or ‘modified’ to some partners at the provincial, district and commune levels,

“Previously, Ben Tre received from NGOs a full package and without allocating counterpart funds. The people who receive the grants were in a passive position in terms of giving and receiving. Currently, the project is implemented in such a way that the local people understand their roles and responsibilities so that must contribute in terms of personnel and counterpart funds. This is a modified mechanism. There is no mechanism of “give and take”.” (Participant, FGD, Ben Tre, Water)

Partners at all levels highly appreciated the OBA model, which they understood as “build latrine first, get the subsidy later” for its encouragement of marginalised households to build latrine or connect to the tap water supply system. In the opinion of the partners, this model should be applied because WASH take up is the community responsibility.

“In Nghe An, the authorities have been applying this model. It could continue in the future.”
(Participant, FGD Nghe An, Sanitation)

“The approach in WOBA is right. For a long time, people have had the expectation of the state, other organizations. WOBA's approach means that people themselves are responsible for accessing the clean water for their own health. We undertake propaganda to make people aware of these issues.” (Participant FGD, Nghe An, Water)

It is interesting that none of partners and WU interviewees considered OBA as a “market-based approach. FGD participants were very surprised when being asked the question that “do you think that the approach in WOBA is the market- based approach?”. Some respondents thought it was true because it involved the private sector. Others responded immediately “No, because I don't see anything related to the market mechanism.” When the role of the WU is asked in reference to the ‘market-based approach’, all WUs disagreed. For them, participation is political responsibility for the benefits of community not as market or demand generation for market creation.

“Q: Do you think OBA in WOBA is similar to a market-based approach or not?

A: Absolutely not.

Q: Why not?

A: Because it is the responsibility of WU. This is the political responsibility that we have to do, the mutual responsibility. If it is considered as a business, then the WU don't participate in.” (FGD, Ben Tre, Sanitation)

They explained that the WU's main task besides propaganda for the government is to look for other sources beside subsidies from the project to support the poor, near poor and GESI households to build the latrines. Their purpose in the project is to achieve the targets allocated by the DWU and PWU. They also built latrines for many households themselves so that families only have to pay VND 500,000 in advance. This is the reason why beneficiaries view subsidies they received from the project as a support or donation from the State rather than rebate for latrine cost. Similarly, the CWU do not view the allowance they received from the project after the households complete their own latrines as commission but the allowances for them to do their assigned task. They think that they encourage the poor, near poor and GESI households for the benefits of the community but not their own benefits.

“I think this is a program implemented by the WU, so I don't think about earning money here. The project staff only said to us that they would give us a small allowance but not the commission. I do my task not only for VND 70,000 but I want the people in my community to get benefits from the project. Actually, this money is not enough for the travelling but that is considered as an encouragement for my efforts to persuade Households to build latrines only. (WU, Nghe An)

Even the private enterprise agreed with the WU's opinion of WOBA that,

“It is not the market-based approach but social protection because of the target beneficiaries of the project”. (FGD, Nghe An, Water)

Thus, OBA model is viewed by these partners as a relevant management channel of the government structure. With the target set by the superiors, the subordinates (such as the WU at lower levels)

must find resources to achieve the target. Participants at the national group discussion said that the role of the central government is only a reminder of the implementation in the province if they have not met the targets. The central role in the implementation belongs to the provincial level PC to direct the parties. With this universal view of OBA across all participant groups in the field visits, it can be argued that OBA cannot be institutionalised with the purpose of private sector engagement. Furthermore, co-financing commitments have not been confirmed in terms of actual disbursement or that it can be continued post WOBA without project subsidy. It is not possible to determine that WOBA will achieve its outcome of institutionalisation of OBA through government co-financing; however, it is quite evident that subsidies are seen as donation or rewards and the cofinancing is a implementation mechanism for the PPC to direct the parties involved.

The issue of human resources also point to the same uncertainty post WOBA. Given the role of the WU in propaganda activities to apply OBA, it will be difficult for them to continue to do the work when there is no funding,

“It’s very good if the WU can continue doing the mobilisation activities when the project is completed but where are the resources and the money come from? Encouraging women to use clean water is an ongoing activity.” (Participant FGD Nghe An, Water)

4.6 KEQ6. To what extent has WOBA effectively engaged private sector operators in delivering WASH services for the poor and GESI communities? (Effectiveness)

4.6.1 *Engagement with private sector operators*

Interview with the representative of Tan A Dai Thanh, a sanitation enterprise revealed that the enterprise has established a relationship with EMW and WU from the previous project CHOBA 2 in 2015. They involve with WOBA to sell the plastic septic tank which was also the product involved in CHOBA project. They received information about OWBA from the PWU in Ben Tre which is where the company operates.

“We are an enterprise. After working with WU, I found that the WU members in the Mekong River Delta are close to the locality, and no one understands that locality as well as them. So, that is our strategy to connect with them to increase demand from that locality.”

Interview with the representative from the Hoa Son water supply company indicate that the enterprise’s main contact is with PCERWASS rather than the WU. He was not aware of the WU’s role and responsibility in the water component of WOBA,

“I don’t remember exactly (who provided information relating to WOBA), but the PCERWASS sent me an announcement, then our enterprise contacted with PCERWASS and sent them the application. Then, we received some official letters (from the project) on the requirement to take part in the project, mainly providing connections for the poor households. I only meet the WU at PCERWASS meetings and don’t contact them. I understand they only broadcast some propaganda on loudspeaker, that’s all.”

Both the WU and water enterprises think that it is necessary for them to cooperate with each other because of the mutual benefits. However, they both felt that WOBA has not been clear in establishing this relationship between them.

The water company interviewee attended one WOBA workshop on safe water supply and climate change at Nghe An PCERWASS, and learnt about the requirements of safe water supply and the cooperation mechanism between the water enterprise with the local authorities to protect the water supply system. The sanitation company interviewee did not attend any training due to lack of time but recalled a field visit with WOBA staff where he gained some information about sub-structure of septic tank latrine.

There is no specific information provided by the enterprises to suggest that WOBA has and able to help increase their profitability. However, they are motivated to join WOBA to expand their customer base, which they believe can be achieved through their presence in the local areas and public perception of the company's social responsibility.

“We can advertise our business when we participate in the project because our current number of customers is limited. The more we do that, the more we can expand our market.” (Water company Nghe An)

“From providing services to the poor and GESI group, we have a voice in the locality. My brand is also associated with the disadvantaged group.” (Sanitation company, Ben Tre)

4.6.2 OBA model and impact on business

The representatives of private enterprises referred to the target beneficiaries when being asked about their knowledge of WOBA project. For the water company, it could be because they have to collect the list of target beneficiaries. The water enterprise still believed that WOBA operates on a donation model in its subsidies provision to the disadvantaged households. Free connection fee and subsidised tariff of water consumption is viewed as not sustainable model for their business operation. In addition, the low usage of water to date leads the water company representative to be concerned that WOBA's target beneficiaries will stop using water if there is no subsidy. According to him, this model of OBA cannot be applied for poor and vulnerable households because it does not ensure sustainable revenue for the water companies. In this comment below, he referred to the 1.5 million VND consumption before water tariff is charged. As discussed in 4.3, this concern is reasonable given that beneficiaries are using alternative sources of water to save on consumption of piped water and that many households have not yet paid for water usage tariff.

“There will be risks in the near future. With the initial investment, they have 1.5 million in their {water} account. When people use it up, they will not use it anymore. It means that the investment is not effective.”

The sanitation company had a different viewpoint in relation to business potential. They viewed WOBA as a project relating to the environmental sanitation, and the products that they want to sell should relate that environmental objective. According to the representative from TADT, the company can introduce their substructure of the septic tanks to potential customers. They saw the advantage of using the WU over their own agents because it is less expensive to train construction materials agents to sell this product,

“We deploy the WU to advise households about construction aspects like materials, which we used to ask construction material shops to do and advise them guideline.” (Sanitation company, Ben Tre)

To accommodate payment issue, they implemented an instalment payment process so households, both poor and non poor, can repay the latrine costs over a period of time. This instalment scheme was already developed and implemented in CHOPA project. It should be noted that the cost of latrine and instalment payment has to be paid within a defined period whereas water consumption is an ongoing cost, which could explain why credit instalment may not work for water companies. It is also that water tariff is determined by the government whereas sanitation companies have more autonomy in product and pricing.

4.6.3 Challenges in delivering WASH services

The target beneficiaries of WOBA are target group whom the authorities and WU are interested and have a duty to provide support. Thus, private sector participation is supported and encouraged by localities and provides them with enabling conditions for business creation. In addition, as noted in 4.1, policy setting favours private section engagement in WASH to support rural communities. WASH is one of the important criteria of New Rural Development Program, so, the enterprises who provide WASH services are also encouraged to develop their business.

There are some challenges in delivering WASH services for private sector operators, mostly for water companies, which relate to WOBA design and implementation. For the water company, there is no government investment or project investment to help the water operator to extend their service network, and the subsidy amounts are not sufficient to support families who live far away from the pipeline to afford the higher cost of connecting. There is too much time taken by water companies to collect baseline data of households without water connections. If there is a clear process and connection between the DWU, CWU, and village WU, and the WU can be involved in the identification of beneficiaries, this process will be more effective and less complicated, and as noted in 4.2, more accurate baseline data can be produced. The very low tap water consumption, limited awareness on protecting the water pipeline, the water supply facilities, or water resources are other factors that make the water supply scheme hesitant in continuing to supply water to target beneficiaries. For the sanitation company, according to the sanitation company interviewee, one of the main implementation issues is that the WU has not disseminated adequate information about the composite of latrine substructure and its quality.

The connection between the WASH enterprises and the customers is mainly developed by the WU and local authorities' guarantee. Through this third party, the enterprises can access their customers easier, and the customers can trust the enterprises more. Involvement of the WU and local authorities is the social capital required for business relationship to be established between the suppliers and customers. This level of social capital and its effect on business relationship and understanding the customer vary between provinces, with a stronger relationship in Ben Tre than in Nghe An localities. Such involvement of the WU and local authorities can be an enabling factor for operators in WOBA to connect with households. It also highlights an emerging market with externalities that could impede the creation and effective operation of the market. Further, the private sector would need to continue engaging with the WU and local authorities and paying them incentives like WOBA, which means additional ongoing costs of running their business.

Moreover, the capacity of customer services of the private enterprises, especially the water operators is limited. Their staff are mainly the technical staff, there is no professional staff on communication or customer service. The new enterprise like the Hoa Son water supply company felt that they were still confused in how to manage, operate, develop communication strategies and establish the relationship with local authorities and organizations like the WU and people in the

localities. They felt that they have not yet received support including technical support, adequate training and connection to some other partners in the project such as the WU to help them in identifying mobilising households and improving their services.

4.6.4. Case Study - Tan A Dai Thanh Group

Name of business: Tan A Dai Thanh (TADT) group
Operation location: TADT operates in 63 provinces. For Ben Tre, it operates in 9 districts/cities. WOBA project now is being implemented in 39 communes in 4 districts: Giong Trom, Mo Cay Bac, Thach Phu, Ba Tri TADT has operations in these 4 districts before WOBA project involves. Coverage in districts: 55%
Years in operation: TADT has been operating in Vietnam since 1993 and in Ben Tre since 2002
Staff: Diverse and complex Group because there are many different branches and regions. There are 1 or 2 or even 3 branches in each province, the number of branches in each province is depended on the square of each province, with the maximum radius is 70km. In Ben Tre, there are 10 staff.
CEO: Nguyen Duy Chinh - Education level: Master of Business Administration in UK - Age: 36 years old Sales & Marketing Director in South of Vietnam: Le Van Son - Education level: University: 1st degree on informatics, 2 nd degree on economy. - Age: 39 years old
Work experience prior to this business: CEO: - Deputy director in charge of production, planning and procurement, finance at Tan A Hung Yen Co., Ltd - Tan A Dai Thanh Group - Director of Marketing at Tan A Hung Yen Co., Ltd - Tan A Dai Thanh Group Sales & Marketing Director in South of Vietnam: - Nokia Vietnam company (2010-2011)
Target customers: Stores and funded projects. (Main selling is through agents, not retail) The number of customers in the South of Vietnam: 12,000 customers. In which, Ben Tre: 250 customers. The number of customers has decreased about 10% compared to 2020 due to the COVID-19 epidemic
Industry: Water Solutions Industry, Hardware and Appliances Industry; Plastic Industry; Paint and Chemical Industry; Real Estate Industry Products: in Ben Tre - different Types of Plastic Pipes, Stainless Steel Water Tank, Different Types of plastic tanks, Solar water heater, electric water heater, sinks, showers. The product sold most is composite water tank. Since 2014, 2015, TADT has cooperated with the WU to sell the composite water tank and substructure. These products have been traded before WOBA.
Revenue per month for the septic tank product, which WOBA is working with: + Revenue per month: 12 billion VND + Revenue per year: 140 billion VND Last year, the revenue in Ben Tre branch is 75 billion VND (through agents, stores), and 30 billion VND through the government and donor funded projects/programs.
Profit rate: 7% per Septic tank product According to Mr Le Van Son:

Profit rate from the septic tank and water tank is not high about 1.2%/year. The benefits of the group are mainly from the real estate.

Business plan: Currently, TADT focuses on selling products to urban areas, agencies, projects, and especially charity units. For charity units, they will support at different prices for both social work and commercial purposes.

Financial statements: yes

In WOBA, this is not the first time Tan A Dai Thanh cooperated with the WU to sell their products such as water tanks or composite septic tanks. They have cooperated with the WU in Ben Tre since 2015 – CHOBA 2 project. Ben Tre PWU and EMW staff introduced the WOBA in the Tan A Dai Thanh based on the previous available relationship. The Tan A Dai Thanh knows the target beneficiaries in the WOBA are the poor/near poor or GESI households. Therefore, the financial resources for building latrines of these Households is very limited, and their low-price composite septic tank is one of the reasonable choices for these Households to build their own latrine. Although the director of The Tan A Dai Thanh – the Southern branch said that he had not attended any training course of WOBA/EMW due to his frequent business trips, he was very impressed with WOBA when he had a field visit with a field staff of WOBA, he learnt about the knowledge on advantages of qualified sub-structure of septic tank latrine. Actually, he does not visit Households at their own houses, his company often sell their products through the stores or the organizations for the donation purpose.

The role of Tan A Dai Thanh is similar to their role in the CHOBA 2. They work and get the agreement with the PWU about the cooperation mechanism such as kinds of the products, price, commission, payment. CWUs collect the demand of Households in the commune, then announce to Tan A Dai Thanh to transport the products based on the provided list. The CWU also collect the payment from Households then transfer to the Tan A Dai Thanh. Tan A Dai Thanh also the monthly credit payment in 6 months for Households who buy the septic tank. The director of Tan A Dai Thanh also recognized that their role in WOBA is only to provide the best price for Households that is cheaper than the price of the stores and the Households can get the monthly credit payment in 6 months.

Reasons for working with WOBA

Tan A Dai Thanh participates in WOBA because they have cooperated with Ben Tre PWU and PWU is the key implementor in this project. Participating in WOBA helps the Tan A Dai Thanh maintain the relationship with the PWU for the mutual target group: support the poor/near poor Households to be able to build their latrine.

“The customers are poor women, therefore they don’t have money to build latrine if they don’t buy the substructure from the WU... Whatever the WU do for the social security, so we can’t sell the products with the higher price for them. Because if we sell them with the higher price, we will lose prestige. So, our purpose is to provide the cheaper, even much cheaper to the poor women. Some stores also complaint that the price of the septic tank bought from the WU is even lower than the price that the company sell the products for the stores.”

Therefore, the profit in the short term is not the main purpose of Tan A Dai Thanh to participate in the WOBA.

Although the WU is an agent in the supply chain of septic tank of Tan A Dai Thanh, the company does not fully consider the WU as an actual agent in the market of their product because similar to the opinion of WU, they think that the WU participate in the project due to their political mandate, rather

than for economic profits. Although the commission is the most important factor for an agent, in WOBA, the commission for WU when they sell latrines for the poor households is very limited.

Q: I know you have sold more than 500 septic tanks with the original price in WOBA, right?

A: Yes, we provide the products with the price that we use for our wholesale agents.

H: If so, when families buy the septic tank, is there any commission for WU staff who sell them for you?

A: No

Q: Oh, so, what is your contribution in the WOBA?

A: We only provide the credit during 6 months.

Participation in WOBA is part of the business strategy of the enterprise. It is not for the direct economic profit but for the purpose of social security aiming to promote their brand. Therefore, they accept to lose some agents – stores to cooperate with WU to provide the water tank or septic tanks for households.

“When we cooperated with WU, we met some difficulties with the stores. Some stores even “boycott” Tan A Dai Thanh, they didn’t sell our products. It happened most in 2016... Many stores quit and left us...”

Due to the mutual customers of households in the rural area, the numbers of sold products have not changed when the WU is their agent.

“We sell the products with the original price to the WU for the purpose of social security. Besides, our purpose is to create jobs for our workers with the large number of consumptions. Instead of through the stores or agents, customers, sales staff. We could cut down those costs to compensate the low-price products provided through the WU.”

For several years, Tan A Dai Thanh has applied this model in not other projects such as with the Father Land Front, the charity activities of some commercial Banks or individuals, in which the marginalized households are always the target beneficiaries.

Business goals for participating in WOBA

The goal of Tan A Dai Thanh is to sell their products. Participating in WOBA is a business strategy to develop their network with the local organizations to extend their market or customers. Basing on the political organizations such as WU or Father Land Front, they have built the trust with the customers and promote their brand with very limited cost for marketing and advertisement.

WOBA is different from CHOBA 2 in which the target Households are mainly non-poor households in the rural area, the target beneficiaries in WOBA are the poor, near poor and GESI Households. Participating in WOBA helps Tan A Dai Thanh strengthen their prestige with the authorities and community, when the target beneficiaries in the project are the marginalized Households. The composite septic tank provided by Tan A Dai Thanh is much cheaper than other kinds of substructure of the latrine such as bricks or concrete. So, although the WOBA has not provided the tangible supports for Tan A Dai Thanh, WOBA still helps the company develop the brand for a product of “low-price but high-quality septic tank for the poor” basing on the WU – the key implementor and the target Households of the project. It is relevant to the business strategy of the company.

In reality, there are some challenges for Tan A Dai Thanh to provide the services in WOBA. Firstly, it is difficult to transport the products to the houses of the target beneficiaries because many houses are

far away from the main road, so the truck of the company can't go while the local stores can transport the products to the houses of the customers by their "rickshaw". In those cases, the company must ask the Households to transport the septic tank from the main road to their houses by themselves. This is not convenient for the customers.

Secondly, the transport is restricted due to the COVID-19. For example, in 2020, some Households in Thanh Phu (Ben Tre) wanted to buy the composite septic tank from Tan A Dai Thanh to build their own latrines. But due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the company had to delay delivery services. Meanwhile, the Households can't wait the composite septic tanks, then they had to build the concrete/brick substructures. So, when the composite septic tanks were transported to the commune, those Households had finished their latrines some months ago.

Finally, there is a habit in the community that they are used to building the substructure of the latrine by brick or concrete although the cost is higher than using the composite substructure for the latrine. Actually, no one can be sure that how durable it is because it has appeared and used since about 10 years ago only. It needs more time to prove their reliability and convenience to build the trust in the quality of the composite septic tank of Tan A Dai Thanh.

Business sustainability when participating in WOBA

Tan A Dai Thanh does not expect to get direct benefits from WOBA in the short term, rather the strategy of the company is to extend the market and customers, promote their brand and enhance the relationship with the local partners.

The existing relationship with the WU is a leverage to continue delivering WASH services to poor/GESI in rural Vietnam after WOBA finishes. Specifically, Tan A Dai Thanh is developing a new cooperation model with the WU to increase the commission for WU and reduce the risks for the enterprises. Tan A Dai Thanh also intends to develop the new products such as the water pipe and water spares with the competitive price for the Households in the rural area. However, this policy is intended to be applied to all households, not only for poor/GESI households. With the good brand and low price, Tan A Dai Thanh hopes to be able to extend their customers in the rural area.

4.7 KEQ7. What impacts (intended and unintended) has WOBA Vietnam had and how sustainable are these? (Impact/Sustainability)

4.7.1 *Intended impact on household, WU, partners, private sector*

From the perspectives of beneficiaries, WOBA has enabled their understanding about the importance of having and using hygienic latrine and piped water. All of the beneficiaries interviewed thought that their WASH conditions have improved as a result of connecting to water or building latrine. In respect of the subsidy which all believed was provided by the state as donation, they have learnt that WASH take up is the household and community responsibility, with the government playing a role (through financial support) to leverage households to access the WASH services. The intervention appears to intend for a development of community mindset of market approach, that is households are customers, however the market-based approach of WASH service delivery seems to be far from the community understanding about accessing WASH through WOBA.

Improved WASH services can reduce time otherwise spent on caring for the disabled people or old people (see 4.3). This would need further studies or evaluation to measure this impact.

Participation in WOBA has helped the WU staff have more opportunities to visit households more frequently, so they can have more knowledge about the WASH demand of the community and the capacity of households to access the WASH services. The WU's capacity on mobilization or looking for the resources to support the vulnerable families has been increased. All WU interviews felt that their mobilisation skills in WASH issues have improved because of practical mobilisation activities in WOBA, mainly in sanitation component, which has led to increased sense of self efficacy and confidence, and perception of themselves as change agents to bring benefits to their communities. At the organisational level, the position and reputation of WU have been increased.

One of the biggest changes in knowledge and attitude of the partners, especially with WU is the knowledge and attitude about people with disabilities.

Participation in WOBA has helped private sector operators to expand their current customer base by increasing their brand in social responsibility and reputation with the community. Some costs are saved by using the WU to promote their product, however there is some limited impact due to lack of sufficient dissemination of information about the product.

The OBA model was applied in the previous projects of EMW and carried across the WOBA. Overall, there is support for OBA although the understanding of OBA is based on a 'rewards' model rather than market-based approach. However, it is difficult for the OBA model of delivering WASH products for rural poor to be continued after the project or the external fund runs out because affordability is the critical issue for these disadvantaged households. In addition, the funding of the PPC seems to be based on MOU rather than systematic inclusion in the budget system. Without these subsidies, it does not seem that the private sector operators are able to provide services without affecting their profit. In addition, the necessary involvement of the WU and local authorities in the business connection suggest continued externality in the market structure and ongoing costs for the private sector operators. It could be said that the impacts of OBA model to institutionalise sustainable market-based approach in delivering WASH services are not well understood, embraced or could work effectively and efficiently in the context of poor and vulnerable communities.

4.7.2 Unintended impact

There are some unintended impacts from the project. First, household understanding of subsidy (especially with those that were provided the full latrine and water connection has led to the misunderstanding that WASH take up is the government responsibility, which counters the idea of OBA as creating demand at the household level.

Second, the lack of bottom-up approach and method of identifying and selecting beneficiaries (see 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6) has compromised the inclusive approach of WOBA and the idea of leave no one behind. Many of the beneficiaries, WU and partners involved in this evaluation felt that WOBA has excluded very difficult households who actually have WASH needs and desire to receive WASH services.

Third, leveraging of government political structure, while effective in achieving latrine and water uptake, has continued the 'subordination' of the WU to the authorities rather than offering real decision making and leadership in their mobilising and supporting households.

Fourth, building latrine has led to some households who are already poor to incur additional debts. This is visible in the households who build houses in combination with toilets or build latrines combined with the bathroom.

Fifth, households are now using multiple water sources to reduce water tariff fee which has affected providers' revenue source rather than increasing revenue stream.

Similarly, some households are still using fishpond latrine and hygienic latrine due to habit and cost of buying toilet paper to use with the new hygienic latrine.

Lack of maintenance of latrines due to lack of understanding or lack of financial resources to buy right sanitation materials lead to rapid degradation of the latrine especially the septic tank latrines. This could be because of lack of information provided to households at the time of latrine construction, mobilisation, verification and post verification. Thus, the communication activities to households after building latrine or connect to water supply system is very important to maintain the effectiveness of access to these WASH services. The WU staff at commune and village level should be trained and provided information/materials (such as leaflets, flip chart) to implement the communication activities.

i. What factors contribute to these and how might they undermine sustainability of positive changes? (Impact/Sustainability)

Enabling factors for WOBA include long-term relationship between EMW and partners, and the leverage of existing government structure which have provided WOBA with legitimacy and ease of coordinating at the national level and implementing at the province level and downward. The WU's involvement in the project "5 No, 3 Clean", their current experience and achievements in WOBA and other WASH projects, offer them the reputation to continue mobilizing households to access WASH services which can continue the impact of WOBA in providing access to improved sanitation and water.

Factors that limit WOBA's impacts are multi-fold. The process of identifying and selecting beneficiaries, particularly for the water component is inflexible to account for households needs and situations. This is compounded by the top-down structure that does not allow for feedback at the village level.

With the sanitation enterprises, the existing relationship with the WU is a leverage to continue to deliver WASH services to poor/GESI in rural Vietnam after WOBA finishes. Especially, Tan A Dai Thanh is developing a new cooperation model with the WU to increase the commission for WU and reduce the risks for the enterprises. However, this policy is intended to be applied to all not only for poor/GESI groups.

The WU's political mandate restricts the space for changing mindset or way of operationalising a market approach, which is coupled with the mindset of partners and the WU, as well as the beneficiaries of the WU as provider of resources for households. This context and operational structure create a significant barrier to enable change in perception of WU as leaders or change agents in WASH business and WASH sector. On the one hand, the use of the WU and local authorities is an enabler for implementing WOBA. On the other, it acts as barrier to realising long term impact for gender transformation and private sector strengthening. In addition, lack of funding and incentives could limit the WU's ability to continue mobilisation activities post WOBA.

Co-financing by the PPC is dependent on available fund, and the PPC has experienced across-the-board budget cuts. Without the external funds from the development projects, it is difficult for the PPC to arrange similar budget to WOBA subsidies after the project finishes.

Households' lack of financial resources affects their continued use of WASH products. Using latrines means that the households may have to pay another cost for their latrines such as water, toilet papers, toilet detergent. Similarly, using piped water means they have to pay water usage charges.

Social norm of using fishpond latrine and lack of familiarity with the new septic tank latrine contributes to continued use of old latrine. Similarly, habitual use of rain or well water and perception of water quality has resulted in continued use of other water resources especially rainwater rather than piped water.

The limited resources of poor and GESI households is a significant barrier for private enterprises to enter the market or to apply market-based approach, even with some type of subsidy, for large number of households. It is not clear how WOBA is addressing affordability issue and with a weak private sector in WASH, the WU encounters competing agenda with its political mandate if they are expected to act as sales agents in the poor/GESI communities. Further investigation is required in the SANOPA component where EMW trained WU members to promote for more affordable latrine options to vulnerable households.

5. EVALUATIVE REASONING AND LESSONS LEARNT

Drawing on the analysis in Section 4, this section applies the five major domains of CFIR (the intervention, inner and outer settings, individuals involved, and the process by which implementation is accomplished) as the evaluative reasoning for the evaluation. These domains interact in rich and complex ways to influence the implementation effectiveness²⁶, hence lessons can be drawn from understanding the external influences, organisational components, core implementation process, and the central role of individuals. This section aims to support the findings discussed in Section 4 with the broad array of constructs described in CFIR and i) the theory of multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development²⁷ to understand system strengthening outcomes (outcomes 1 and 2), and ii) the framework of gender equality and social inclusion to understand gender and social inclusion outcomes (outcome 3 and 4). A summary of WOBA's achievements as of June 2021 is presented first.

Summary of WOBA's key achievements

- 9,364 poor and near poor households built latrines at subsidised cost, representing 62% of target of 15,000.
- 2,588 GESI households built latrines at subsidised cost, representing 86% of target of 3,000.
- 815 non-poor households built latrines representing 41% of target of 2,000.
- 3,223 poor and GESI households connected to existing piped water supply with subsidised connection fee, representing 45% of target of 7,100 households.

²⁶ Pettigrew A., Whipp R. (1992) Managing Change and Corporate Performance. In: Cool K., Neven D.J., Walter I. (eds) *European Industrial Restructuring in the 1990s*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. Retrieved from https://doi-org.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/10.1007/978-1-349-12582-1_9

²⁷ Davies, A. (2002). Power, politics and networks: shaping partnerships for sustainable communities. *Area* 34(2), 190-203. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4762.00071>

- 2,076 handwashing devices provided to kindergartens, health stations
- 980 handwashing devices provided to GESI households, and 200 plastic water tanks provided to households.
- Signed agreement with 4 PPCs to co-finance subsidies for poor and GESI households to build latrine. As of June 2021, 5,891,080,000 VND (256,134 USD) was co-financed by 3 PPCs, representing 56% of total agreed amount of 10,485,000,000 VND (455,870 USD).
- The WU members supported 695 households to acquire loan to build house and latrine and connect to pipe water.
- 1 sanitation enterprises, 178 local masons and 14 of their contractors, and 57 construction materials shops have participated in WOBA's sanitation component as of June 2021.
- 4 private water operators provided subsidised water connection for poor and GESI households.
- Partnership with the DRD to deliver training on inclusive WASH for persons with disabilities. As of June 2021, 6 training sessions on technical hygienic latrines for people with disabilities were delivered to 220 people.

5.1 Intervention characteristics

5.1.1 *Intervention source*

The WOBA model of delivery was planned based on 1) the experience and success of EMW's previous OBA projects in sanitation and water supply (CHOBA 1 and 2), 2) relationships already established with the government structure particular the WU. In addition, the policies and regulations in RWSS, and National Strategy for RWSS to 2020 and to 2030 provided the rationale for WOBA to deliver WASH services to target marginalised households in rural Vietnam and leverage the government structure to do so.

5.1.2 *Evidence strength and quality*

As shown in 4.2, partners' perceptions of EMW quality and validity of evidence of latrine output in prior projects support their belief that WOBA will have desired outcomes for marginalised communities.

5.1.3 *Relative advantage*

With a strong alignment with policies for RWSS in Vietnam, WOBA is perceived by partners to have relative advantage of implementing this intervention over other interventions, particularly the subsidy scheme based on OBA model (see 4.2).

5.1.4 *Adaptability*

Adaptability refers to the degree which an intervention can be adapted, tailored, refined, or reinvented to meet local needs. Adaptability relies on a definition of the 'core components' (the essential and indispensable elements of the intervention itself) versus 'adaptable periphery'

(adaptable elements, structures and items related to the intervention and organisation into which it is being implemented).

WOBA's core components are connecting water supply and building latrine using the OBA model, with fixed targets of beneficiaries in each component. Underpinned by OBA as outputs-focus, the intervention has a fixed design rather than adaptable in both product design, processes and system used to implement the components. Although the contexts of beneficiaries may differ in terms of demography, socioeconomic, environment and locations, WOBA focuses on achieving outputs rather than ideation, tests and scale up, or flexibility to adapt to contexts and characteristics of individuals and organisations. The application of OBA delivery model based on prior projects might give WOBA its relative advantage, but it has also skewed the implementation towards targets achievement cross-provinces rather than flexible options and measures for local sites and people to adapt the intervention as needed. Leveraging the existing governance structures means that the PC hold the central role in implementation rather than the WU (see 4.2).

The OBA model assumes an even playing field for both supply side (private sector operators) and demand side (households) across villages, communes, districts, provinces. As we have learnt from Part 4 of this report, differentiation of products is needed to accommodate different needs, differentiation of financing either through loans or subsidy levels is needed to accommodate different affordability, and alternative methods besides using government list of poor and GESI are needed to ensure no one is left behind in accessing WOBA, differentiation between men and women, job role and organisation are needed in order to engage individuals and empower them in decision making and leadership either at the household or public domains.

5.1.5 Inclusive approach

WOBA design relies on the government's list of poor/near poor and GESI households, which has unintentionally excluded households to which social assistance may be justified, which would affect the accuracy and transparency of the identification of households eligible for WOBA's subsidy. WOBA appears to be less concerned about whether its implementation activities are inclusive, that is whether WOBA information reaches all people and organisations and whether all people who are marginalised can access WOBA. The assumption of the government system and target beneficiaries is not itself an inclusive approach because it does not necessarily leave no one behind, as evidenced in the conversations with the beneficiaries. Inclusivity must be embedded in the representation of the beneficiaries in the intervention design process and in the identification and selection process. The two tiers of subsidy for poor/near poor and GESI seem rigid to address diverse needs and conditions for demand driven sanitation market implied by WOBA.

The same can be said about persons with disabilities who experience barriers in full participation in society. But it is not the impairment alone that excludes someone from accessing services. It is the impairment plus social, environmental and attitudinal barriers that they experience which result in their exclusion. Thus, designing WOBA and provision of latrine to them needs to consider their participation in the project. The partnership with DRD and training in technical aspects of hygiene latrines for PWDs in some ways have progressed representation of PWDs, but WOBA is at the critical consciousness raising stage rather than practical application to improve the lives of PWDs. This could be due to the lack of planning at the intervention level as well as the cost of building latrine for PWDs is too high and subsidies are too low for this target group. Before and during the implementation, it would be worthwhile to bring PWDs into the project and ask about their needs, their consent to services and products, and what should those services and products look like.

Further, if WOBA is designed with more adaptable focus at the community level, feedback of beneficiaries and mobilisers would have potentially allowed for more timely recognition of diverse needs and adaptable management.

The notion of inclusivity is embraced by WOBA through its target beneficiaries. But providing subsidy alone does not mean inclusive or reach to people in need of the intervention. An intervention is considered inclusive when all its partners and stakeholders have access to relevant information and resources and, at the same time, demonstrate a willingness and capacity to develop rich and meaningful lives for themselves and for others. Yet, inclusion is inextricably linked with exclusion, as seen in this evaluation, which demands an effort to ensure equal access to information, adequate subsidy, product and services appropriate to needs, and representation of the community whose needs are being served in the WOBA processes and structures.

5.1.6 Gender lens

The use of the WU presupposes the idea that women can be change agents and leaders in their WASH work and community. This seems paradoxical given the WU works under the PC at all levels, and WOBA intentionally follows the government structure rather than transforming it. As highlighted in section 4.4, the idea that the WU is most suited to mobilisation because they are women and WASH service benefits women reinforces a gendered view about the role of women in workplace and traditional roles of women in water collection, cooking and cleaning. The lessons learnt here are:

- While the superiors (the PC) and even EMW can play a role as facilitators of WU's empowerment, they are not 'empowerers' themselves. WOBA must find a space for the WU women to empower and that means bringing them into the design, implementation, feedback and evaluation.
- Women empowerment are context specific, as shown in the WUs' experiences across three provinces. Thus, traditional knowledge and deep understanding of the local contexts from the women's perspectives are necessary in the design and implementation of WOBA.
- Enabling gender equality must go beyond the focus on 'women' that bound them in the traditional roles of women. In addition to leveraging relationship with government partners to implement subsidy schemes, WOBA must ensure that those in charge of the WU's work accept and allow the WU members real opportunities to do empowerment activities in their work, having voices and rights, and through education and training.
- Women are diverse with different access and power to use social, physical, natural, physical and human capital that can enable or hinder their ability to act in their job. WOBA must consider and attend to these forms of capitals at an individual level to understand and support the women in WOBA. This support needs to consider firstly women as beneficiaries or adopter of WASH products, which means adaptability is needed to accommodate female-led households with different socio-economic status, family networks, and intersectionality of marginalization characteristics. Secondly, WOBA must consider women as manager in the planning, operations and monitoring of WOBA. The idea of decision making by women at the household level in WOBA must be revisited beyond one question 'who makes decisions in building latrine' in the verification survey to ensure there is adequate planning, baseline data, and understanding of women's decision making inside and outside the household.

- The WU perceive themselves as change agents in promoting WASH services, supporting households to take up latrine, which have enhanced the community respect for them; however structural changes for the WU's empowerment are needed at the institutional levels and WOBA has the potential to incorporate this through its partnership structure.

5.1.7 *Trialability*

WOBA is planned based on EMW's history of delivering sanitation and water connections using OBA, and as such there is an assumption that this method will be successful in WOBA and no need for trialling. However, OBA is different to other EWM's projects in its assumption of market principles and intention of institutionalising OBA for the government to engage private sector in delivering WASH. While this is understood by partners in the sanitation for non-poor groups (SANOBA), it is not understood in the subsidies for poor and GESI groups. In addition, the WU's political mandate restrict their actions as private sector agents and consideration of OBA as a market approach.

The trialability of any intervention is about having the space for ongoing evaluation to reverse course of implementation if warranted. In this case, the OBA model in the SANOBA group, could have been trialled in terms of financing mechanisms for the private sector like loan, instalment payment, credit arrangement or involving other organisations like social enterprises rather than the WU.

Trials of products could address water resource management given issues with climate change, or types of latrines to encourage sustainable adoption (use) of WASH products for WOBA's beneficiaries and future beneficiaries as well as improving the quality improvement cycle of either latrine or water supply. This does not mean complex changes to the implementation activities. For example, usability testing of latrine could be part of the verification process, and water quality testing can be part of verification and customer satisfaction process to promote adoption such as use of piped water for drinking and maintenance of latrine.

5.1.8 *Complexity*

Complexity refers to perceived difficulty of implementation based on the duration, scope, radicalness, disruptiveness, centrality and intricacy and number of steps involved to implement. As the partnership survey revealed (see 4.2), WOBA is perceived to be on the 'simple' or 'complex' depending on the relationship with partners organisations and scope of activities of these organisations. It is also because WOBA does not have significant reorientation or non-routine process, nor does it aim to produce fundamental changes in any partner organisation's activities or clear departure from their existing practices. Partners are involved with WOBA because of the mutual benefits and shared value of increasing WASH access to rural families. There are limited decision points or choices presented at decision points that are held by a partner organisation other than the PPC.

It could be argued that WOBA is complex because of many components, actors including private sector operators, different levels of the government, and beneficiaries with different socioeconomic situations and geolocations and different levels of vulnerabilities. However, WOBA does not include a range of risks or adaptability or trialability processes for these diverse conditions. Although working with different levels of government, not everyone is directly involved in the implementation design so WOBA could identify certain networks or connection points across the map to (1) visualize

implicit knowledge and understand the interplay of complex formal and informal networks, power relations, and actors' goals; (2) uncover sources of conflicts as well as potentials for cooperation; (3) facilitate knowledge exchange and learning processes. This kind of mapping of network and relationships, power dynamics and resources flow can produce both qualitative and quantitative data to strengthen structural measures (as seen in the diagrams in 4.2) that WOBA already is aware of and leverages, with measures of attributes of actors, and their perceived influence and goals. It could also promote gender equality and empowerment by understanding which existing work processes require changes and which ways. For example, how might WU be empowered or hindered when their WOBA work is part of the WU's mandated activities and monitored by the WU and PC at the higher levels?

5.1.9 Cost

Table 11 shows the total cost of WOBA as of June 2021. Cost per unit of WASH is then calculated for i) direct cost of subsidy and performance incentives per latrine; ii) direct costs of subsidy and incentives per water connection; iii) indirect cost per unit of WASH product; iv) total cost per unit of WASH product.

Table 11. Total WOBA costs as of June 2021

	WfW AUD	EMW AUD	Total AUD
Performance incentives to WU - sanitation	375,150		375,150
Performance incentives to VIHEMA -sanitation	28,513		28,513
Total incentives - sanitation	403,663		403,663
Subsidy for poor Households - sanitation	277,842		277,842
Subsidy for GESI Households - sanitation	122,567		122,567
Total subsidy - sanitation	400,409		400,409
Performance incentives to WU - water	15,203		15,203
Performance incentives to PCERWASS - water	25,046		25,046
Total incentives - water	40,248		40,248
Subsidy for poor/GESI - water	225,588		225,588
Total subsidy - water	225,588		225,588
Field activities cost	613,896	786,767	1,400,663
Personnel cost	1,238,290	275,353	1,513,643
All other costs	535,312		535,312
Total costs	3,457,407	1,062,120	4,519,527
Total number of latrines built			12,767
Direct cost (Incentive and subsidy) per unit of latrine			62.98
Total number of water connections			3,223
Direct cost (Incentive and subsidy) per unit of water connection			82.48
Total number of WASH units (latrine & water)			15,990
Total other costs per WASH unit			215.74
Total cost per WASH unit			282.65

Based on the table of average cost of connecting water per household supplied by water schemes (see 4.3), Table 12 shows a simplistic comparison of cost of connecting water per household with and without WOBA intervention.

Table 12. Comparison of water connection costs with and without WOBA

With WOBA (average cost in AUD)		Without WOBA (average cost in AUD)
Direct costs (subsidy & incentives)	82.48	
Other costs	215.74	
Household out-of-pocket in Ben Tre, Nghe An	Nil	
Household out-of-pocket in Ha Tinh province	18.50	
Household out-of-pocket in Thanh Hoa province	45.69	
Total costs in Ben Tre	298.22	186.85
Total costs in Nghe An	298.22	171.51
Total costs in Ha Tinh	316.72	143.75
Total costs in Thanh Hoa	343.91	136.31

The average cost of latrine ranges from 12,000,000 VND (about 750 AUD) to 33,000,000 VND (2,032 AUD) depending on the type of latrine. It is difficult to calculate a cost-benefit of WOBA's intervention as the subsidy is fixed at the basic level of latrine, and is marginal compared to the actual cost of latrine. For an average cost of 23,000,000 VND (approximately 1,438 AUD) per latrine (see 4.3), WOBA's direct cost is 62.98 AUD, total cost is 280.72 AUD per unit of latrine, and the average household out-of-pocket cost is 21,000,000 VND (approximately 1,312 AUD).

It is not possible to say whether WOBA's costs have been minimised or efficient without comparative analysis with other similar intervention or WOBA scale up activity with costs information. However, as Table 13 shows, the costs per unit are a lot higher than WOBA Cambodia which is designed with the same costs structure. It should be noted that the environment of operation is different between each country, so are cultural, social and economic factors, which would affect implementation efficiency. Moreover, this simple cost analysis is based on outputs achieved only. A cost-effectiveness analysis would consider health benefits from WASH products use, human capital benefits from WOBA training activities, and potential economic benefits for private sector businesses. It would be worthwhile to carry out a cost effectiveness analysis of the intervention at the end of the project's term.

Table 13. Comparison of costs per WASH unit between WOBA Vietnam and WOBA Cambodia

	Vietnam	Cambodia
Incentive and subsidy paid per unit of latrine	62.98	42.25
Incentive and subsidy paid per unit of water	82.48	69.29
Total other costs per WASH unit	215.74	67.49
Total cost per WASH unit	282.65	111.03

5.2 Outer setting

5.2.1 Needs and resources

WOBA relies on the Government's list of poor/near poor and GESI household which follows the NRDP targets to identify target beneficiaries. WOBA's target households align with policy directions of enabling disadvantaged rural populations to have equitable and sustainable access to safely managed drinking water services, safely managed sanitation services, and improve their hygiene behaviours and practices related to safe drinking water, sanitation and hand washing. WOBA is also aware of importance of accounting for their increased awareness about WASH and health (see 4.3) through the propaganda activities of the WU as way to get households to take up latrine. As discussed earlier, inclusive approach means that people to whom the intervention is aimed at should be at least represented in the design or that their views and consent to services are represented. As the results have shown in relation to perception of unequal access to WOBA due to changing list of poor households, WOBA could adopt a more participatory process by involving the community in the identification and selection of beneficiaries, which would also enable them to have knowledge about WOBA and voice in WOBA. Understanding the outer context of implementation is important for effective implementation and sustainable impact, and scaling of future similar interventions by the communities. Applying the six elements of the Practical Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model PRSI, can help to understand the extent to which beneficiaries or the community is at the centre of intervention processes and decisions:

Choices of beneficiaries are provided. There is little choice in WOBA because the subsidy is provided based on defined categories and installation of basic latrine. More advanced latrines and associated costs are borne by the households. There have been initiatives from the partnership with the DRD and VIHEMA in designing latrine to accommodate PWDs mainly to assist the masons in technical aspect of accessible latrine, and more can be done to understand other solutions that are more affordable.

Beneficiaries' barriers are addressed. The main barrier that beneficiaries encounter is affordability. The subsidy has addressed this issue although there are those with WASH needs who do not have poor status. Other issues affecting usability of latrines and piped water relate to climate change and habit. Inclusion of beneficiaries in the process of WOBA design and product design to understand the root of the barriers is likely to lead to appropriate solutions and ensure the WOBA's impact is sustainable.

Transition between program elements. As noted above, the subsidy structure is fixed by household type with limited transitioning options.

Beneficiaries' satisfaction with service and access to service. Most beneficiaries who participated in the MTR are satisfied with the latrine built and highly appreciated the benefit of sanitation (see 4.3). The degree of feedback opportunity to the implementation team is somewhat limited because the verification process is conducted with the purpose of paying subsidy. This is unfortunate because the survey also collects other information about households and usage although these data is not analysed or used to improve implementation. As noted, more communication with households is needed post latrine completion or water connection to understand whether their needs are addressed, particularly in relation to climate change impacts, and their maintenance of the product.

Complexity and costs are minimised. As mentioned above, perception of complexity varied depending on the partner organisation. The operational structure follows the governance structure of Vietnam therefore is vertical with many levels of bureaucracy at the PC as well as WU, and thus could be seen as administratively cumbersome. The implementation steps are sequential and based on simple criteria of eligibility of household type and two tiered subsidies. Beneficiaries are mobilised to build latrine through the WU's propaganda activities. This is followed by beneficiaries register to build latrine, pay the cost of latrine, wait for the masons to build latrine, be part of the verification in some cases, and receive the subsidy from EMW and then the PPC. Sufficient information about subsidies and target households is being provided to households while less information about the WOBA project such as the source of funding, name of the project and EMW. Information provision could be improved to enable better understanding about WOBA not just subsidy amount to promote knowledge of the WOBA intervention and recommendation for it and future similar schemes within the communities.

The cost of latrine is a challenge for some households who could not afford to build latrine even with the subsidy. They have to borrow from families or the VSBP. Financial assistance mechanism of subsidy and other resources such as loans, incremental payment plans, and WU guarantee to buy construction materials were clearly important in the decisions and process of building latrine for many households. As discussed in the intervention section, financing mechanisms based on a range of subsidies and financing sources are needed as trials and testable solutions, with mechanisms for revising and adapting the implementation to understand how the demand and supply of WASH products can be realistically enabled for this target group of WOBA.

At the project level, without a cost benefits or cost effectiveness analysis, it is difficult to assess whether WOBA costs have been minimised or whether the project can deliver its activities more efficiently.

5.2.2 Cosmopolitanism

WOBA applies a partnership model that follows the existing political governance structure. The collective networks of relationships of individuals in an organisation represent the social capital of the organisation. To that extent, the vertical structure of the government is an appropriate vehicle for implementing WOBA. Potentially the range of partners organization that people have access to or exposed to can increase their social capital. As the partnership survey indicated, there is a high level of shared vision and information sharing between organisations. The survey indicated each partner organization collaborates with almost all of the partners in the partnership structure. This means a potential creation of external bridging between people or groups outside the organisation, although this was not the focus of this evaluation. System strengthening could start with identifying the various networks and relationships and resources flow, power dynamics and how they change as a result of WOBA.

5.2.3 Peer pressure

There is no obvious competitive pressure among private sector operators or WU members to implement WOBA. People are working towards achieving set targets assigned in the local areas.

5.2.4 External policies and incentives

As discussed in 4.1, WOBA is aligned with policy directions of rural WASH in Vietnam. The draft National Strategy to 2030 affirms WOBA's enabling context. These documents provide guidelines, recommended action although there is little specific guidance to implement WASH, private sector engagement in WASH, addressing climate change in WASH, or setting benchmark reporting on outcomes for WASH. In this regard, WOBA can influence policy direction and regulation and would need effort to identify advocacy opportunities. This would address one of the limitations of WOBA's impacts and barriers to WOBA effectiveness as discussed in 4.6.

5.3 Inner setting

5.3.1 Structural characteristic of partnership

The partnership structure of WOBA follows the government political structure to execute implementation therefore the PC has the power and decision making in all aspects of the project implementation. Based on this structure, the function of each organisation in the partnership, and the role of each person in the partner organisation is already established prior to WOBA. The stability of the partnership structure and its members' role in the implementation contribute to the implementation of WOBA in an effective way. A possible deviation is the WU with staff turnover resulting in some missed connection in the networks and missing important knowledge about WOBA. In this regard, ongoing training at the WU level especially at the village level is important.

The structure has concentrated decision making at the PC and dependent on EMW's prior experiences with the PC and the WU. As a result, the OBA subsidy schemes and payment are adhered to with the same mindset and understanding of OBA in prior projects, which is about achieving output of latrine/water rather than broader system outcomes of private sector engagement. This is distinctly different to the intention and assumption that OBA as the mechanism for the government to bring in private sector in the long term. The consequence of viewing OBA as short term results based reward system is the focus on achieving outputs, which alongside a centralised decision making, results in fixed rather than adaptable implementation (see above in 5.1). Further, because WOBA offers universal products across all provinces leveraging the existing WU structure and political position, it has provided the PC and WU legitimacy and effectiveness in transferring information down the chains of authority.

The concept of partnership used in WOBA can be said to fall within the idea of a shared understanding about the purpose of the intervention rather than the 'collaborative arrangements in which actors from the state, market, and civil society are involved in a non-hierarchical process through which these actors strive for a sustainability role'.²⁸ Although many partners are involved in WOBA implementation, the link between them typify one-way information flow and decision-making (see 4.2). There is cooperation between organisations to serve the shared view that WOBA's main purpose is delivering WASH rather than seeing WOBA as a forum for resource-efficient, outcome-effective and inclusive-progressive form of policy delivery as intended in the concept of

²⁸ Glasbergen, P. (2007). "Setting the Scene: The Partnership Paradigm in the Making," Chapters, in: Pieter Glasbergen & Frank Biermann & Arthur P.J. Mol (ed.), *Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development*, chapter 1, Edward Elgar Publishing.

public private partnership for sustainable development.²⁹ WOBA certainly has the potential for multi-stakeholder partnerships that involve government, businesses, and NGOs to deliver innovation solutions. However, it would need a different kind of design and activities if it wants to pursue this aim. Further, the rationale for PPP in the development context is that the private sector is intrinsically more innovative and efficient than the public sector. This is not the context of WOBA and Vietnam where private sector sanitation suppliers and water scheme operators are emerging with weak infrastructure, technologies, business skills and financing capabilities.

5.3.2 *Networks and communications*

According to the survey with partners, the nature and quality of networks and nature and quality of communication within the WOBA partnership structure is high. It appears that the ongoing meeting with the partner groups are adequate given the existing relationships that they have with the partners which is to ensure the implementation is carried out. The connections between individuals, units, services, and hierarchies are formal, tangible and strong insofar as they align with existing government structure and the organization they belong to. The social capital that these individuals and organisations have appear to be high in terms of shared vision of WOBA and information sharing about WOBA implementation.

One component of social capital is the internal bonding of individuals within one organisation. In this regard, the WU has a collective duty to support women and disadvantaged households, which has afforded the WU members with a shared commitment toward delivering WASH for the marginalised communities. Their working under the PC and WU at all levels oblige their actions rather than empower or enable autonomy to carry out the WASH activities (see 4.4). The relationships between these WU members and other partners appear to be less important to WOBA's implementation effectiveness because they were already established before WOBA. Rather, for the WU women, it is their individual attributes or skills and knowledge learned from WOBA participation that are contributing factors to implementation effectiveness. This will be further discussed in the next section.

The communication to orientate partners about WOBA seems clear at all levels in relation to subsidies and target beneficiaries. However, deeper understanding about WOBA and its underlying principles of PPP for system strengthening using a market based approach is missed at the village level or unacknowledged due to the WU's political mandate which aims for a 'socialist' rather than market approach. The issue of staff turnover could be a factor, but nevertheless it means more effort is required to ensure clear and consistent communication between provinces and at all levels of partnership.

5.3.3 *Culture*

The communication culture and political culture of Vietnam is strong within WOBA because of its partnership structure, which carries gender norms into WOBA. As 4.4 highlights, the mindset of partners about WASH being an issue for women may have allowed for the WU to occupy the role of mobilizers, but there is a long way to go in terms of changing the views and practices that see men as champions for issues that advance or benefit women. WOBA has seen an increase of the WU's

²⁹ Stewart, A. and Gray, T. (2009). *The governance of water and sanitation in Africa. Achieving sustainable development through partnerships*. p. 26. I.B. Tauris Publishers: London.

reputation, but it seems that they continue to encounter patriarchal attitudes in the workplace and in their work (see 4.4). Findings in this evaluation suggest that barriers to women leadership is a combination of the social norms, political mandate of the WU and their position under the PC, mindset of partners that WASH is a women issue and therefore WOBA prioritises the needs of women. WOBA has provided some training on gender equality, but it appears that the gendered view of WASH is relatively stable and socially constructed based on norms of practices by organisations with traditional views about women and WASH. Further inquiry is needed to understand about gender norms and women empowerment. WOBA must endeavour to incorporate gender equality considerations explicitly in its activities and report on the kinds of gender equality outcomes in a more meaningful way during implementation.

5.4 Implementation climate

According to CFIR, implementation climate refers to the absorptive capacity for change, shared receptivity of involved individuals to the intervention, and the extent to which their participation is rewarded, supported and expected within their organisation. It is clear that the WOBA's subsidy schemes act as reward system which has enabled targets of WOBA to be reached. It could be argued that these rewards are a critical factor in WOBA implementation success in relation to WASH services delivery for target beneficiaries. Other constructs that help to explain the influence of implementation climate to WOBA's effectiveness should be noted.

Tension for change. WOBA aligns very well with national policies, and the partners involved in the focus groups also perceived the situation of rural marginalised communities as needing WASH services enabled through WOBA.

Compatibility. There is a tangible fit between the meaning and values attached to the WOBA intervention by those involved and they also align with individuals, at least the WU and private sector operators in terms of values and perceived risks and community needs. As discussed so far, the use of partnership structure that follows the political governance structure allow for easy fit of WOBA with the government work flows and system, which WOBA seeks to maintains rather than changes it. The common idea of better WASH outcomes for marginalised communities is the common ambition of all individuals and partner organisations. This is something that they understood very well even if they did not know the name 'WOBA' or EMW.

Relative priority. Because the partnership functions at the everyday local government system, the priority of WOBA fits within the partner organisation and individual's perception of the importance of its implementation. Individuals share the value and mission of WOBA because they align with those of the upper level of authority which allow them to cooperate in the implementation.

Less is understood about the relative priority of WOBA in empowering women which again reflects the norms in these organisations where there are conflicting views between the WU women and their partner representatives or between the idea of 'market' versus 'social support'. In either case, WOBA is perceived to be more conducive for women actors because of a gendered view and the priority of the WU's position forces a 'following the leaders' orders'.

Organizational incentives and rewards. It is not clear whether these incentives were considered as organisation reward and enabling factor for this intervention and in the long term. The increased

respect of the WU is a clear marker of organisational reward which is perceived at the community level as well as at the organisation level (see above).

Goals and feedback. It seems that the goals set are the targets of latrine constructions for WU and water connections for the water operators. For some WU, this has created an obligation and pressure to deliver rather than empowerment through autonomy and decision making. For the water operators, this has led to a number of challenges due to a range of economic, technical, and community issues.

Learning climate. There is a focus on capacity building in WOBA with many trainings delivered, of which disability training and water safety planning training seem to be impactful and has potential for enable behavioural change. However, without baseline information and M&E of these activities, it is not clear how skills development, learning and growth are acquired or applied in and beyond WOBA. The focus of training if only to deliver WASH products would miss the opportunity and encouragement of new methods of mobilisation, latrine construction and reflective thinking. This may not be important for latrine or water targets but necessary for gender and social inclusion outcomes of WOBA.

Readiness of implementation. As mentioned, the partners involved appear to be committed to WOBA. EMW has engaged at the highest level of government responsible which can effectively engage the local authorities. The idea of leadership engagement in WOBA is evident as the current leaders and managers of local government involved have a direct influence on the implementation process. It seems much less evident in term of women empowerment or women leadership despite the recruitment of women to the role of WU. The WU members have been provided with information and knowledge through the orientation and training workshops. The partner survey has also indicated that there is adequate shared materials and resource, although this area also reported less agreement compared with other aspects of the partnership. This suggests that for some partner organisations in provinces that EMW have not established long term partnership or those with high WU staff turnover, there must be continued effort in information provision and knowledge transfer.

5.5 Characteristics of individuals

5.5.1 *Knowledge and beliefs about WOBA*

At the partner level, there is an understanding of the WOBA project, its OBA modality, and shared value among government partners about access to improved sanitation and improved water for poor and disadvantaged communities. Private sector operators have a good understanding of WOBA and also believed that subsidising costs of WASH products is important for delivering WASH for disadvantaged communities. At the community level, there was universal appreciation for the subsidy and thought that the subsidy is state provided. Almost all beneficiaries interviewed were not aware of the name 'WOBA', 'EMW', 'WfW' or 'DFAT'. Their knowledge about health benefits from WASH services and affordability were the critical factors to decide to build latrine.

At the WU level, knowledge about subsidy schemes were consistent across provinces although the village WU did not consider it OBA to be a market approach or that they could have a role as market agents. Those at the commune level were more aware although as with the village WU and did not view OBA as a market based approach. Their motivation to participate in WOBA is primarily political duty to serve the disadvantaged or work obligation because they are members of the WU. Some were motivated by acquired knowledge about WASH and health and opportunity to transfer that to

households through mobilisation activities. Most also seem to have a sense of self efficacy as they achieved their mobilisation targets.

5.5.2 *Gender identities and roles*

As discussed throughout this report, placement of WU women as mobiliser of WOBA has the potential to effect gender empowerment in terms of human capital through access of training, although a wider range of topics such as financial management and literacy, project management, leadership that are tailored to needs and level of education would offer more sustainable capacity building particularly if the strategy is to empower these women as market-based OBA agents. For the majority of WU women interviewed, WOBA has not engendered a shift in gender identity or gender role. They continued to experience the traditional view of women as bearers of domestic responsibilities and thus suitable for communicating about WASH. As discussed earlier, the lack of representation of WU women in the WOBA design, and that lack of oversight by and feedback mechanisms from the WU to EMW misses opportunities to understand challenges and enablers for their meaningful participation. The implementation process that leverages existing structures ignore power dynamics within these structures and thus lack opportunities for discussion on gender norms, barriers and advantages to women's participation before and during each of WU's WOBA activities. Willingness and space for them to talk about socially imposed gender roles could increase their understanding of inhibiting normative assumptions.

Financial incentive is not a motivational factor for these WU women because the incentives are too small even to cover travelling costs and moreover, they carry out WOBA activities because of their collective duty of the WU. In this regard, WOBA has not provided them additional economic opportunities or increased access to and control of their income or ability to work outside their normal job.

At the household level, WOBA has brought about physical empowerment through improved access to sanitation and clean water. Economic empowerment seems limited, and in fact, taking up WASH could be a disabling factor for economic empowerment because of additional costs and sacrifice of basic sustenance to purchase latrines. WOBA aims to improve household women's decision making in taking up WASH, it is difficult to assess this without base line data or understanding of their decision making in other household issues.

Overall, access to WASH or work in WASH can be productive factors for women's empowerment but cannot alone help to grow subsistence households or enterprises for women who face multiple constraints. The training and support that WOBA aims to provide in its capacity building of the WU as market agents or improve mobilisation skills must also aim to shift towards making these skills work better for women. This means WOBA has to engage with not only women but with men especially those at the decision making level and the whole communities to overcome barriers to women's empowerment, and to recognise that women WU cannot be empowered without addressing or contesting the issue of gender norms in WASH.

5.6 Process

Insights into the effectiveness of the implementation process are restricted by a lack of a precise and robust baseline data and indicators relating to Outcome 1, 2 and 4. In order to produce better insights into the effectiveness of the tools and mechanisms used in WOBA, it would be necessary to

have a comprehensive and precise baseline against which the effects of the intervention and the implementation could be measured. However, there are some lessons learnt in relation to WOBA's planning and processes and how they influenced the implementation effectiveness.

5.6.1 ToC and planning

WOBA has a ToC that states the strategies and expected outcomes under five overarching outcomes. However, as a ToC, it does not have log-frame or results chain that relate objectives, activities, outputs and results in a systematic and logical way, thus difficult to understand the logic or relationship between the activities and their outcomes and how they relate to what is stated in the ToC. It appears that the ToC was developed from a desire to describe and explore change. However, the assumptions about the underlying conditions or resources that need to exist for planned change to occur are not clear. For example, what does gender empowerment for Outcome 3 and 4 hypothesise implicitly or explicitly about the women (households or WU) as the subject of an intervention, and how does that interaction with other problems like WASH needs, gender norms, human capital, economic opportunities as determinants of gender empowerment and its possible effects?

While the use of government structure to execute the implementation is a tactical step to achieve latrine outputs, it obscures a vision of system strengthening or explorations of which resources or conditions are necessary to affect any kind of change in respective institutions. For example, how do roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government partners change through their participation in WOBA within each organisation and in interacting with each other, and what are underlying problems that WOBA sees as needing to change in the system? Reliance on existing structure assumes the same set of conditions to sustain rather than envisioning an alternative situation and mapping a pathway for change. Likewise, the idea of sustainability in private sector engagement is mentioned in the ToC but the implementation focuses on output or supplies of latrine or water connections rather than mechanisms of sustainable delivery of WASH services. The concept of sustainability is unclear in terms of what WOBA sees as its goals and measures of success in the long term for example, business development, revenue stream, operational or technological, access to finance, or which mechanisms or tools can WOBA deploy to ensure the sustainability of private sector engagement in WASH. It is not clear from the ToC what WOBA assumes about different dimensions of sustainability (social, technical, environmental, financial) and how does WOBA then engage private sector beyond completion of certain number of latrines or water connections, but longevity in the already known hard to reach households and emerging private sector operators.

The lack of a logical framework and M&E processes and tools to assess implementation activities and their expected outcomes in the design of WOBA (see earlier discussion on intervention) poses challenges for the evaluation in terms of the quality of those activities and how they track towards expected outcomes. However, it could be argued that WOBA's ToC is organic in which its assumptions are backed by more general assumptions and more implicit theories of change and development, and understood more as theories *for* change rather than theories *of* change. In this way, the evaluation needs to take on additional theories and frameworks and resources to understand the quality of implementation activities and potentially what changes or outcomes can be reasonable expected. For this reason, this evaluation has drawn on partnership theory for sustainable development, and gender empowerment framework in development in addition to the

CFIR constructs of implementation science to guide the evaluation methodology and to formulate lessons learnt (see section 2 on framework and 3 on methodology).

5.6.2 *Process*

Even if WOBA applies an organic approach in ToC to design its activities, the process of WOBA in prioritising outputs as measures of success, could miss important elements of an inclusive approach. As highlighted in 4.3 and throughout this report, the reliance on the government's list of poor and near poor has excluded some people with WASH needs and experience poverty and created sense of being left behind. Although the work plan refers to tailored messaging for women in households and provision of loans to female led households, there is no evidence of this during interviews with the WUs. Although the WU members in their hygiene promotion activities were well aware of the need for adapting propaganda content, imagery and communication channels to households with different socioeconomic background and geolocations in order to ensure their engagement and knowledge acquisition, EMW must have oversight of the WU's communication activities with regular assessment and feedback. This can also be said about gender training at the partner level to consider the characteristics of individuals (role and position) and organisation (level of government), and a space for them to receive feedback and understand the constraints that the WU women encounter in making decision, having a voice, asserting their leadership. WOBA processes could prioritise learning and feedback as part of its training and provide the space for participants to draw on the experiences of each other and apply to other training components of WOBA.

Similarly, an organic approach to ToC should allow for tracking of progress towards goals and milestones that include not just verification of outputs but trialling of mobilisation techniques, testing in building different types of latrines that are adaptable to different needs, and allowing the WU to gain confidence on their mobilisation, and make autonomous decisions on appropriate WASH products through latrine construction and verification.

WOBA implementation can be viewed as effective in its manageable components (PMB meetings, mobilisation, latrine construction, subsidy payment) which are implemented consistently across communes visited. Although the idea of assigning responsibility to one agency such as the PC to govern operation and the WU to implement without EMW oversight can be a form of localisation, it could result in risks not identified and mitigated in a timely way and the need for adaptation not understood or implemented. There must be more documentation of program information and processes at the village, commune, district level, to provide adequate feedback at the various stages.

The range of partners involved directly and indirectly in WOBA's components mean that any evaluation of WOBA needs to be selective and the M&E framework needs to incorporate valid and reliable measures for all components. While the fidelity of the sanitation and water components can be ensured through WOBA's verification process and tracking outputs to ensure timeliness of these WASH outputs, the capacity building activities and degree of engagement of partners in these activities are more difficult to assess unless it is built into the results chain and M&E process. In addition, dedicated time for reflecting or debriefing before, during, and after each stage of implementation would promote shared learning and improvement along the way. Quantitative and qualitative feedback about the progress and quality of implementation accompanied by regular personnel and team debriefing about progress and experience is important.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

I. To improve effective, inclusive and systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation of WOBA implementation to track progress of activities and outcome indicators, partner accountability, and to identify effective route to achieve goals (all outcomes),

1. Develop and implement appropriate M&E processes and tools, appropriate for tracking GEDSI outcomes, system strengthening outcomes, and private sector outcomes alongside verification of outputs. Indicators and qualitative information should be collected at baseline, throughout implementation to allow EMW to capture and report on these kinds of outcomes (as WOBA desires) in a meaningful way and support adaptive management approaches to implementation results in a timely manner.
2. Collect baseline data for water at the province level not only by service area of the water schemes in WOBA. This would enable a periodical report on change in water coverage related to WOBA connections consistent with sanitation.
3. Latrines constructed and water connected should be analysed and reported using disaggregated data of gender and types of GESI category at household level and number of people.
4. EMW should continue to engage with the partners institutions with the explicit intention and action plans to contributing to institutional, individual and system changes. This could involve planning and agreeing on indicators of change to be tracked and reported by partners and synthesised by EMW and feedback to partners.
5. Regular check of actual disbursement of the PPC's cofinancing.

II. To ensure correct and complete information about WOBA is accessible to and understood clearly by all households (outcome 3 and 4),

6. Update the WOBA information package provided to households and WU with complete information about the WOBA project (EMW, DFAT as donor, WfW as the Fund, partners involved).
7. Use appropriate style and content in the information package that is tailored to female, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and illiterate people (e.g. animations, drawings, videos, or pictures).
8. Deliver the information package all WU members involved in the program as part of their onboarding to WOBA. This can be through creation of a video and part of onboarding mandatory documents that they have to read and delivered online.
9. Incorporate questions to test knowledge in the training video and WU participants must achieve a certain score to pass the WOBA knowledge test before they can start the mobilisation activities. Results of training should be part of EMW's regular monitoring and reporting process.
10. Develop information package on how to maintain latrine and use of piped water for the WU to educate households that have built latrine and water connections.

11. Regular monitoring of the WU's mobilisation activities by EWM to ensure tailored messaging is being delivered and households feedback on the communication content and communication. This could be integrated in the verification survey conducted by EMW. Results of these survey should be communicated to the WU and suggestion for improvement plan.

III. To promote private sector operators' engagement in sustainable ways (outcome 2),

12. Training and support provided to the enterprises based on their desires and needs. For example, mobilisation techniques and communication to households to be part of the water companies training. Training should be provided by business experts.
13. Deliver the training package to each of the private operator involved in the program as part of onboarding to WOBA. This can be through creation of a video or online learning.
14. Questions or test scenarios could be incorporated in the training and participants have to achieve a certain score to pass the financial knowledge and business skills test.
15. Conduct regular meetings with private sector operators to discuss barriers, enablers, opportunities and risks in their WOBA activities, and work with them to develop action plans to be implemented and regularly revised. This should be done by EWM in collaboration with the WU.
16. Record all private sector operators (sanitation companies, masons, construction materials shops, water companies, state owned enterprises) working in WOBA. Currently EMW is only keeping record of the suppliers who have signed formal partnerships to provide services for the non-poor households and the water companies.

IV. To enhance capacity building on climate change and adaptation for all WOBA's stakeholders (outcome 1),

17. Develop training package and workshops on climate change, adaptation measures in sanitation and water supply to deliver to all partners, not only the water companies and WU at national and provincial level. The training content should be developed by climate change experts in consultation with EMW.
18. Deliver targeted training (online or face to face) to partners, private sector operators, WU and households. Assessment of skills and knowledge should be conducted for the training and part of regular EMW's monitoring process.
19. Pilot of climate resilient safety planning should be documented, with results incorporated into the training package for all water schemes, and other partners.

V. To ensure inclusiveness, reach and engagement of women and disadvantaged households (outcome 3),

20. Review the use of WOBA's base line data to include both the government list of poor and GESI and other information gathered from the community. Alternatively, assess the risks of poor households being dropped off the list and mitigation measures.
21. Review appropriate designs and construction options for latrines in challenging environments and price range and support scheme that includes subsidy and other resources. A pilot can be conducted for the prototype and revised scheme.

22. Incorporate feedback of beneficiaries about quality of service and products, and experience of WOBA in the verification surveys and use their feedback to improve and adapt the implementation processes.
23. Deliver WASH promotion in a targeted way to ensure women can access them, for example not at the time they have to fulfil domestic duties; information on hygiene practices is not the same as information on water filters effectiveness or water testing therefore should be delivered differently; identify networks that women trust or part of to deliver information in addition to the WU and female volunteers.
24. Continue to deliver awareness raising activities on WASH and health to households even if the households have already built latrine or connected to piped water. These activities should be delivered in a targeted way and appropriate communication channels to ensure women, persons with disabilities, elderly people can access them.
25. EMW should oversee the WU's promotion activities and mobilisation activities and provide regular feedback from households.

VI. To promote gender transformative mindset among partners and improve gender empowerment (outcome 4),

26. Incorporate two-way information sharing through a forum for the WU, WASH experts and women households to share their knowledge about WASH related issues, and allow them to know and be part of different steps in the WASH service value chain, discuss challenges encountered and come up with solutions for themselves. This would enable the women to have ownership in the activities, have a sense of decision making and leadership of their activities and voice.
27. Identify challenges and enablers for the WU as market agents or mobilisers which affect their ability to raise their ambitions in WOBA and in the WASH sector.
28. Training and support provided to the WU based on their desires and needs in market operations and market agents. Training should be provided by business experts and social enterprises.
29. Incorporate the WU in the design, process and feedback at each stage of WOBA processes e.g. at baseline data, at mobilisation, at latrine verification, etc.
30. Discuss with the WU about appropriate reward or recognition of the time and energy that they spent on mobilisation and try to include that in WOBA.
31. Identify existing supportive structure for gender empowerment within the existing structures that WOBA leverages and facilitate discussion that includes both men and women on gender norms, barriers and advantages to WU and female volunteers' participation before and during a WOBA activity.
32. Provide leadership skills to the WU in a targeted training and mentoring program to promote collective leadership and support the sustainability of their WASH activities.
33. Maintain the level of training provided to WU volunteers and make sure it does not add to unpaid work and can include range of skills beyond WASH like business skills, conflict management, leadership, climate change, project management. This adds to their capacity of diverse skills, confidence, self-efficacy.

34. All capacity building activities should be evaluated as part of EMW's monitoring framework and include quantitative and qualitative indicators for analysis of acquired knowledge, skills, attitude and other forms of change impact assessment. Results should be communicated back to the WU with follow up activities.

VII. To improve WOBA's knowledge and sharing on gender and inclusive WASH and contribute to global evidence base (outcome 5),

35. Develop and disseminate learning notes and policy briefs in English and Vietnamese from various studies conducted by EWM (including this report) to WOBA's partners stakeholders, and Vietnam's WASH networks.
36. Follow up with partners through regular meetings or survey to assess how they are using these knowledge products and what change has taken place as a result of applying these knowledge products.

VIII. To gain further insights about the emerging findings from this MTR, further studies should be conducted,

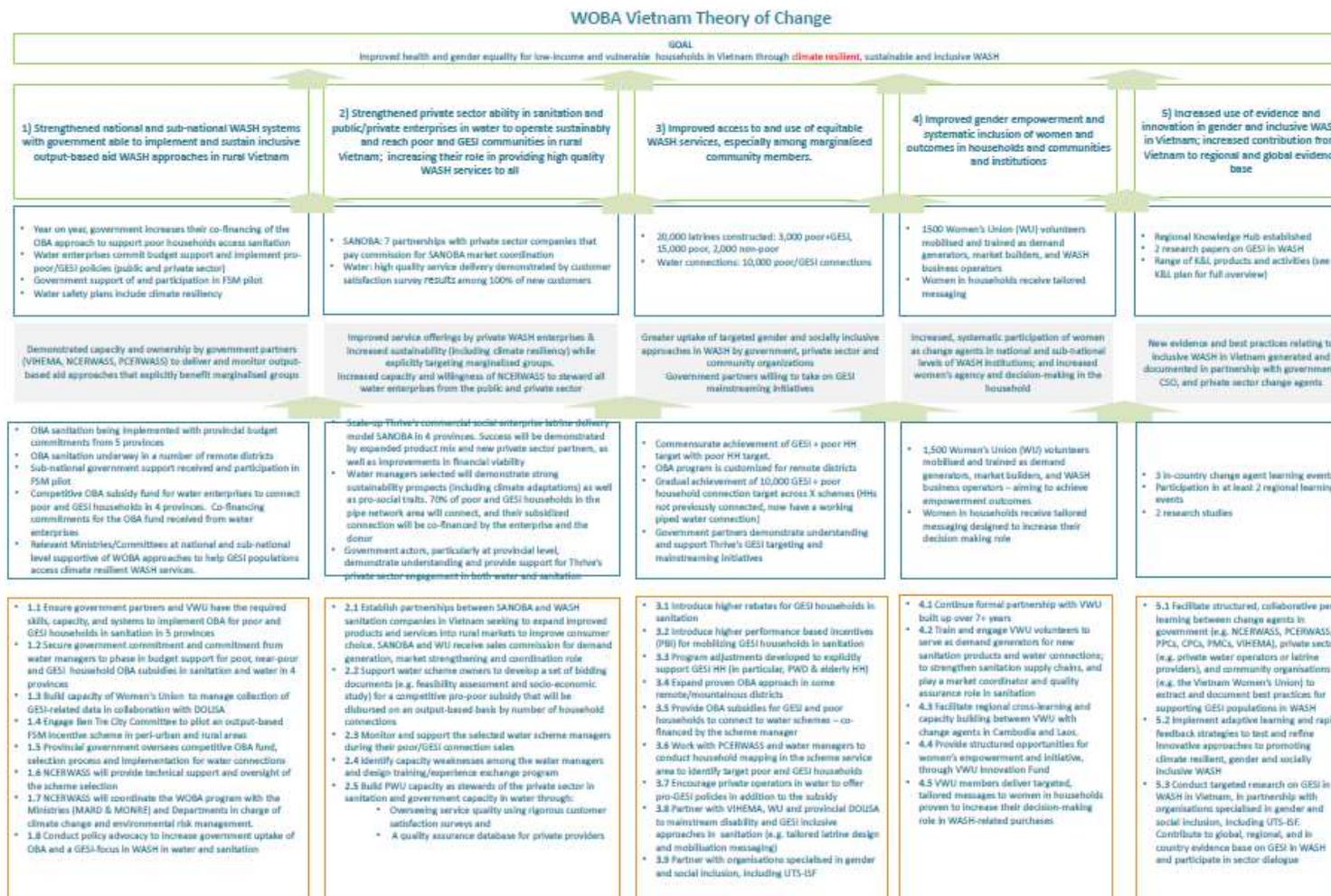
37. Conduct a study on gender equality and women's empowerment with the WU and other partners to 1) assess the effectiveness of WOBA in advancing equality and women's empowerment, 2) contribution of different actors to the process of change, and 3) identify areas where capacity building is needed among partners.
38. Conduct a study on financial health of WOBA's private sector sanitation suppliers and water operators to assess and identify factors contributing to economic viability. The study should look at the non-poor households' experiences with WOBA as this group was excluded from this evaluation.
39. Conduct an evaluation of the climate resilient water safety plan initiative to understand the results and outcomes of this initiative and identify areas that require further support in relation to climate change and adaptive capacity of water operators.

ANNEX 1. Standard 5: Independent Evaluation Plans³⁰

- 5.1 The evaluation plan is based on a collaborative approach
- 5.2 The primary intended users of the evaluation are clearly identified, and their evaluation needs are described
- 5.3 The purpose and/or objectives of the evaluation are stated
- 5.4 A summary is provided to orient the reader to the overall evaluation design
- 5.5 Limitations or constraints on the evaluation are described (e.g. time frame; resources; available data; political sensitivities)
- 5.6 The Key Evaluation Questions are supplemented by detailed descriptions and/or sub questions
- 5.7 It is clear which questions are considered to be of higher priority and are expected to provide the most important information
- 5.8 There is sufficient flexibility to be able to address important unexpected issues as they emerge
- 5.9 The methods to collect data are described for each question (or related questions)
- 5.10 The proposed data collection methods are appropriate for the questions posed
- 5.11
Triangulation of data collection methods is proposed to strengthen the confidence in the findings
- 5.12 The sampling strategy is clear and appropriate for the evaluation questions posed
- 5.13 The plan describes how data will be processed and analysed
- 5.14 The plan identifies ethical issues and how they will be addressed
- 5.15 The process for making judgments is clear
- 5.16 Approaches to enhance the utilization of findings are outlined (if this has been requested in the terms of reference)
- 5.17 The evaluation plan provides guidance on scheduling. The final schedule (if attached) reflects adequate time to answer the posed evaluation questions
- 5.18 The allocation of evaluation tasks to team members is clearly described (i.e. data collection, processing and reporting)
- 5.19 The plan for publication of the final evaluation report is documented

³⁰ DAFT Standard 5: Independent Evaluation Plan

ANNEX 2: WOBA Vietnam Theory of Change



ANNEX 3: Evaluation focus areas, key evaluation questions, data methods and analysis

Evaluation focus areas of inquiry	Key evaluation questions and scope	End of program outcomes	Data collection method	Data analysis
Context	<p>1.To what extent has WOBA aligned with the Vietnam government’s policies in WASH in rural Vietnam?</p> <p>5 ii. Is the approach of co-financing leading towards institutionalisation of OBA approach in government systems?</p> <p>7i. What factors contribute to WOBA’s impacts and what is likely to undermine sustainability of positive changes?</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Survey</p>	<p>Qualitative content analysis</p> <p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Comparative analysis</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis</p> <p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Descriptive statistics</p>
Partnership and systems strengthening	2i. Are the program’s governance structure and implementation arrangements appropriate and proportionate to the outcomes sought?	1,2,3,4	<p>Focus groups</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Survey</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Descriptive statistics</p>

	<p>2iv. Has WOBA allocated enough resources and technical expertise allocated to implement appropriate capacity development strategies that are responsive to the needs of different beneficiaries and stakeholders?</p> <p>2v. To what extent do partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries know about WOBA and its mode of market-based OBA delivery?</p> <p>7i. What factors contribute to WOBA's impacts and what is likely to undermine sustainability of positive changes?</p>		<p>Document review Interviews Focus groups Survey</p>	<p>Qualitative content analysis Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics</p>
<p>Empowering women by building capacity and profile of Women's Union</p>	<p>4.To what extent has the WOBA's approach to gender empowerment through the involvement of WU has resulted in greater understanding of gender issues and improved gender empowerment for WU and other stakeholders?</p> <p>4i. To what extent has there been greater understanding of gender issues and women's empowerment among partners and stakeholders?</p> <p>4ii. To what extent has WOBA effectively engaged the WU in delivering WASH services for the poor and GESI communities?</p> <p>4ii.To what extent has the WU women been empowered to become change agents in their communities and leaders in the WASH sector?</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Interviews Focus group Monitoring information</p>	<p>Thematic analysis Comparative analysis</p>

	4iv. How has gender analysis been incorporated in the monitoring, verification, and learning activities?			
Inclusive access for poor and GESI households	<p>3.To what extent is WOBA’s approach inclusive and is reaching the poor and marginalised communities in rural Vietnam to address their WASH needs?</p> <p>3i. Have the OBA subsidies been effective in reaching the poor and GESI-poor households in both sanitation and water supply?</p> <p>3ii. To what extent is there ownership of the results among the program’s targeted beneficiaries, particularly the poor/GESI households?</p>	3	<p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus group</p> <p>Monitoring information</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Comparative analysis</p>

ANNEX 4: List of participants

1. List of beneficiaries

Fullname	Sex	Province	District	Commune	Type of Households
Trần Thị Mận (con là Đỗ Thị Yến)	Female	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Thanh	GESI
Phan Thị Đào	Female	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Thanh	Poor/Near poor
Trịnh Thị Thảo	Female	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Thanh	Poor/Near poor
Mai Thị Kim Tuyến	Female	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Thanh	GESI
Nguyễn Thị Thắm (chồng Nguyễn Đình Kế)	Female	Thanh Hoa	Hoàng Hoa	Hoàng Hải	GESI
Lê Văn Hải	Male	Thanh Hoa	Hoàng Hoa	Hoàng Hải	GESI
Trương Ngọc Bàn	Male	Thanh Hoa	Hoàng Hoá	Hoàng Hải	Sanitation
Lê Thị Sửu	Female	Thanh Hoa	Hoàng Hoá	Hoàng Hải	Sanitation
Trần Thị Ninh (vợ Dương Đình Chiến)	Female	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Tân	GESI
Mai Trọng Dinh	Male	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Tân	Sanitation
Trần Đình Cảnh	Male	Nghe An	Tân Kỳ	Nghĩa Dũng	Poor/Near poor
Nguyễn Thị Lý	Female	Nghe An	Tân Kỳ	Nghĩa Dũng	Poor/Near poor
Đặng Xuân Hùng	Male	Nghe An	Tân Kỳ	Nghĩa Dũng	Poor/Near poor
Nguyễn Thị Hương	Female	Nghe An	Tân Kỳ	Nghĩa Dũng	Poor/Near poor
Lô Thị Thanh	Female	Nghe An	Anh Sơn	Tho Sơn	GESI
Lê Thị Trí	Female	Nghe An	Anh Sơn	Tho Sơn	GESI
Nguyễn Thị Tâm (vợ Phan Văn Trầm)	Male	Nghe An	Yên Thành	Trung Thành	Poor/Near poor
Hoàng Công Chu	Male	Nghe An	Yên Thành	Trung Thành	Poor/Near poor
Đặng Trọng Hùng	Male	Nghe An	Yên Thành	Trung Thành	Poor/Near poor
Võ Văn Tú	Male	Nghe An	Yên Thành	Trung Thành	Poor/Near poor
Đặng Thị Lệ	Female	Ben Tre	Giong Trom	Bình Hoa	Poor/Near poor
Huỳnh Văn Hiệp + Huỳnh Thị Bội	A couple	Ben Tre	Giong Trom	Bình Hoa	Poor/Near poor
Trần Thị Lang	Female	Ben Tre	Giồng Trôm	Bình Hoà	Poor/Near poor
Nguyễn Thị Á	Female	Ben Tre	Giồng Trôm	Bình Hoà	GESI

Nguyễn Thị Tánh	Female	Ben Tre	Ba Tri	An Thủy	Poor/Near poor
Võ Thị Nhớ	Female	Ben Tre	Ba Tri	An Thủy	Poor/Near poor
Nguyễn Thị Kim Loan	Female	Ben Tre	Thanh Phu	An Thanh	GESI
Trần Quốc Cần	Male	Ben Tre	Thanh Phu	An Thanh	Poor/Near poor
Lê Văn Khoản (con rể Cao Tấn Dũng interviewed)	Male	Ben Tre	Thạnh Phú	An Thanh	Poor/Near poor
Nguyễn Thanh Trọn	Male	Ben Tre	Thạnh Phú	An Thanh	Poor/Near poor

2. List of WU women interviewed

Fullname	Position	Province	District	Commune
Phạm Thị Thủy	Chairwoman of CWU	Thanh Hoa	Hoang Hoa	Hoang Hai
Vũ Thị Nhung	Vice of CWU	Thanh Hoa	Hoàng Hoá	Hoàng Hải
Mai Thị Dân	Head of village WU	Thanh Hoa	Nga Son	Nga Tân
Mai Thị Chính	Head of village WU	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Tân
Trần Thị Thơm	Chairwoman of CWU	Thanh Hoa	Nga Son	Nga Thanh
Nguyễn Thị Sâm	Head of village WU	Thanh Hoa	Nga Sơn	Nga Thanh
Nguyễn Thị Lệ Thủy	Head of village WU	Nghe An	Tan Ky	Nghia Dung
Đặng Thị Thảo	Chairwoman of CWU	Nghe An	Tân Kỳ	Nghĩa Dũng
Lương Thị Lam	Chairwoman of CWU	Nghe An	Anh Sơn	Tho Sơn
Cao Thị Bích Nguyệt	Head of village WU	Nghe An	Anh Sơn	Tho Sơn
Nguyễn Thị Danh	Head of village WU	Nghe An	Anh Sơn	Thọ Sơn
Nguyễn Thị Hà	Chairwoman of CWU	Nghe An	Yen Thanh	Trung Thanh
Trần Ngọc Yến	Head of village WU	Ben Tre	Giong Trom	Bình Hoa
Võ Thị Mỹ Duyên	Chairwoman of CWU	Ben Tre	Giồng Trôm	Bình Hoà

Trần Thanh Kỳ	Chairwoman of CWU	Ben Tre	Ba Tri	An Thuy
PHạm Thị Hải	Head of village WU	Ben Tre	Ba Tri	An Thuy
Võ Thị Thu Oanh	Chairwoman of CWU	Ben Tre	Thanh Phu	An Thanh
Phạm Thị Vô	Head of village WU	Ben Tre	Thạnh Phú	An Thanh

3. List of private operators

Name	Sex	Position	Organization/Address	Province	District	Commune
Cao Hữu Mỹ	Male	Vice Director	Hoa Son Water Supply Company	Nghe An	Do Luong	Hoa Son
Nguyễn Văn Sơn	Male	Director	Tan A Dai Thanh - Southern Region	Ben Tre		
Hà Văn Phúc	Male	Mason	Tan My village	Ben Tre	Mo Cay Bac	Tan Binh

4. List of participants in focus group discussions

Fullname	Sex	Position	Organization/Address	Province	FGD
Nguyễn Thị Xuân	Female	Vice Director	CCTT-NCERWASS		National FGD
Nguyễn Thị Kinh Oanh	Female	Vice Head	Family and Social Affairs Department-NWU		
Nguyễn Phương Nhung	Female	Staff	Family and Social Affairs Department-NWU		
Trần Văn Hiến	Male	Staff	CCTT-NCERWASS		
Nguyễn Huy Cường	Male	Vice head	Community Health Division - VIHEMA		
Nguyễn Văn Cử	Male	Vice Director	DRD		
Lê Văn Nghĩa	Male	Staff	PCERWASS	Thanh Hoa	Provincial FGD in Thanh Hoa
Đinh Ngọc Quý	Male	Vice director	CDC	Thanh Hoa	

Đặng Thành Chung	Male	Vice director	PCERWASS	Thanh Hoa	
Nguyễn Thanh Phương	Male	Head	Health Care Division - CDC	Thanh Hoa	
Lê Thị Trang	Female	Chairwoman	Hoang Hoa DWU	Thanh Hoa	
Tạ Thị Hồng Nhung	Female	Staff	PWU	Thanh Hoa	
Nguyễn THỊ Hương	Female	Chairwoman	Nga Son DWU	Thanh Hoa	District FGD in Thanh Hoa
Trịnh Thị Yến	Female	Vice chairwoman	Nga Son DWU	Thanh Hoa	
Lê thị Kim Chung	Female	Vice head	Communication Division - PWU	Nghe An	Provincial FGD in Nghe An (water component)
Đậu Nguyễn Xuân Linh	Male	Head	Planning and communication Division - PCERWASS	Nghe An	
Phạm Duy Kỳ	Male	Director	PCERWASS	Nghe An	
Cao Hữu Mỹ	Male	Vice Director	Hoa Son Water Supply Company	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Mạnh Hùng	Male	Head	Long Thanh Water Treatment Plant	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Thị Hòa	Female	Chairwoman	Yen Thanh DWU	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Thị Hoa	Female	Vice chairwoman	Yen Thanh DWU	Nghe An	
Thái Thị Hiền	Female	Chairwoman	Do Luong DWU	Nghe An	
Lê Thị Kim Chung	Female	Vice head	Communication Division - PWU	Nghe An	Provincial FGD in Nghe An (Sanitation components)
Hoàng Thị Thu Hiền	Female	Staff	CDC	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Thị Thanh Nhân	Female	Chairwoman	Quy Hop DWU	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Thị Phương Hà	Female	Chairwoman	Tan Ky DWU	Nghe An	
Nguyễn Văn Sơn	Male	Director	Tan A Dai Thanh - Southern Region	Ben Tre	Provincial FGD in Ben Tre (sanitation components)
Trần Ngọc Diệp	Female	Staff	PWU	Ben Tre	
Lê Hồng Vũ	Male	Staff	CDC	Ben Tre	
Dương Thị Hồng Cúc	Female	Vice chairwoman	Giong Trom DWU	Ben Tre	
Nguyễn Thị Cẩm Nhung	Female	Staff	Mo Cay Bac DWU	Ben Tre	
Nguyễn Thanh Dung	Male	Head	Tan Phong Water Treatment Plant	Ben Tre	Provincial FGD in Ben Tre (Water components)
Nguyễn Thị Bích Phương	Female	Staff	PCERWASS	Ben Tre	
Trần Thị Thủy	Female	Chairwoman	Thanh Phu DWU	Ben Tre	
Trần Thị Kim Huyền	Female	Chairwoman	Ba Tri DWU	Ben Tre	

Đặng Thị Hạnh	Female	Staff	NID Water Treatment Plant	Ben Tre	
Võ Ái Hòa	Female	Vice chairwoman	PWU	Ben Tre	
Lê Thị Kim Thúy	Female	Staff	PWU	Ben Tre	

ANNEX 5: Evaluation Schedule

MTR Field work: 15 March – 15 April 2021

Draft Report: 22 July 2021

Final Report: 6 August 2021

Deliverable	Person in charge	Time frame
TOR for recruiting consultants	Lien Pham, Hanh Nguyen	Dec 2020
Recruiting consultants	Lien Pham	4 March 2021
Sampling for field work	Program team – partners, WU members & private sector Lien Pham – beneficiaries	15 Feb – 12 Mar 2021
Data collection instruments	Lien Pham	Feb 2021
Field work data collection	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa with support from Ha Thi Minh Thang	15 Mar – 15 April 2021
Transcribe interviews and FGDs	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa	7 May 2021
Data analysis of FGDs, interviews with beneficiaries, WUs, private sector operators and CWA	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa, Lien Pham	8 May – 15 June 2021
Data analysis of partner survey responses	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa	16 June 2021
Collect monitoring indicators	M&E Vietnam team	18 June – 22 July 2021
Review of Vietnam policy documents	Khanh Hoa Nguyen	10 – 12 Mar 2021
Comparative analysis of all phases and monitoring indicators	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa, Lien Pham	15 – 30 June 2021
Draft report	Lien Pham/ Khanh Hoa Nguyen	22 July 2021
Field work findings presentation	Khanh Hoa Nguyen, Hoang Hoa/ Lien Pham	22 July, 29 July 2021
Final report	Lien Pham	6 August 2021
Dissemination of final report	Lien Pham, Hanh Nguyen	6 August 2021

ANNEX 6: Key WOBA Vietnam program documents for Phase 1 document review

- Decree No.117 /2007/ND-CP on clean water production, supply and consumption
- Decree No.124/2011/ND-CP on amendment and addition to a number of articles of the GoV's Decree No.117 /2007/ND-CP on clean water production, supply and consumption
- Decree No.57/2018/ND-CP on mechanisms and policies to encourage enterprises to invest in agriculture and rural areas
- Decision No.131/2009/QD-TTg on a number of preferential policies to encourage investment, management and exploitation of rural clean water supply works
- Decision No. 543/QD-BNN-KHCN is on the Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and vision to 2050
- Decision 6105/QD-UBND.NN on approval of the rural WASH plan in Nghe An to 2020 and orientation to 2030, that was issued in 2015 by the Nghe An PPC

ANNEX 7: Phase 2 Focus Group Discussion question guide

Introduce yourself to the group.

Explain the purpose of the focus group discussion: To seek opinions of WOBA partners and stakeholders about WOBA's partnership approach and processes.

Explain the focus group activities: Two components

1. Focus group discussions. You will ask some questions and the group will respond. About 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours.

2. After the focus group discussion ends, participants will be invited to complete a short survey (paper or digital) individually. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete

Set some rules for focus group discussion: Take turn to talk. Respect each other's point of view. Make the participants feel comfortable. Assure them that their responses will help to improve the program, and there are no right or wrong answers. Frank and respectful opinions are valued.

1. Please introduce yourself to the group. Prompt:

- Which department are you from?
- How long have they been involved with WOBA?

2. a. How would you describe WOBA or its implementation? Prompt: is it OBA, results-based development program, charity to support the poor etc.

b. Is there a strong need for WOBA? Why or why not? How does WOBA fill current gaps in the WASH sector?

3. a. WOBA operates on a partnership structure which each partner (you) plays an important role in. What are some of the uniqueness of WOBA's partnership approach?

b. What are the advantages or disadvantages of the WOBA partnership approach compared to other programs that you know in relation to WASH service delivery?

4. How has this partnership structure helped you and your organisation in implementing/mobilising WOBA? Prompt the group to think about:

- Their activities in WOBA e.g. in terms of baseline data collection, funding, mobilising, results checking?
- Their leadership role in WOBA processes and committees
- Their decision making in WOBA in the partnership process. Is it shared decision making or more directive?
- Are there any bottle necks or missing stakeholder groups that could allow for better decision making?

5. How does this partnership approach contribute to policy & strategy in WASH in Vietnam?

Prompt:

- In relation to NAP 1 and 2
 - In relation to PAP 1 & 2
 - In relation to national COVID 19 response strategy
6. How does the WOBA partnership processes promote roles and responsibilities between government departments and the private sector operators?
 7. Do you feel your partners and colleagues in your organisation who are involved with WOBA share the values of OBA and market-based WASH programs?
 8. Do you feel this partnership approach and its processes inclusive? In which way are the processes inclusive? Prompt:
 - bringing different perspectives into dialogues
 - selecting poor/GESI households to the program
 9. One WOBA's main processes is providing training and information to help partners gain knowledge and skills in implementing WOBA. How has the training met your needs? Prompt:
 - Your knowledge and attitude about gender equality and social inclusion in general
 - Your knowledge about health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and impact on health
 - Your knowledge and skills in delivering OBA in WASH for poor/GESI households
 - Your belief in your own capacity and capacity of your organisation to deliver WASH services to achieve WOBA goals
 10. What are some challenges you have encountered in the WOBA partnership processes? Are these challenges particular to WOBA project or generally in the sector?
 11. a. What are some ways that WOBA has met the needs and vulnerabilities of poor GESI households are met through WOBA? Prompt: E.g. improved access to services? Reduced wait times? Help with self-management? Reduced travel time and expense?
 - b. Should WOBA be changed in any way to better meet the needs and vulnerabilities of poor/GESI households?
 - c. What kind of policies, regulations, or guidelines do you think (at national or subnational levels) influence the ability of WOBA to reach poor GESI households in the long term?

Focus group questions end. Thank all the participants for participating in the focus group.

Distribute the survey (paper or link) and ask them to complete the survey. Collect the paper survey.

Thank all participants for completing the survey.

ANNEX 8: Semi-structured interview guide for interviews with beneficiaries

Introduce yourself to the interviewee. Explain the purpose of the interview: to find out how WOBA has helped to meet their needs in WASH. Make them feel comfortable, and assure them that their responses will help to improve the program, and there is no right or wrong answers. We value frank and honest opinions.

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your family. Prompt:
 - How long have you lived here?
 - What do you do to earn a wage?
 - How many people do you support with your wage?
 - Who lives here with you? Prompt: anyone who is elderly, has a disability, single parent, and female head of household
2. a. I want to know what it is like for you and your family to live in rural areas and challenges you face in relation to WASH. Can you share with me some of the problems that you or a member of your household personally face? Prompt: lack of access to safely drinking water, to ash hands, etc.

b. Can you give me a specific example of the problem that you encountered?
3. Are these problems relate to environmental issues like flood, drought, natural disasters, or climate change? Can you give me a specific example?
4. a. Do you think these problems are unique to your own household, or are they also problems that people in your village face?

b. Are these problems different across communes or districts?
5. How do you cope with or adapt to these problems? Prompt: Use the specific example that the interviewee gives in question 2 and 3, and asks them how they cope with it.
6. a. How did you know about WOBA or EMW? Prompt: did you receive the household messaging? Did you attend the village meetings?

b. Do people in your village generally know about WOBA? Please explain.
7. a. Can you describe WOBA? Prompt: is it OBA, results-based program, charity to support the poor etc.

b. What are some of the advantages that WOBA has compared to other programs that you know in relation to WASH service? What are some of its disadvantages?
8. Tell me about your experiences with WOBA. Prompt:
 - Who did you meet?
 - What did you do?

- How did you gain information about WOBA?
 - Were there any problems that you faced e.g. rebate payment, product delivery etc?
9. a. Why did you decide to build a latrine or connect to water scheme through WOBA?
- b. Did you make decision on your own or with someone in your family?
- c. What were some of the issues that you had to consider before deciding to build latrine?
- d. What were some issues that prevented you from building a latrine sooner (i.e. before WOBA)?
10. What have you done differently, if anything, since you constructed the latrine, or connected to water scheme, or received the household messaging on WASH?
- 11.a. In what ways has WOBA lessened some of the problems that you faced in relation to WASH (refer to specific problem they provided in Question 2 and 3 above)? Prompt: e.g. improved access to services? Reduced wait times? Help with self-management? Reduced travel time to get water?
- b. Are there any unintended benefits or harms because of WOBA?
- 12.a. WOBA operates on a subsidy basis to help poor GESI people to have access to WASH that they otherwise might not have the opportunity to do. Do you think this is a good model to get people like yourself to build latrines or connect to water scheme in the long term?
- b. What other financial or other incentives could help households like yours to build latrine or connect to water? Please explain how these incentives could help you and your family specifically.
- 13.a. Do you think WASH service is something that the household is responsible for or is it something that the government or private sector should support households?
- b. What other services or assistance do you feel can be usefully provided by the government or private sector to support rural communities in WASH?

ANNEX 9: Semi-structured interview guide for interviews with Women's Union members

Introduce yourself to the interviewee.

Explain the purpose of the interview: To understand the extent that WOBA's female-led partnership structure with WU women as the key mobiliser has empowered the WU women to become change agents in bringing WASH services to those in needs, and improving gender equality and social inclusion in the sector.

1. Tell us about yourself. How long have you been with WU?
2. Can you describe how you got involved with EMW and the processes of working with EMW in WOBA. Prompt:
 - How long ago?
 - Who are your partners and what are your relationships with them?
 - What are your roles and responsibilities?
 - What motivates you to work with EMW in the WOBA project?
3. a. What do you know about WOBA or its implementation? Prompt: is it OBA, results-based program, charity to support the poor etc.
 - b. Do you think WOBA is effective in your commune? Why or why not?
 - c. Is there a strong need for WOBA? Why or why not? How does WOBA fill current gaps in the WASH sector?
 - d. What are some of the advantages that WOBA has compared to other programs that you know in relation to WASH service delivery? What are some of its disadvantages?
4. One WOBA's main processes is providing training and mentoring to WU women to help them in implementing WOBA. Can you describe some of the training and mentoring that you received?
5. Do these training meet your training needs and informational needs to deliver WASH services? Can you explain? Prompt:
 - What are the positive aspects of planned training?
 - What is missing?
 - What kind of continued training is planned?
 - What kinds of information and materials about WOBA have already been made available to you?
 - Has it been timely? Relevant? Sufficient?
 - Who do you ask if you have questions about the intervention or its implementation? How available are these individuals?
6. What other activities can be provided to the WU women to help you implementing WOBA

7. a. Do you think the OBA model is a good model and processes to get poor GESI households in rural areas to build latrines or connect to water scheme in the long term? Why?
- b. Do your partners and WU colleagues share the values of OBA and market-based WASH programs?
- c. What financial or other incentives could help to motivate and support poor GESI households to build latrine or connect to water? Why?
8. One of WOBA's core strategy is implementing a female structure in its partnership arrangement. How has this structure helped you in implementing WOBA? Prompt: think about
 - your activities in WOBA
 - your leadership role in WOBA processes and committees
 - your decision making in WOBA have been supported through these processes, committees. Is it shared decision making or more directive?
9. a. To what extent do you think your colleagues at WU and other partners who are involved with WOBA are aware of the needs and preferences of the poor/GESI households for WASH?
- b. What is the general level of receptivity in WU to implementing WOBA? Why? How does that influence your participation in WOBA, particularly in taking on market-based approach to WASH?
10. What are some of the challenges that you have encountered in implementing WOBA? Are these challenges particular to WOBA project or generally in the sector?
11. How has your participation with WOBA changed you personally? Prompt: think about
 - Your knowledge and attitude about gender equality and social inclusion in general
 - Your knowledge about health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and impact on health
 - Your knowledge and skills in delivering OBA in WASH for poor/GESI households
 - Your belief in your own capabilities to deliver WASH services to achieve WOBA goals
12. What are some of the changes you have observed as a result of implementing WOBA? Prompt: think about
 - your access to employment, income, careers, or other economic opportunities
 - access for women in the households to employment, income, careers, or other economic opportunities
 - capacity of WASH utilities to deliver WASH services that could benefit both men and women equally, or to be able to consult with women and men to respond to women's priorities
13. a. Can you describe specific examples where you felt the needs and vulnerabilities of poor GESI households are met through WOBA? Prompt: E.g. improved access to services? Reduced wait times? Help with self-management? Reduced travel time and expense?
- b. Should WOBA or WU's role in WOBA be changed in any way to better meet the needs and vulnerabilities of poor/GESI households?

c. What kind of policies, regulations, or guidelines do you think (at national or subnational levels) influence the ability of WOBA to reach poor GESI households in the long term?

Interview ends. Thank the interviewee.

ANNEX 10: Phase 5. Interview question guide for interviews with private sector operators

Introduce yourself to the interviewee. Explain the purpose of the interview: to find out the processes of private sector engagement in WOBA and how this process has helped suppliers and water operators to provide WASH service to poor/GESI households. Make them feel comfortable, and assure them that their responses will help to improve the program, and there is no right or wrong answers. We value frank and honest opinions.

1. Tell us about yourself and your business. Prompt:
 - What does your organisation do? Which markets? Which customers?
 - How long have you been with this organisation and in this role?
2. Can you describe how you got involved with EMW and the processes of working with EMW in WOBA? Prompt:
 - How long ago?
 - Who are your partners and what are your relationships with them?
 - What are your roles and responsibilities?
3. a. Can you describe what the WOBA project is about? Prompt: is it OBA, results-based program, charity to support the poor etc.
- b. What are some of the advantages that WOBA has compared to other programs that you know in relation to WASH service? What are some of its disadvantages?
4. What motivates you to work with EMW in the WOBA project?
5. WOBA's main core is to support GESI poor households to build latrines or connect to piped water system.
 - a. Through your involvement with WOBA, what have you learnt about gender equality and social inclusion in general?

Is the GESI/poor group a viable customer group for private sector business in the long run? Why and why not?
 - b. What else can be done to encourage more private sector operator to provide WASH services for marginalised communities?
6. WOBA takes on a partnership approach where we partner with the government and the private sector operators like yourself to sell WASH products at a subsidised rate. How important do you think a public-private partnership approach is in providing WASH delivery for the GESI/poor households specifically, and households in rural Vietnam generally? Prompt: Please explain more. Can you clarify? What do you mean?
7. a. How has WOBA helped you to develop your organisation's business e.g. access to a new market of customers, new products, new technology?

- b. Please give a concrete example.
8. a. Can you describe some of the ways in which you have been supported by EMW to develop your knowledge and skills in running a WASH business for the poor/GESI? Prompts: e.g. developing a business plan, developing suitable products for persons with disabilities, follow up on customer satisfaction.
 - b. Please give specific examples of the training, mentoring, or coaching that you received through WOBA and how that has helped you.
 9. What other training, learning, or coaching activities do you think can be provided to help you and your business in providing WASH services to the poor/GESI households?
 - 10.a. What changes have you personally made in your organisation as a result of your participation with WOBA?
 - b. Why did you make these changes? What benefits or effects do think they might have for you and your business in the short term and long term?
 11. What are some of the challenges that you and your organisation have encountered in providing WASH services in WOBA? Are these challenges particular to WOBA or generally in the sector?
 - 12.a. What are some things that have been helpful for you and your organisation to provide WASH services to the poor/GESI? Prompt: household messaging on WASH, village meetings, performance incentives, etc.
 - b. How might these things be enhanced at a sector or policy level so more businesses like yours can enter and stay in the market?
 - 13.a. What is the one most difficult thing for you personally in WOBA?
 - b. What is the most rewarding thing for you personally?
 14. Is there anything you would like to change about the way WOBA has been implemented? Why and why not?
 15. If you are responsible for setting policy, what would be one thing that you would implement to engage the private sector in rural WASH in Vietnam?

Interview ends. Thank the interviewee.

ANNEX 11: WOBA's monitoring indicators

Latrine:

1. Latrines constructed as of June 2021.
2. Rebate list for latrines constructed as of June 2021.
3. Performance incentive paid for latrine completion as of June 2021.
4. Baseline data for latrine as of June 2021
5. Co-financing paid by PPC as of June 2021
6. EMW's verification results as of June 2021

Water:

7. Water connections as of June 2021.
8. Base line data for water (only for service areas of the 15 water operators involved in WOBA)
9. Water connection costs and subsidies submitted by water operators in entering WOBA)
10. Rebate list for latrines constructed as of June 2021
11. Performance incentive paid water connections as of June 2021.
12. EMW's verification results as of June 2021

COVID 19:

13. Handwashing devices and water tanks distribution as of June 2021.

Annex 12: Partnership survey

East Meets West Foundation (EMWF) values the feedback of all partner organisations and uses this information to make sure that these relationships are as mutually beneficial as possible.

We would like to ask you some questions about your experience working as a partner in the Women-Led Output-Based Aid (WOBA) Vietnam Project.

Please be as open and honest as possible. The survey should only take 10 minutes to complete.

Your individual responses will be attributable to your organisation but will only be used for internal reporting of the Mid-Term Review of the WOBA Vietnam Project and will never be disclosed to any third parties. Non-identifiable and aggregated data will be used for publishing and reporting purposes in order to demonstrate WOBA Vietnam’s impact and share learnings. Please try to answer all questions on behalf of your organisation.

By completing this survey, you agree for EMWF to collect your responses for the purposes outlined above.

PART A. PARTNERSHIP

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the **nature** of your organisation’s partnership with EMWF in the WOBA Vietnam Project

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The partnership is mutually beneficial					
Our organisation has an equal voice in the partnership					
Our partnership is built on a shared vision of WOBA					
Trust has been built between EMWF and our organisation through this partnership					
The overall level of communication with EMWF is satisfactory					
EMWF shares its resources with our organisation (include monetary and non-monetary resources such as skills, training, mentoring, use of building etc)					
The overall decision making process in the partnership is satisfactory to implement WOBA activities efficiently					

2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the **outcomes** of your organisation’s partnership with EMWF in the WOBA Vietnam Project

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The partnership has had a positive impact on our organisation					
The partnership has had a positive impact on WOBA’s beneficiaries					
The partnership has increased our organisation’s capacity to contribute to Vietnam’s policy and strategy of WASH					
We would partner with EMWF again on a mutually beneficial project					
We would partner with EMWF again on a project that contributes to Vietnam’s policy and strategy of WASH					
We would partner with EMWF again on a project that contributes to providing WASH services to marginalised communities					
There are clear arrangements in place for monitoring and reviewing how the partnership itself is working					

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about **how your organisation views the WOBA** project

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
WOBA has a positive influence on mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in society					
WOBA advocates on gender and social inclusion issues that concern and impact communities					
WOBA promotes an inclusive approach in delivering WASH services					

EWMF has a good overall reputation in the WASH sector					
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PART B. PARTNERSHIP CONTINUUM

The following questions ask you to rate various aspects of the WOBA partnership on a scale from 1 to 10. Please choose the number which best reflects your response to each statement. There are no ‘correct’ or ‘better’ responses.

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 where ‘1’ is low and ‘10’ is high, how would you describe the level of engagement between your organisation and EMWF in the WOBA project? (e.g. just receiving a monetary donation is low)

LOW HIGH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. On a scale of 1 to 10 where ‘1’ is peripheral and ‘10’ is central, how would you rate the importance of your organisation’s mission to that of EMWF in the WOBA project? (e.g. no alignment of mission with EMWF would be peripheral)

PERIPHERAL CENTRAL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. On a scale of 1 to 10 where ‘1’ is low and ‘10’ is high, how would you classify the value of resources your organisation has received from EWMF through WOBA project relative to some of your other institutional partners? (include monetary and non-monetary resources such as skills, training, mentoring, use of building etc)

LOW HIGH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. On a scale of 1 to 10 where ‘1’ is narrow and ‘10’ is broad, how would you rate the scope of activities in your partnership with EMWF in the WOBA project? (e.g. a single activity would be narrow compared to the partnership having several activities)

NARROW BROAD

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 where ‘1’ is infrequent and ‘10’ is intensive, how would you describe the interaction level between your organisation and EMWF in the WOBA project?

INFREQUENT INTENSIVE

PART D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

15. Which organisation are you from?
- Ministry of Rural Development
 - Provincial Department of Rural Development
 - District Administrations
 - District Offices of Rural Development
 - District Committee for Women and Children
 - Vietnam Water Association
 - Commune Council
 - Commune Council for Women and Children
 - Village chief
 - Deputy chief
 - Private sector
 - Other. Please write the name of your organisation_____
16. Which organisations do you work with in the WOBA project? Please select ALL that apply.
- Ministry of Rural Development
 - Provincial Department of Rural Development
 - District Administrations
 - District Offices of Rural Development
 - District Committee for Women and Children
 - Vietnam Water Association
 - Commune Council
 - Commune Council for Women and Children
 - Village chief
 - Deputy chief
 - Private sector
 - EMWF
 - Other. Please write the names of the organisations_____

17. What are your main activities in the WOBA project?

18. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing the survey. We really value your input and if you have any questions or comments about the survey or would like to give further feedback, please contact Dr Lien Pham, Director of Research and Evaluation at East Meets West Foundation: lien.pham@eastmeetswest.org.

END SURVEY