

WASH REFLECTIONS

Report from Bangkok, Thailand



Bridging Data and Action: Insights from the WASH Financing Conclave

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From 5 to 6 March 2024, WaterAid organized a WASH Financing Conclave in Bangkok, Thailand. This significant event brought together representatives from eight countries across South Asia and Africa—Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Niger, and Zambia. These nations have integrated initiatives on WASH finance into their work as a high priority through, among other efforts, use of [WASH accounts](#).

The conclave kicked off with sessions on various aspects of WASH financing. Discussions on fiscal decentralization and tariffs from Punjab province offered a deep dive into localized financial strategies. Meanwhile, a presentation by the Dhaka Water Supply and Sanitation Authority shed light on their approaches to financial sustainability and cost recovery, essential components for long-term WASH success.

A marketplace of ideas on the first day provided a dynamic platform for sharing innovative finance-related initiatives. Notably, the stall featuring WASH accounts and the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) attracted significant attention, underscoring the importance of these approaches -- tracking finance in WASH, and monitoring the health of WASH 'systems'.

The second day was dedicated entirely to WASH accounts. I had the privilege of presenting a global overview, setting the stage for detailed reports from the Nepal and Bangladesh teams on their inaugural cycles of WASH accounts. These presentations sparked enthusiastic discussions and were a testament to the power of detailed, actionable data in shaping WASH decision-making..

Key highlights from the event included the use of WASH account findings in Nepal's Joint Sector Review process, contributing directly to their Sector Development Plan. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' commitment to regular WASH accounts production, as part of their National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2024-2030, was another standout development.

Country teams engaged in spirited group discussions centered around three critical questions concerning the implementation and utility of national WASH accounts. The discourse was particularly robust regarding the institutionalization of these accounts, with Nepal proposing a feasible cycle every 2-3 years tied to joint sector review processes supported by budget allocations and external support.

Despite some challenges, like the difficulty in gathering data on household WASH expendi-

tures in Nepal and other data gaps across countries, the collaborative spirit was palpable. The conclave not only facilitated a rich exchange of ideas and best practices but also set the stage for future actions and initiatives, including strong interest from countries such as Pakistan and Zambia to develop WASH accounts.

As we move forward, follow-ups with regional WHO offices and continuous engagement with WaterAid will be crucial to maintain the momentum gained. The shared experiences and commitments from this conclave are stepping stones toward enhanced, sustainable WASH infrastructure globally.

[Click here to see a video report on YouTube.](#)



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accounts