

Living Research, Capacity Strengthening & Learning Strategy

Last updated November 1, 2023



Welcome

Welcome to our dynamic and evolving 4-year comprehensive stakeholder engagement, capacity strengthening, research, and learning strategy.

Our living strategy ensures we remain adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing needs of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) Implementing Partner (IP) community and the broader food security community we serve.



Photo credit: Mustafa Saeed/Save the Children

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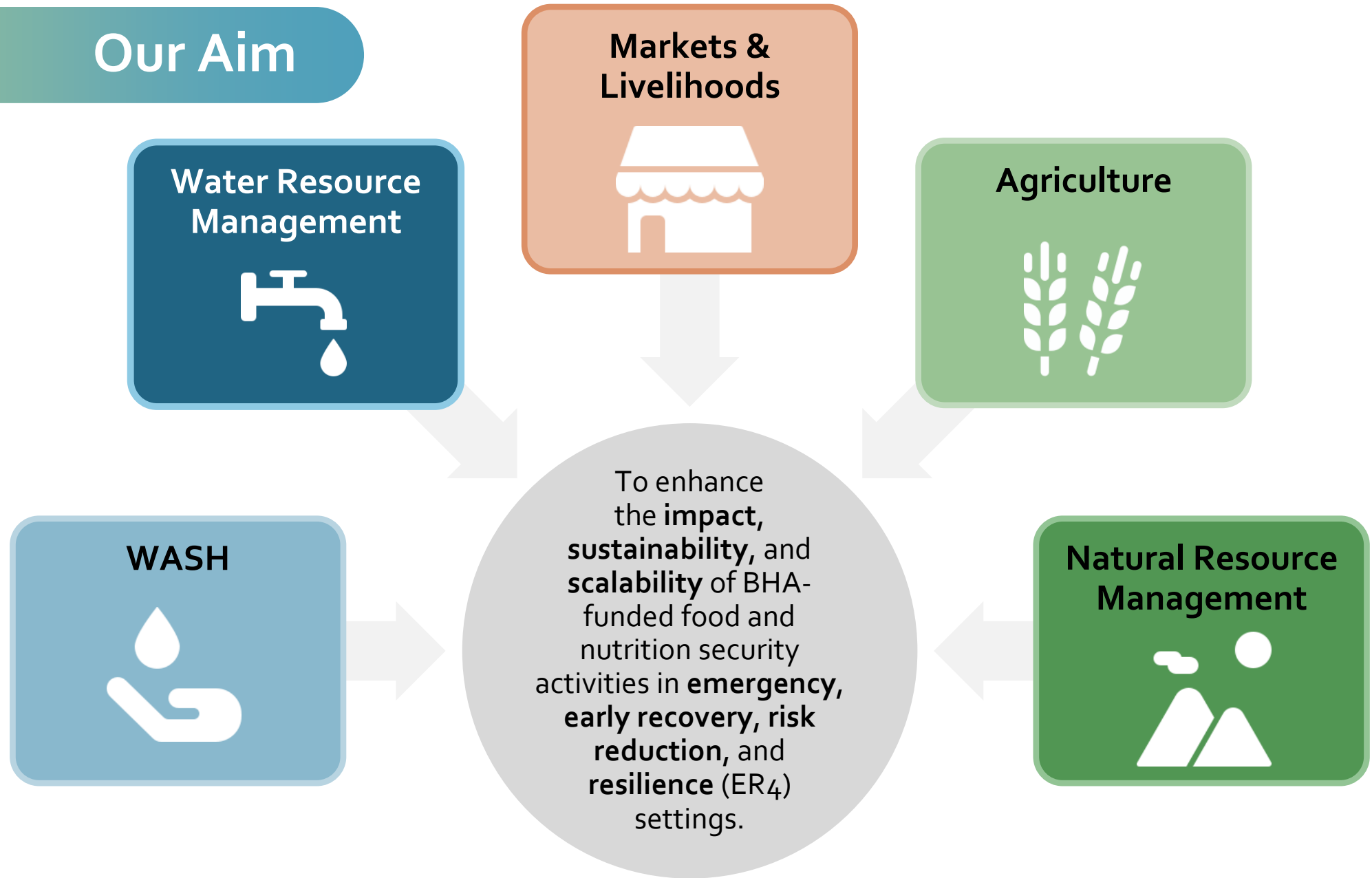
Strategy Background

Who is PRO-WASH & SCALE?

**[Practice, Research, and Operations in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene] +
[Strengthening Capacity in Agriculture, Livelihoods, and Environment]**

- Combines/continues previous PRO-WASH and SCALE awards
- Funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)
- Implemented by Save the Children and Mercy Corps
- Implementation Period: Jan 2023 – Feb 2027
- Collaborates with Emergency, Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience partners
- Team includes agriculture, natural resource management, and WASH technical advisors with expertise in adult learning, social and behavior change, facilitation, knowledge sharing

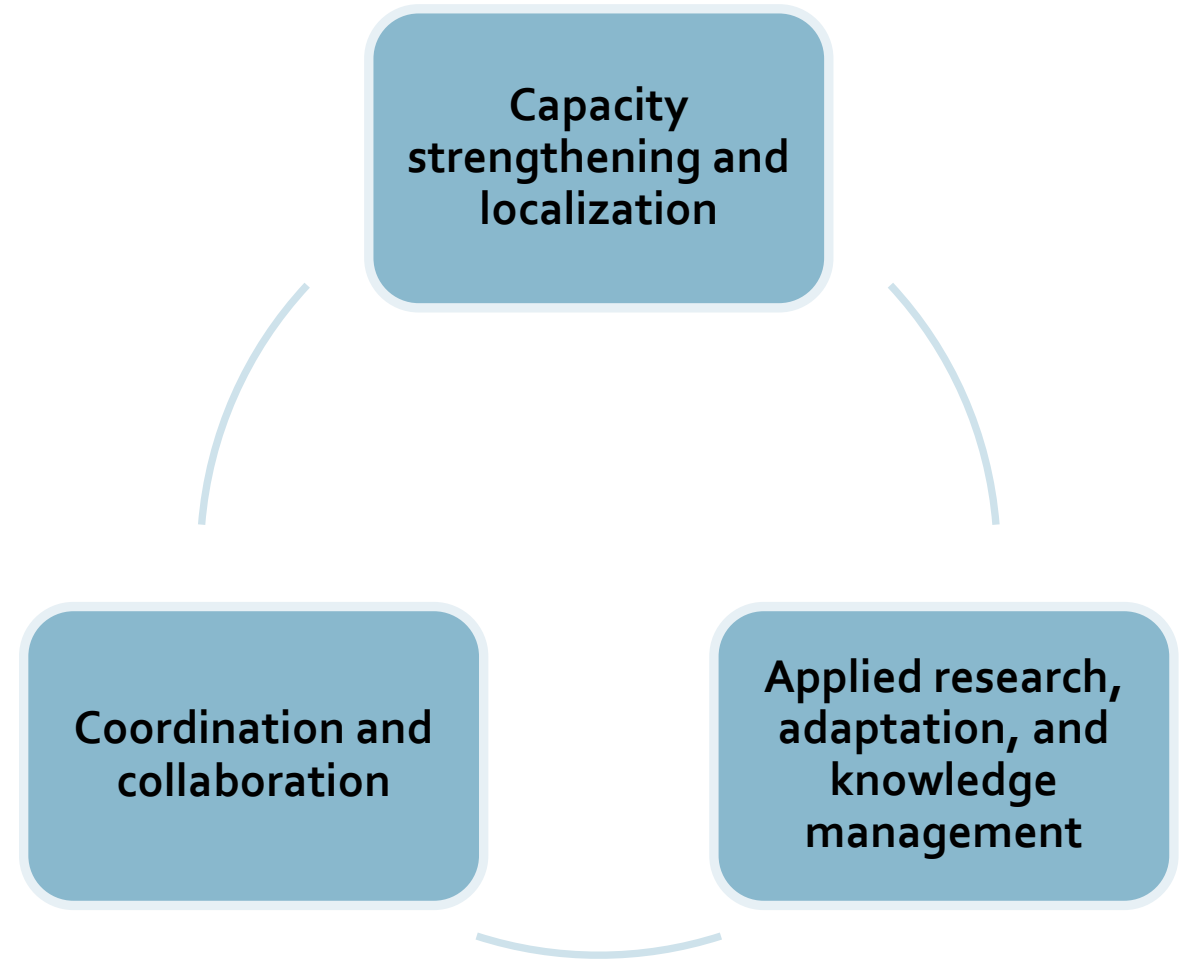
Our Aim



Our Approach

We collaborate with partners on:

- Training & capacity strengthening
- Designing & testing interventions
- Applying localized knowledge
- Capturing, disseminating, and socializing best practices & learning
- Creating sustainable links among stakeholders, including technical working groups, Communities of Practice, Clusters, and others



Strategy Development

Our Approach

- Review of final evaluation findings
- (Re)engagement with RFSAs, Clusters, TWiGs, IDEAL Associate Awards, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), USAID and BHA staff, other USAID awards, researchers, and other stakeholders to identify priorities and define engagement plans
- Review of key partner and USAID guidance documents—such as the USAID Water Technical Briefs, Emergency Application Guidelines, Climate Strategy, WASH Research in Crisis Agenda, Humanitarian WASH Road Map, Nature-based Solutions Sphere Unpacked Guide
- Refinement of PRO-WASH & SCALE priorities under all three purpose areas, determining which predecessor activities should be continued, adapted, or expanded across the broader emergency and ER4 IP community

Learning and Adapting from SCALE & PRO-WASH's Final Evaluations

Program Management & Adaptive Management

- Continue/create partnership agreements with IPs
- Intentional outreach to and communications with RFSAs from which demand is low (annual check-in)
- Reach out to RFSAs at the earliest possible point in their Refine and Implement year, including through PCS workshops
- Create an inclusive TAC with more representatives from partners & countries with BHA investments
- Continue to act as an informal mechanism for collecting IP feedback on BHA processes, requirements, approaches
- Provide opportunities for IPs to submit anonymous feedback on PRO-WASH & SCALE support
- Learn how partners are using, adapting, contextualizing (incl. in emergencies) PRO-WASH & SCALE's resources and tools
- Identify/invest in national/regional technical expertise in countries with BHA investments
- Support institutionalization of approaches, tools & resources through engagement with regional & headquarters (HQ) staff, KM/coordination platforms and networks, including Clusters

Capacity Strengthening & Learning Modalities

- Adopt similar methodologies, including coaching, applied research, technical guides, and in-person and online self-paced training workshops, with particular emphasis on coaching and mentoring
- Enhance opportunities for in-person engagement and training sessions
- Support partners to build the skills necessary to carry out their own research and learning activities

Stakeholders Consulted

21 Resilience Food Security Activities (out of 22)

9 Emergency Clusters and Working Groups

13 Networks

2
0 Non-Governmental Organizations

19 Research Centers

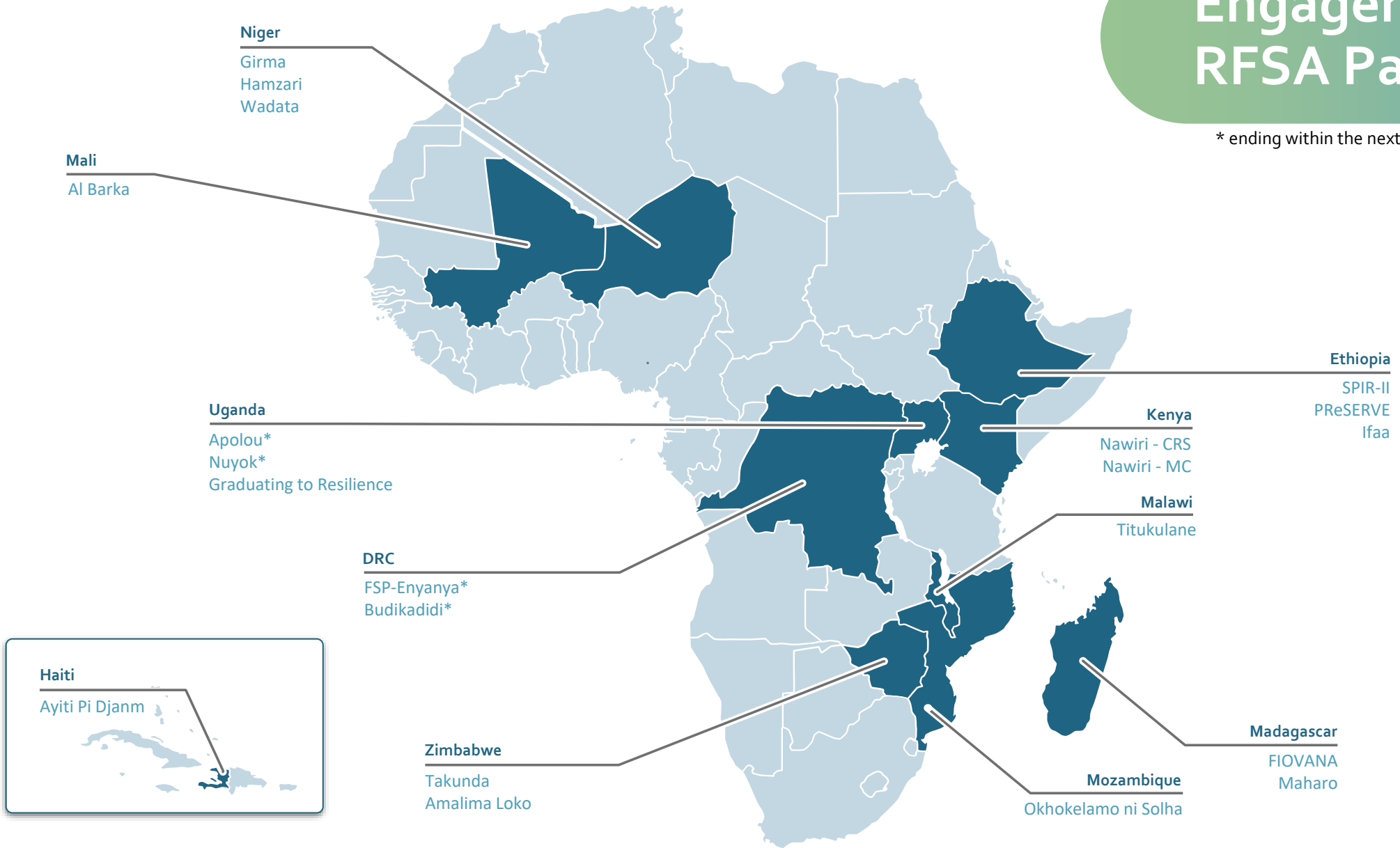
2 UN Agencies

7 IDEAL & Associate Awards

2
0 Other USAID-funded Programs

Engagement with RFSA Partners

* ending within the next six months





Guiding Principles

What Did We Learn From Our Inception?

- Convergence of challenges and priorities between emergency & RFSA partners
- Strong alignment of activities with multiple partners, programs, and other Associate Awards—presenting many opportunities for close collaboration and coordination
- Lots of concurrence on the problems, but still major gaps in terms of evidence and how to practically address the problems
- Need to define the objectives and audiences for capacity strengthening & learning products (ensuring fit for user/purpose) and address the disconnect on how activities/priorities/gaps are identified and addressed at local vs. national vs. international levels
- Wide variety of practices/packages to achieve broadly-termed outcomes (NRM/restoration, climate resilience, MSD)

Guiding Principles for This Strategy

Coordination & Layering

Alignment to Cross-Cutting Issues

Quality Assurance

Sustainability


Promote Best Practices

Climate Resilience

Continuous Learning

Implementer-Focused

Geographic
Prioritization



Purpose 1:
Capacity Strengthening
& Localization

Our Approach for Capacity Strengthening (CS) & Learning

We will

- Increase localized knowledge sharing, emphasize peer-to-peer learning, & prioritize local or regional resources/expertise, tailored to different populations' needs such as women and youth
- Strengthen and prioritize local capacity strengthening activities and provide contextualized solutions, as aligned with USAID's Local Capacity Strengthening Strategy
- Enhance learning, collaboration, and coordination across emergency & ER4 partners and related to humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) coherence

By

- Coordinating & layering capacity strengthening modalities (training + peer learning group + remote mentorship)
- Leveraging networks and partnerships, including locally-led initiatives
- Leveraging PRO-WASH & SCALE's cross-sectoral staff to support sequenced, layered, and integrated interventions

Our Approach for Capacity Strengthening & Learning

Engagement planning and prioritization of CS needs, including considerations for training different populations (i.e., women, youth)

High-level sensitization “training” / buy-in from leadership

Contextualized and practical capacity strengthening activity (ToT or other, engaging local partners in design and implementation)

Post-activity PRO-WASH & SCALE monitoring and adaptation

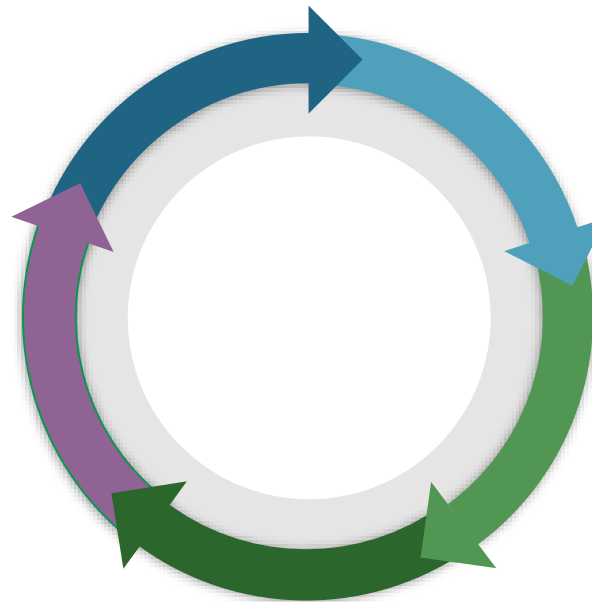
Continued remote/in-person mentorship: troubleshooting, adapting and learning based on monitoring data

Disseminating and amplifying local voices: sharing of this knowledge and experience through webinars, roundtables or other modalities

Support participants to continue peer-to-peer learning (ongoing calls, WhatsApp group, etc.)

Potential study/documentation of local learning based on M&E data, complemented by additional data collection

Provide guidance on roll-out plans and related M&E



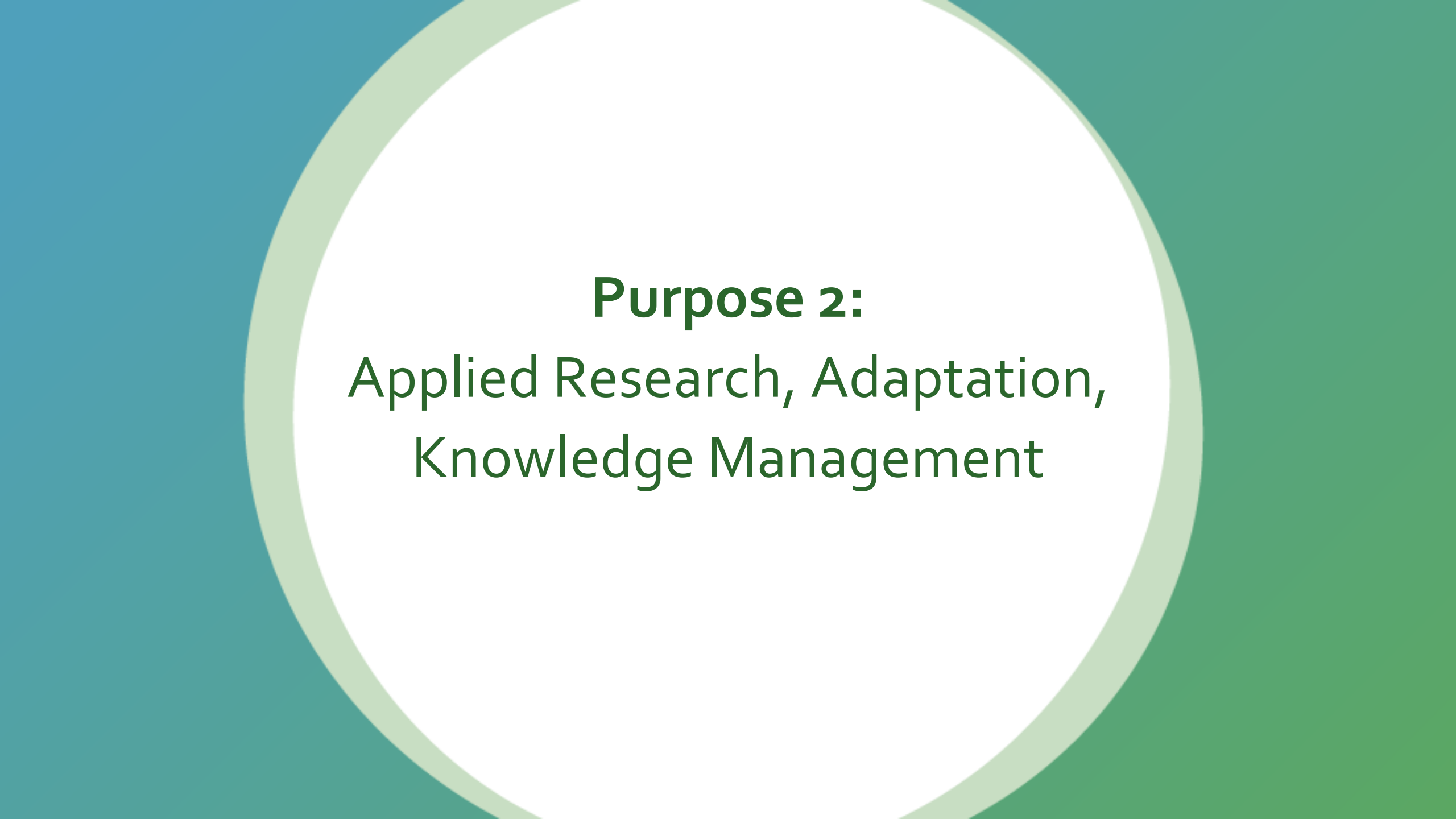
Facilitating Knowledge Sharing – Learning Groups

Climate & NRM

- **Climate Information:** Focused on strategies and best practices used for sourcing reliable, quality climate information and translating that information in ways that are accessible and actionable by end users (farmers, communities), including blending formal climate data with indigenous knowledge and forecasting
- **Natural Resource Management (NRM):** Focused on watershed, rangeland, and landscape-level NRM strategies, best practices, tools, impact measurement, and sustainability including community-led approaches and governance

WASH & WRM

- **Sanitation Strategies:** Focused on adapting, blending, and refining sanitation strategies including community-led total sanitation, market-based sanitation, clean household approaches, and social and behavior change integration
- **Water Sustainability:** Focused on water sustainability strategies including multiple-use water systems (MUS), integrated water resources management (IWRM), governance, supporting services, private sector engagement, water and construction quality and control, and data management



Purpose 2:
Applied Research, Adaptation,
Knowledge Management

Our Approach to Research

- Support emergency and ER4 partners, clusters and other relevant stakeholders to develop, share, and apply current evidence and best practices rather than relying on external consultants
- Foster research equity in the form of authorship for peer-reviewed works and/or presentation responsibilities at conferences
- In Requests for Applications (RFAs), promote research undertaken by—or in partnership with—local staff/consultants or partners
- Commit to transparency & accountability to communities/research participants through active sharing of data and findings in formats that respect people where the research was carried out while ensuring data privacy
- Prioritize research questions that address real-world implementation challenges encountered by USAID/BHA partners working in emergency and ER4 contexts
- Coordinate with existing research & learning agendas of key partners
- Disseminate findings widely in accessible and user-friendly formats including learning and capacity strengthening outputs and modalities and support scale-up, if appropriate
- Adapt work based on research findings and encourage IPs to do the same, such as via sensemaking workshops
- Incorporate gender and youth considerations into research activities

Research Modalities

Deep Dives

Conduct multi-sectoral deep dives into the humanitarian ecosystems in two countries, prioritizing those with significant USAID/BHA emergency and ER4 investments

Identify how emergency & ER4 programs collaborate on activities related to PRO-WASH & SCALE's sectoral areas to identify barriers, bottlenecks, and opportunities to enhancing interventions

Small Grants

Test tools, products, or approaches in similar or differing contexts

Adapt, implement or evaluate existing tools, approaches, pilots, or strategies

Collaborate with local experts to contextualize transformative approaches

Generate recommendations for improved ways of working, including changes to BHA processes and requirements

In-Program Research / Learning

Respond to partners' interest in strengthening their capacity to incorporate research and best practices into their programming by providing one-on-one and group coaching support

Link partners with knowledge providers and research institutions to enable them to make data-driven decisions

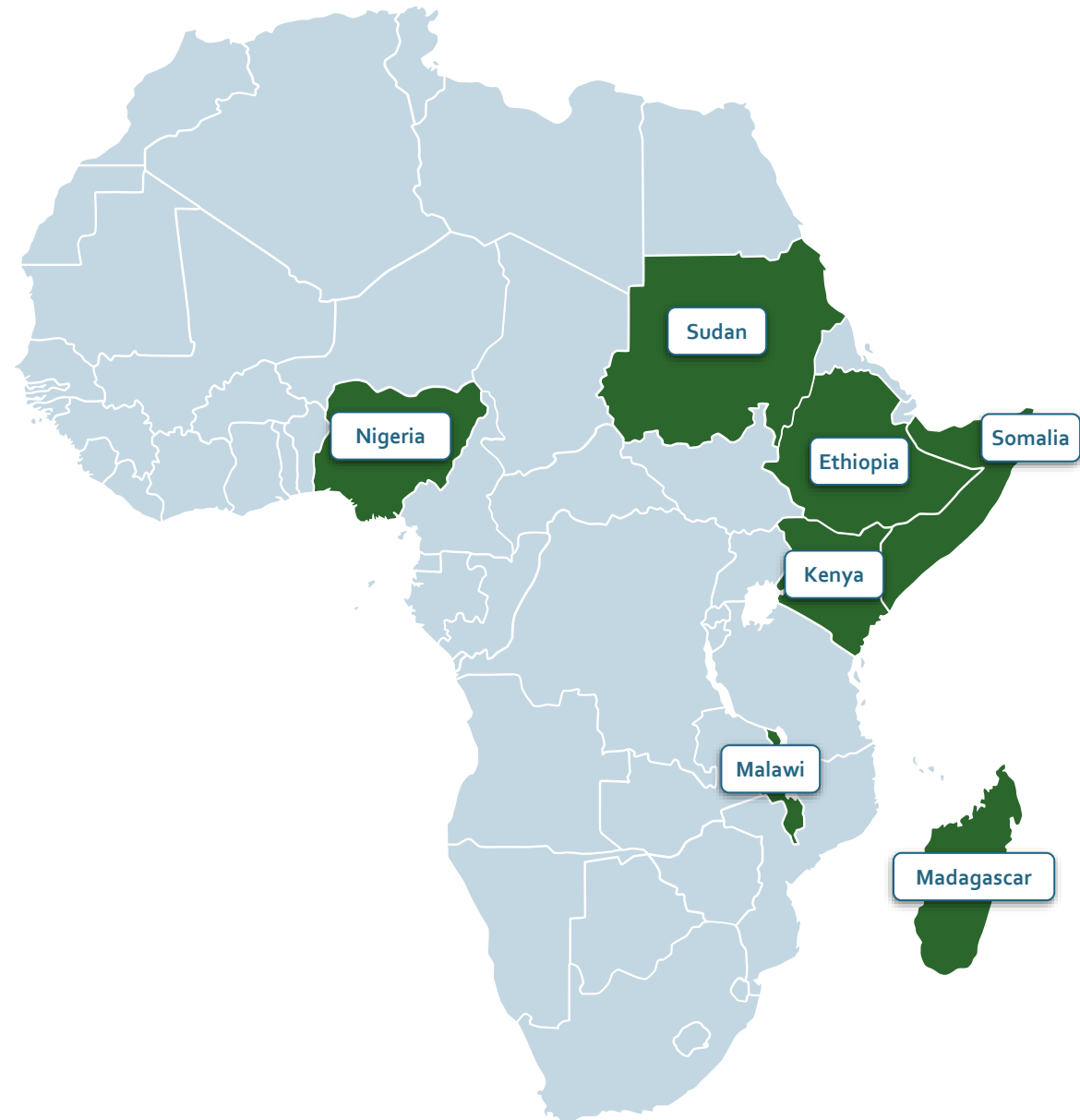
Support IPs to identify and apply assessment tools for decision-making

Deep Dives: Coordination and Integration of Emergency & Early Recovery, Risk Reduction & Resilience Activities

- **Objective:** To better understand and document the coordination and integration of USAID/BHA-funded emergency & ER4 Activities within PRO-WASH & SCALE technical areas and inform development of research, learning, and support activities under Sub-purpose 2.2 Identify Building Blocks to Early Recovery
- **Methods:** Leverage existing data, partners, and resources, and work outwards to better understand the situation. Draw on human-centered design (HCD) methodologies to conduct a stakeholder mapping and landscape analysis, remote interviews and discussions with stakeholders including IPs, Government, USAID, Clusters, Working Groups, with in-person consultations, if feasible
- **Timeline:** Sept 2023 – June 2024

Potential Deep Dive Countries & Draft Questions

- What overlap is there between emergency and ER4 programs in terms of geography, timing, and intervention type?
- To what extent are emergency and ER4 programs collaborating on activities related to PRO-WASH & SCALE's technical focus areas and in support of food security outcomes? What are the barriers and opportunities for improving collaboration?



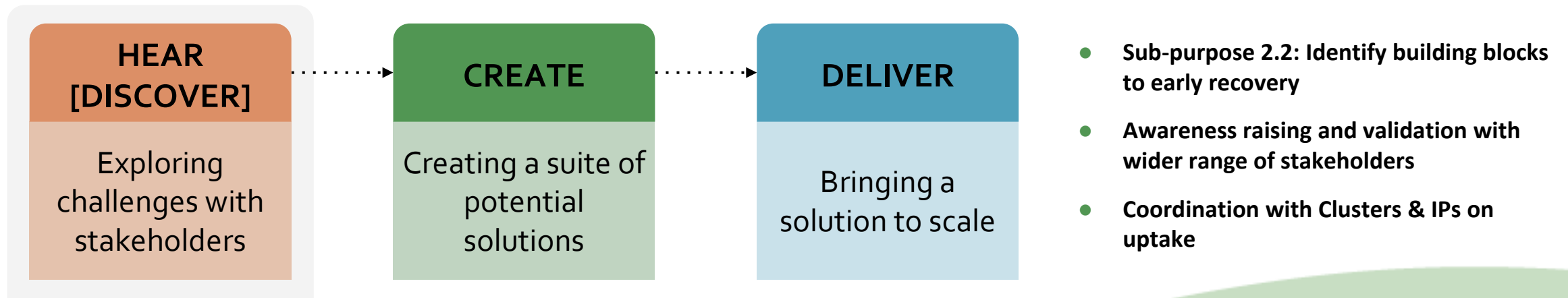
Draft Deep Dive Questions (continued)

To narrow/refine as part of the start-up of the Deep Dives

- How does emergency response affect the resilience interventions in a specific locality?
- When & how do BHA IPs transition from life-saving responses to longer-term early recovery or risk reduction (or vice versa) within PRO-WASH & SCALE's technical focus areas? To what extent are anticipatory action tools and approaches (such as crisis modifiers, cash, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and early warning systems) informing these decisions?
- What best practices are employed within these activities to better integrate resilience-building activities during early recovery? How are early recovery and resilience approaches/activities being leveraged?
- How and when are local experts informing and/or leading program priorities, strategies, and design from emergency response through early recovery and resilience building?
- How do existing projects and coordination mechanisms use shock responsive mechanisms (e.g., cash, crisis modifiers, etc.) to mitigate the impact of shocks, protect development gains, and speed recovery?
- How does the broader landscape (coordination mechanisms, donors, government platforms) in the countries affect the design, implementation, and coordination of emergency and ER4 programs?

Final Outputs

- Focus on accessible, user-friendly, engaging products - similar to [previous HCD reports](#)— rather than text-heavy reports. Include tailored recommendations for global mechanisms like PRO-WASH & SCALE, donors like BHA, and emergency and ER4 partners
- Debrief working sessions with key stakeholders (BHA, emergency & ER4 partners)
- Scope potential interest and need for the CREATE phase with emergency & ER4 partners within our technical areas



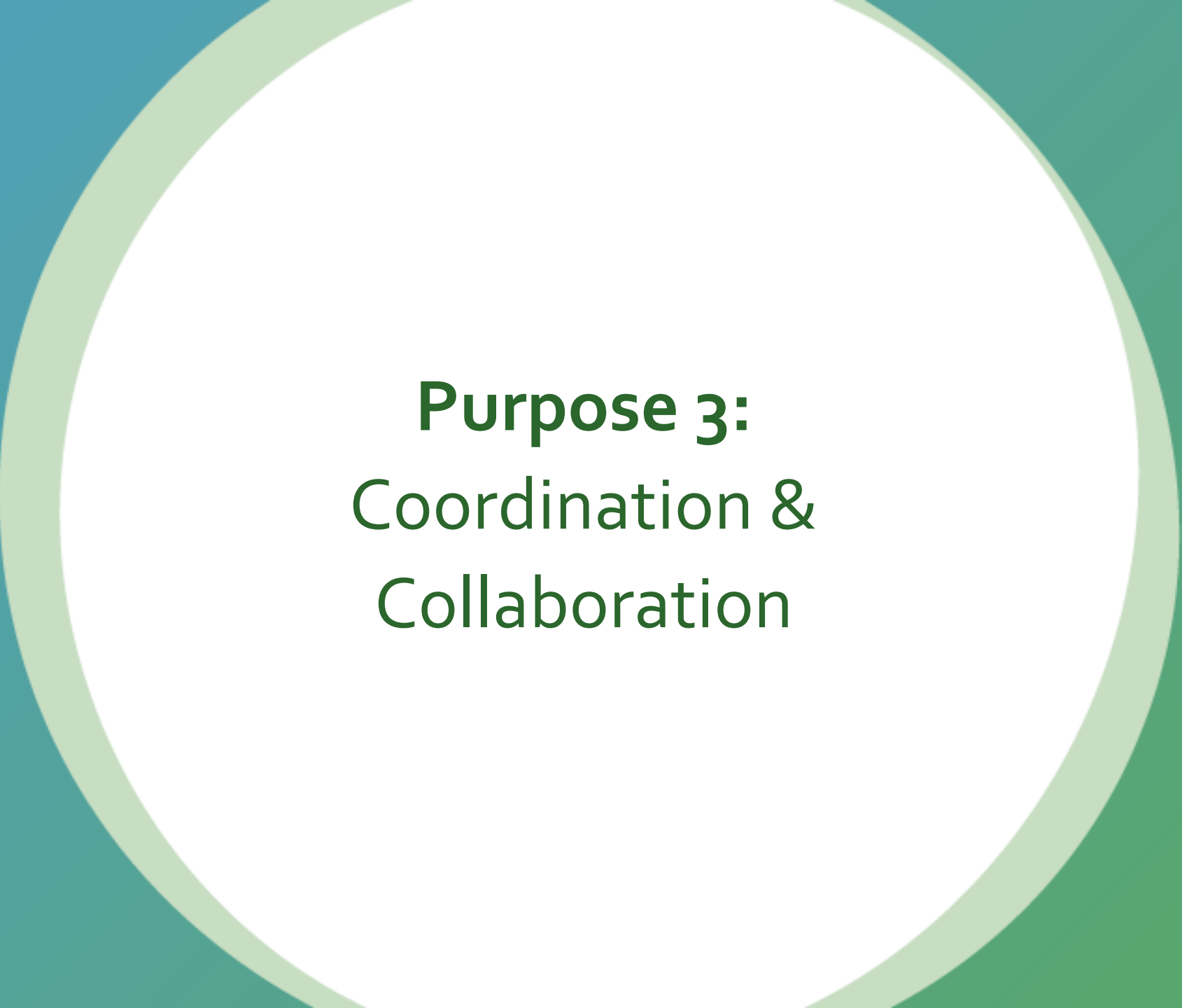
Small Grants Process

Application

- Release RFAs based on priorities identified by emergency & ER4 IPs and the wider humanitarian & resilience communities
- Target local organizations in the RFA
- Three awards planned, first RFA to be released by end 2023. Focus: post-project sustainability
- Themes for others: generating evidence for humanitarian programming & developing/ testing/adapting tools

Co-creation

- Co-creation process with PRO-WASH & SCALE and partner to refine research questions, study design, research management and dissemination plan
- Foster inclusivity and mutual learning
- Incorporate diverse perspectives, support research partners and uphold ethical considerations



Purpose 3:
Coordination &
Collaboration

Our Approach for Coordination Emergency & ER4

- Engage a diverse, inclusive community of implementers to enhance the applicability, use, and relevance of PRO-WASH & SCALE research, resources, and learnings
- Help guide sector-specific components of PRO-WASH & SCALE's technical strategies, work plans, research, and learning activities with the aim of ensuring we are evidence-based, responsive to stakeholders, and complementary to other sector initiatives
- Contribute to existing learning agendas, capacity strengthening initiatives, and community-building platforms for sustainability and to maximize the use of available resources
- Enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and learning

Technical Advisory Committee

- Roster includes 177 people across 47 countries representing international/national/local organizations, emergency and ER4 activities, and the sectors in which we work
- Virtual meetings every other or every third month and smaller time-bound working groups as needed
- Opportunity for members to opt-in according to sector relevance (agendas/materials shared in advance)
- Pilot approach that encourages participant feedback and frequent review, as well as open discussions on adaptations by PRO-WASH & SCALE during Pause & Reflect sessions and work planning

Role of Member

- Share technical information within the TAC and externally to promote learning
- Identify technical capacity strengthening gaps and opportunities
- Foster linkages between implementing community and USAID/BHA

Role of PRO-WASH & SCALE

- Provide multiple opportunities and methods for engagement
- Share agenda and materials in advance
- Maintain transparency in processes and provide feedback loops
- Foster linkages between implementing community and USAID/BHA

Cluster & Working Groups Engagement

What: Engage in global and regional sectoral & cross-sectoral working groups, including Global WASH Cluster Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies TWiG, Global WASH Cluster Climate Resilient WASH TWiG, Global Agriculture Cluster and National TWiGs, Anticipatory Action TWiG, Cash & Markets TWiG, West Africa WASH Working Group

How: Participate in virtual meetings, contribute to pieces of the work plan where aligned with BHA partners' priorities and PRO-WASH & SCALE's scope, co-create resources, leverage cross-sectoral expertise to contribute to TWiGs, leverage Cluster & Working Group's partners' consultations/surveys to inform our work, provide additional avenues for dissemination and resource sharing

Local, Regional, Global Stakeholders & Networks

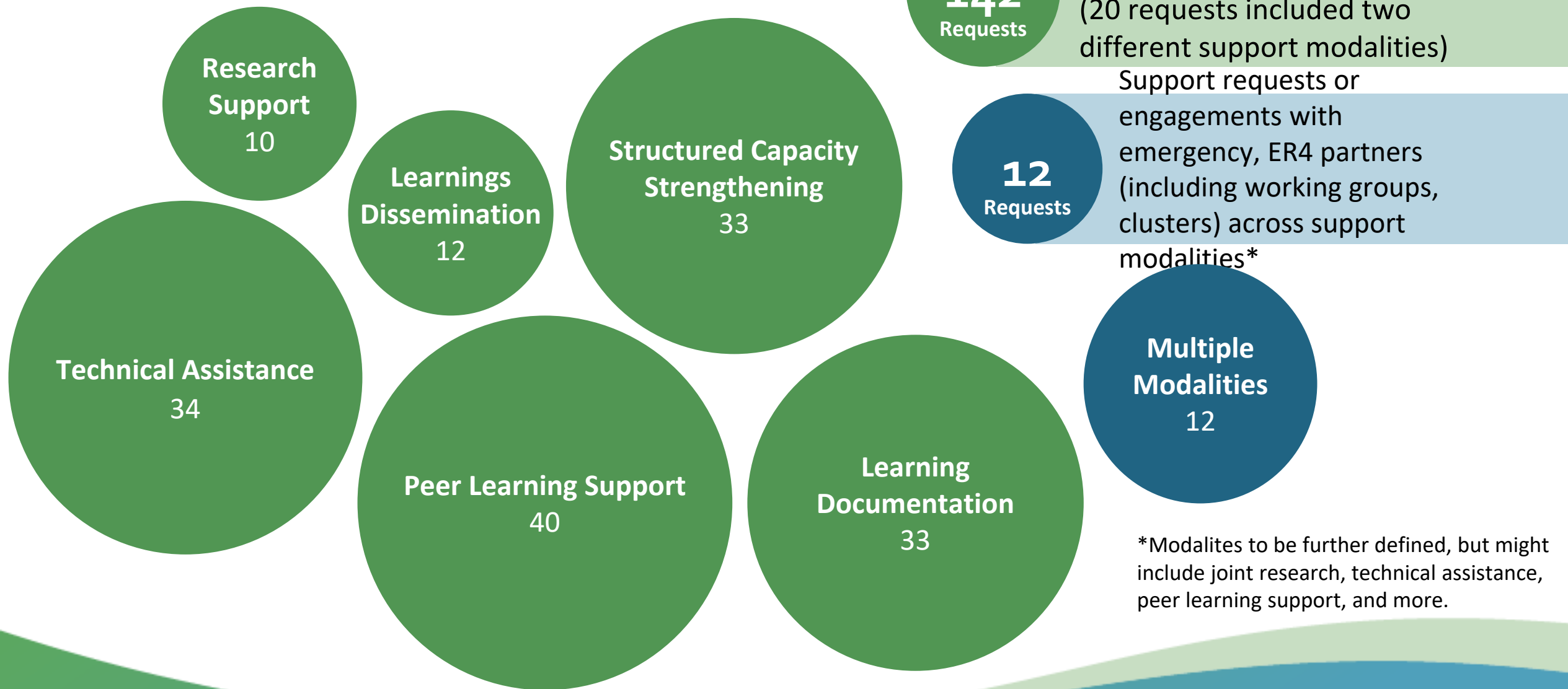
What: Markets in Crises (MiC) Community of Practice, WASH Roadmap 2.0 initiative, Resilience Learning Activity, Sanitation Learning Hub, Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEbA), Community-led Capacity Strengthening for Fragile Contexts, REAL Water, WASHPaLS, Veg Irrigation Toolkit, IWMI, SomReP, IUCN, WWF, SEADS, S34D, SeedSystem, IDEAL & Associate Awards, etc.

How: Collaborate on capacity strengthening activities (incl. in-person and remote), contribute to development and execution of research & learning agenda, share resources and learnings, provide technical reviews and inputs on products, strengthen presence of BHA IPs in these networks and their collaborations with stakeholders, increase cross-sectoral collaboration, enhance accessibility of products/learnings produced by these networks via translation/interpretation



Engagement Snapshot

Snapshot of Requests by Modality



Examples of Support (currently underway or planned)

Technical Assistance

- Emergency & RFSAs groundwater support
- Seeds/SSSA (Ethiopia, Madagascar RFSAs + EFSPs)
- Economic analysis of farmer cooperatives models (Girma)
- RD and PG mentorship (Zim)
- Capacity strengthening & knowledge management with the Climate Resilient WASH TWiG

Structured Capacity Strengthening

- HCD for WASH Coaching Cohort
- RD and PG ToTs
- Emergency and RFSAs water quality support
- Updated SSSA online learning course
- MSD Foundations course (cross-sectoral)

Peer Learning Support

- Water and sanitation RFSAs peer learning groups
- NRM and Climate Information peer learning groups
- Facilitation of MiC peer exchanges
- Foster cross-WG collab (Ag-CMWG-AAWG, CMWG-WASH)

Learning Documentation

- Nuyok and Apolou Learning Brief Series
- CLTS+ Learning Brief Series
- Haiti EFSP on HDP, conflict mitigation/ prevention

Research Support

- Al Barka WASH Market Assessment
- Budikadidi Waterpoint Governance Assessment
- Apolou Permagarden Assessment
- Research synthesis workshops
- Niger Evidence of Impact report
- Co-development of MiC Research & Learning Agenda

Learning Dissemination

- University of North Carolina Water and Health Conference Presentations (2)
- MUS World Water Week presentation
- Support to Kenya and Karamoja learning events
- Facilitate external partner presentations (SEADS, ISSD) at Agriculture WG
- Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies Webinar Series
- Roll-out of revised PG technical manual and learning group

RFSA Priorities by Sector and Themes

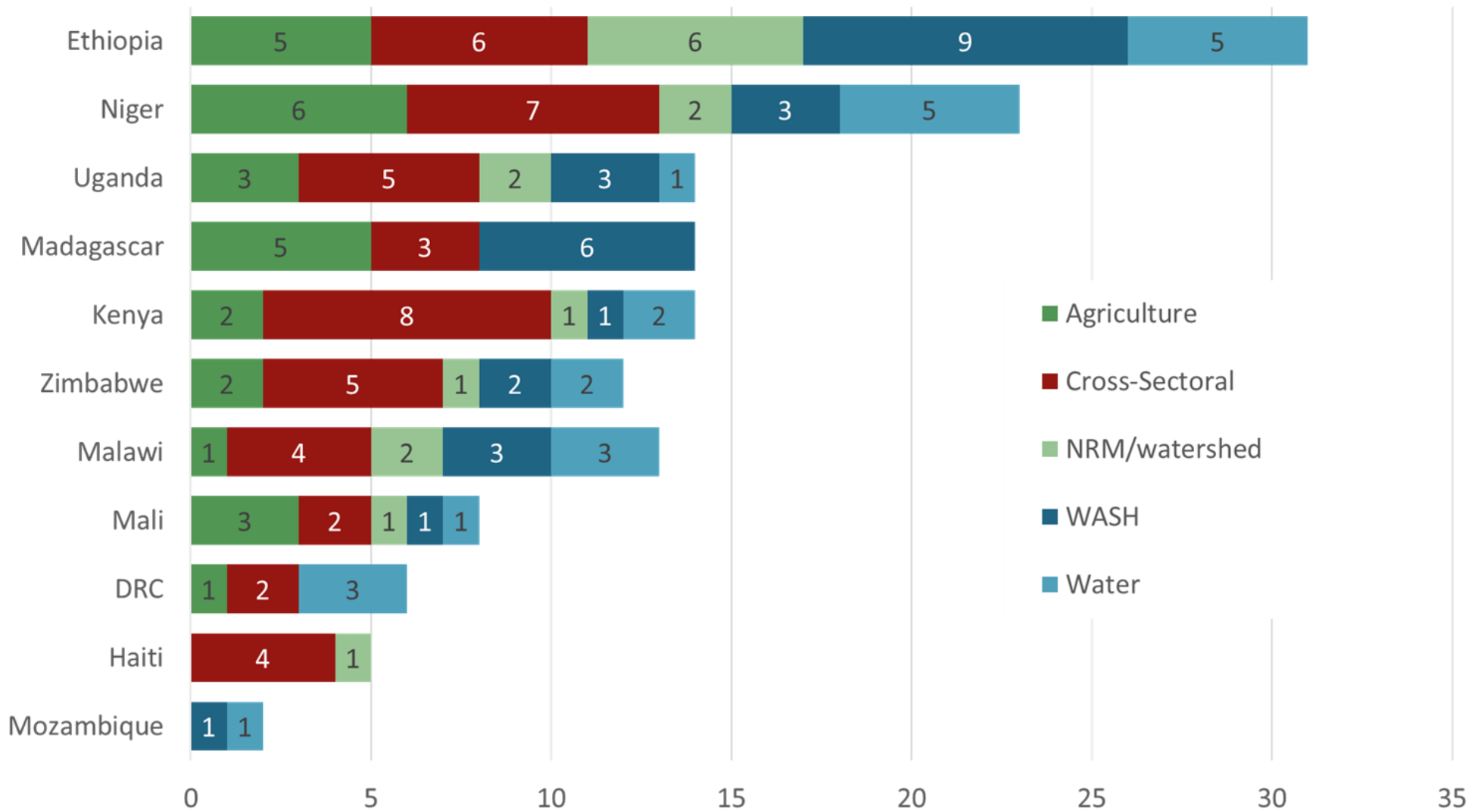


currently
142

Specific support requests from RFSA partners

Among the **142** requests, **5** sectors and **25** themes emerged

RFSA Priorities Sectors by Country



Humanitarian Priorities for PRO-WASH & SCALE

- Use of CVA in support of recovery and food security; cash in support of MBP in emergencies
- Stronger links between WASH cluster technical approaches and nutrition outcomes through improved cross-cluster coordination with the gFSC & WGs (national and global)
- Developing lessons learned, practical guidance, evidence re Anticipatory Action in food crises
- Building the evidence base for market-based approaches in livelihoods stabilization, WASH
- Socialization of Nature-based Solutions Sphere Unpacked Guide, including environmental safeguarding for humanitarian sector
- Seed systems assessments and interventions, promotion/adoption of key tools and resources
- Generating evidence & evidence-based decision-making for humanitarian WASH
- Cross-working group collaboration on pastoralist livelihoods strategies: Agriculture, Cash & Markets, Anticipatory Action
- WASH Knowledge Management
- Climate Resilient WASH
- Hygiene promotion in emergencies, including evidence-based approaches to SBC and community engagement
- Enhancing market assessments and market analyses in crisis contexts
- Sustainable approaches to water quality monitoring in emergencies
- Multi-sectoral WASH integration and coordination
- WASH quality and accountability
- WASH Capacity Professionalization and Localization



**Knowledge
Management, Learning,
Communications (KLC)
Approach**

KLC Approach



Define Objectives

What are we trying to achieve? These objectives should always have a clear link to our overall goal for the award.

- Influence behavior
- Train professionals
- Educate beginners
- Draw attention
- Create awareness



Identify Audiences

Whom do we need to reach to achieve our objectives? Audiences for each objective and specific activity need to be as narrowly defined and focused as possible (see slide 46 for initial stakeholder mapping).

- WASH and agriculture technical staff in RFSAs & emergency programs
- IP leadership
- Local partner staff
- Researchers
- Government officials
- Private sector actors



Package the Learning

The objective & audience determine the type of output. What do they prefer? How do they learn best? Combine this with how we want to change their behavior or awareness to select the output.

- In-person events
- Online events
- Reports or briefs
- Dashboards
- Videos
- E-Learning modules
- Infographics
- Podcasts
- Peer communities



Get the Word Out

What is the best time and place to maximize stakeholder engagement?

- E-Learning platform
- Meetings
- FSNNetwork / Other websites or fora
- Social media
- Email listservs
- Newsletters
- Conferences



Evaluate

Is the learning output successful or does it need to be adapted?

- Post-event / post-training surveys or qualitative feedback
- E-learning platform data
- Website data, incl. resource downloads
- Social media stats
- Video views

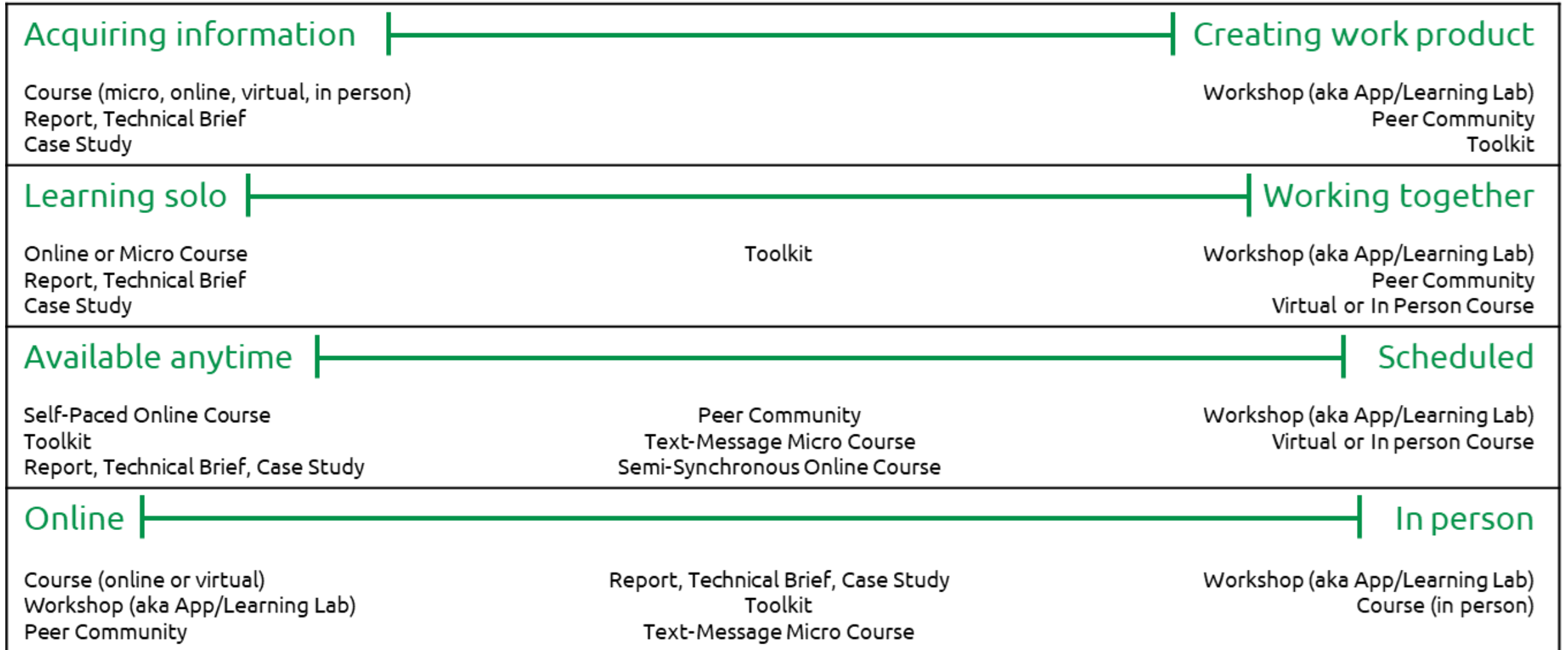
Adapt the package based on feedback and data

Adapt new learning outputs based on feedback and data

Factors in Choosing a Learning Modality

<p>1. What do participants need to do?</p>	<p>Acquiring information ————— Creating work product</p> <p>What will participants do during the session? Read/listen, comprehend, and remember? Analyze or synthesize? Practice a new skill? Why? Be specific. What do participants need to do after the session? Apply new ideas? Change how they do a portion of their work? Lead or train others in a process? Develop a new tool or method?</p>
<p>2. With whom?</p>	<p>Learning solo ————— Working together</p> <p>Will participants need to collaborate to achieve the goal described above? If so, with whom (e.g., peers, experts)? In what ways (e.g., active discussion, creating a file, commenting on work created, practicing facilitation)? For what specific purposes (e.g., to develop new ideas, to reach consensus, to evaluate, to create)?</p>
<p>3. When?</p>	<p>Available anytime ————— Scheduled</p> <p>Consider what you have described above. Can/should this learning experience be available whenever participants need/want it (i.e., any time of day, time of year)? Can/should that time be limited in some way (e.g., 3 live meetings during a 4-week period)? Don't consider artifacts of the experience (e.g., webinar recording) at this time.</p>
<p>4. Where?</p>	<p>Online ————— In person</p> <p>Given the parameters described above and other relevant constraints (e.g., geography, budget, COVID), where should the components of the learning experience be delivered?</p>

Mapping Common Learning Modalities



Other Important Considerations

PRO-WASH & SCALE will:

- Tailor each learning output/product to specific audience needs and preferences such as:
 - preferred language
 - timezone
 - access to internet connection
 - access to advanced technology
 - familiarity with specific tools
 - time & budget available for learning
- Seek user feedback via evaluation surveys, product reviews, beta-testing, etc. and adapt accordingly
- Write in plain language
- Apply our brand to create compelling, high-quality products
- Create accessible products that are 508 compliant

Stakeholders





Adaptive Management

Strategy Learning and Refinement

Monitoring

- Post-event and post-training surveys and feedback forms
- After action reviews
- Review of routine monitoring data, including annual survey results
- Checking in with all IPs at least annually, particularly the “quieter/less engaged ones”

Adaptations

- Regular Pause & Reflects (quarterly)
- Quarterly updates of RFSA engagement plans
- Revisions based on Cluster & TWiG’s work plans
- Regular input from the Technical Advisory Committee
- Consultations with BHA
- Adaptive management integrated in annual work planning process

Thank you!

Website: www.fsnnetwork.org/prowashandscale

Email: prowashandscale@savechildren.org



Disclaimer: This presentation was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the PRO-WASH and SCALE Award and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Acronyms

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CLTS+	Community-Led Total Sanitation Plus
CoP / DCoP	Chief of Party / Deputy Chief of Party
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CS	Capacity Strengthening
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DDR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EFSP	Emergency Food Security Program
ER4	Emergency, Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience
EWS	Early Warning System
FEbA	Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation
gFSC	Global Food Security Cluster
HAO	Humanitarian Assistance Officer
KLC	Knowledge Management, Learning, Communications
KM	Knowledge Management
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HCD	Human-Centered Design
HQ	Headquarters

IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
ISSD	Integrated Seed and Sector Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LSP	Large Scale Pilot
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBP	Market Based Programming
MC	Mercy Corps
MiC	Markets in Crises
MMCA	Make Me a Change Agent
MSD	Market System Development
MUS	Multiple-Use Water Systems
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PCS	Program Cycle Support
PG	Permagarden

Acronyms (continued)

PRO-WASH	Practice, Research, and Operations in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
PSP	Private Service Provider
RD	Resilience Design
RFA	Request for Applications
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
S34D	Feed the Future Global Supporting Seed Systems for Development
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SCALE	Strengthening Capacity in Agriculture, Livelihoods, and Environment
SomReP	Somali Resilience Program

SSSD	Soil Science Society of America
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPQ	BHA Office of Technical and Program Quality
TWiG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WG	Working Group
WRM	Water Resource Management
WWF	World Wildlife Foundation