

Effective Joint Sector Reviews for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) – a poster

1. What is a Joint Sector Review?

There is no standard definition of a Joint Sector Review (JSR). For our purposes, a JSR is a **periodic process** that brings **different stakeholders** in a particular sector together to **engage** in dialogue, **review** status, progress and performance and take **decisions** on **priority actions** (often called *Undertakings*).

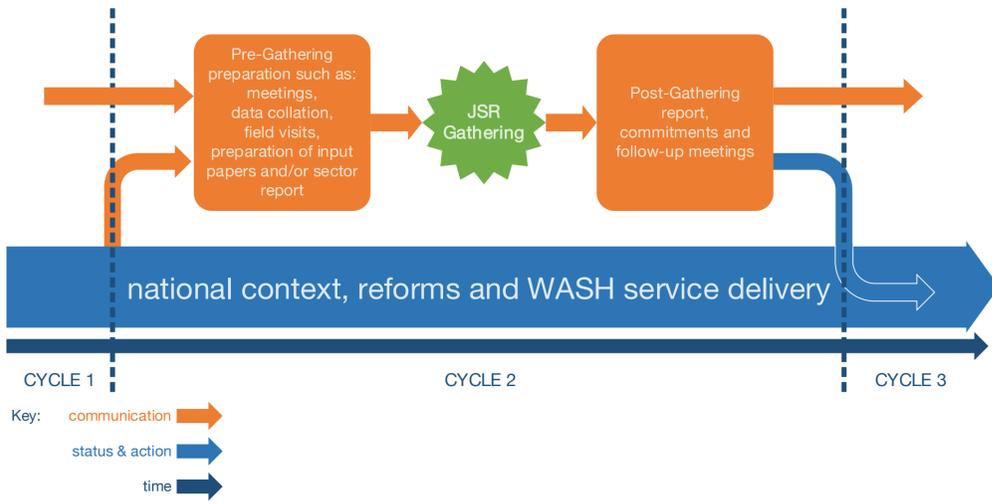


Figure 1: Basic components of a Joint Sector Review (JSR)

3. The way forward for WASH Joint Sector Reviews

1. JSR Leadership and participation: It is the government who needs to lead the JSR process. It is an issue of national sovereignty. Take the lead and ask for support. If you have capacity constraints, ask for assistance from in-country partners. Invest government human and financial resources into the process. Do not just depend on the donors. Remember that a JSR is a political, as well as technical process. This means that the political leadership also needs to be informed and contribute to it.

12. Capacity for JSR participation and monitoring and evaluation: To operationalise the monitoring and evaluation framework (item 11), human capacities, and finance are required to collect, store, analyse and synthesise data, as well as present and communicate it. Capacity for JSR participation as well as monitoring and evaluation needs to be strengthened, and re-strengthened, particularly if staff turnover is high.

2. Donor engagement: In countries where multiple donors are financing WASH, and are not providing general budget support, JSRs are one of the few mechanisms for mutual accountability. Thus, although government needs to take the lead, donors need to take responsibility for JSRs happening, and must play an active role. This includes making themselves accountable for their results.

13. Long-term partner commitment: States and government are not monoliths. Even in contexts where the state is predatory, there will usually be parts of the system, or particular institutions, bureaucrats or ministries with which aid actors can work. Long term donor commitment to the sector and the country, as well as flexibility, is absolutely essential and closely linked to the "Collaborative Behaviours", endorsed by Sanitation & Water for All (SWA) partners, including "one platform for mutual accountability".

3. JSRs can evolve and improve over time: You can start small, depending on what you and your partners can afford. This may mean initially involving few selected stakeholders or limiting the scope to a few topics. Over time, more data can be drawn in. However, limited, try to include some specific field visits to talk to local authorities, service providers and water users. Try to bring financial data, however limited, into the first cycle. Transplanting ideas and practices from other countries should respect the different contexts.

14. Reporting by NGOs, CSOs, donor agencies and other development partners: need to adhere to national reporting systems, including those for WASH. NGO networks, umbrella organisations, and consortia all have a very important role to play in bringing these organisations together, and facilitate as well as consolidate NGO/CSO reporting. It is also essential that the financial as well as in-kind support by all development partners is to be reported in-country in a transparent manner.

4. Involve Finance and Planning Ministries: They can inform you what is needed to attract more government investment into WASH. Innovations and reforms in public finance provide citizens with access to financial information that can enable you to better understand how WASH is being financed (or not). Most finance ministries can provide information on WASH budgets and expenditures by different government agencies and departments – and sometimes donors as well.

15. Capacity strengthening through technical assistance and mentoring: International technical assistance, as well as mentoring can be instrumental in providing support to the JSR processes. However, to be effective, it should be in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and aligned with country systems and needs. All interventions from international partners should aim at reducing dependence on outside assistance not increasing it.

5. Participation: An effective JSR process brings diverse stakeholders together. Provide the opportunity for national and international stakeholders inside and outside government. There will be differences of opinions and debate may not always be comfortable, but over time these discussions will unleash creativity and strengthen the sector. A JSR is a political, as well as technical process. This means that the political leadership, as well as civil society needs to be informed and contribute to it.

16. Global Actions: There are a number of actions that multilateral and bilateral agencies, international organisations and global networks and partnerships could take to strengthen in-country JSR process for WASH and their linkages to the WASH sector:

6. Deciding priorities actions: Setting priorities (or undertakings) needs to be well-facilitated, so that realism is achieved with ambition. Priorities should be SMART, (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), specifying who will take the lead. All priorities that require financial resources that relate to WASH implementation or policy changes must be multi-year, with annual milestones. Try to avoid accumulating more and more high priority actions every year. Only so much can be done!

a. Create incentives for, and encourage country level staff working in development assistance and humanitarian work to collaborate, and effectively engage in and strengthen JSR processes and linkages, including reporting in accordance with local, national and WASH cluster reporting systems.

7. JSR documentation and dissemination: The documents and reports generated before and after the JSR gathering should be finalised, widely disseminated and published online, preferably by government. Newspaper articles/inserts, posters, radio/TV programmes and interviews should be used to inform the public. Non-state actors should also disseminate public JSR documentation. Online access to national (or state) WASH JSR documents needs to become an integral part of national as well as global WASH culture.

b. Use the JSR process to inform and guide agencies in-country activities, funding, programmes and studies.

8. The interface between the JSR and the wider sector, and context: Everyone involved in the JSR needs to create the interface between the JSR process and service delivery, implementation, reforms and the wider context. The JSR can be used to review finance, progress and status of WASH and can be embedded within existing reporting and planning, but this takes time to achieve.

c. Improve the evidence on WASH JSRs in the GLAAS report by providing the evidence that they took place, including links to the most recent relevant documents, also noting where these are not available.

9. Review the JSR process, relevance, effectiveness and impact: JSRs can become more effective over time, but only if time is invested in reflecting on JSR objectives, priority actions and achievements and how the process is organised and run. JSR documentation is essential for this stock-taking and it is important to encourage constructive feedback from partners from within and outside government. It may be decided that cycle needs to be done more or less frequently, or maybe JSR outcomes can be achieved in other ways.

d. Support countries to start, or review their own WASH JSR processes and links to other key activities. Enable countries to learn from each other.

10. Sector Investment Plan: Your country should develop a realistic sector investment plan for WASH or wider, depending on the scope of the sector in-country. It must be able to show different investment scenarios, and models such as reaching the national targets, the SDGs, and lower levels of service. A good sector investment plan is a powerful tool to show graphically what is to be expected for rural and urban water supply and sanitation coverage, service levels and functionality for different levels of investment.

e. Clarify linkages between WASH "sustainability checks" and other audits, evaluations or analytical tools and JSRs.

11. National (or state) Monitoring & Evaluation framework & reporting: A monitoring & evaluation framework setting out what will be measured, including indicators, by whom, as well as reporting flows and data consolidation is fundamental for coherent sector monitoring. Where this does not exist, the JSR process should be used to support its preparation. This framework can start with a few indicators but should clarify how to capture humanitarian assistance as well as development intervention.

f. Undertake another multi-country review of WASH JSRs as follow-on to this study in the next three to five years. Improve the methodology. Address certain aspects in greater depth, such as the relationship between JSR effectiveness and how well they are embedded in sector reforms, finance agreements, programme implementation or long-term donor support, as well as their impact.

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g. Undertake further work to deepen the understanding of how to provide flexible, but effective support, including capacity strengthening in fragile states and countries in protracted crisis.

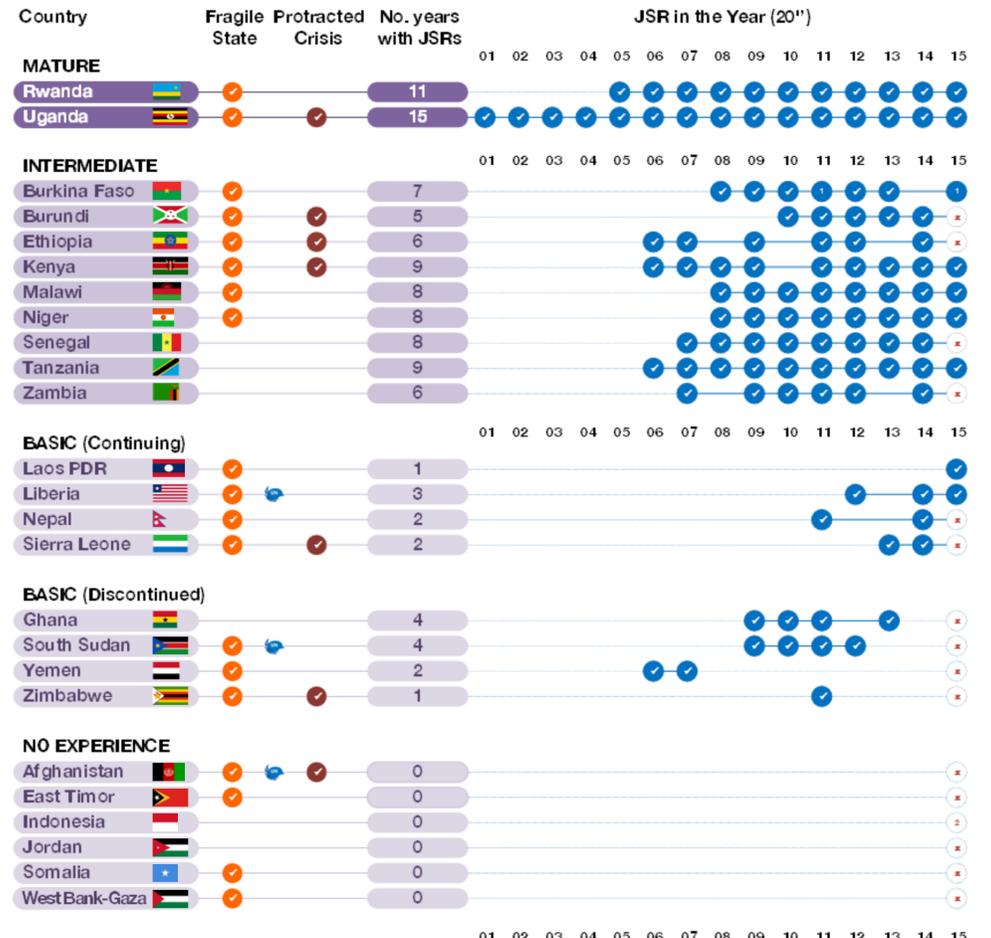
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h. Set an example of transparency in WASH by publishing country reports, evaluation reports and physical audits online and placing WASH JSR documentation on country pages.

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i. Support the development of training materials, online courses and on-job training for leading and participating in JSR process as well as the linkages between JSRs and national planning and reporting.

2. Where have JSRs taken place?



KEY

- Country included in one or more of the OECD fragile states reports between 2007 and 2016 (OECD, 2015 pp32)
- UN peace-keeping operation in the country between 2012 and 2016
- Country included in the FAO (2010 or 2016) updated list for countries in protracted crisis
- One or more JSR gatherings took place in that year
- No JSR in 2015

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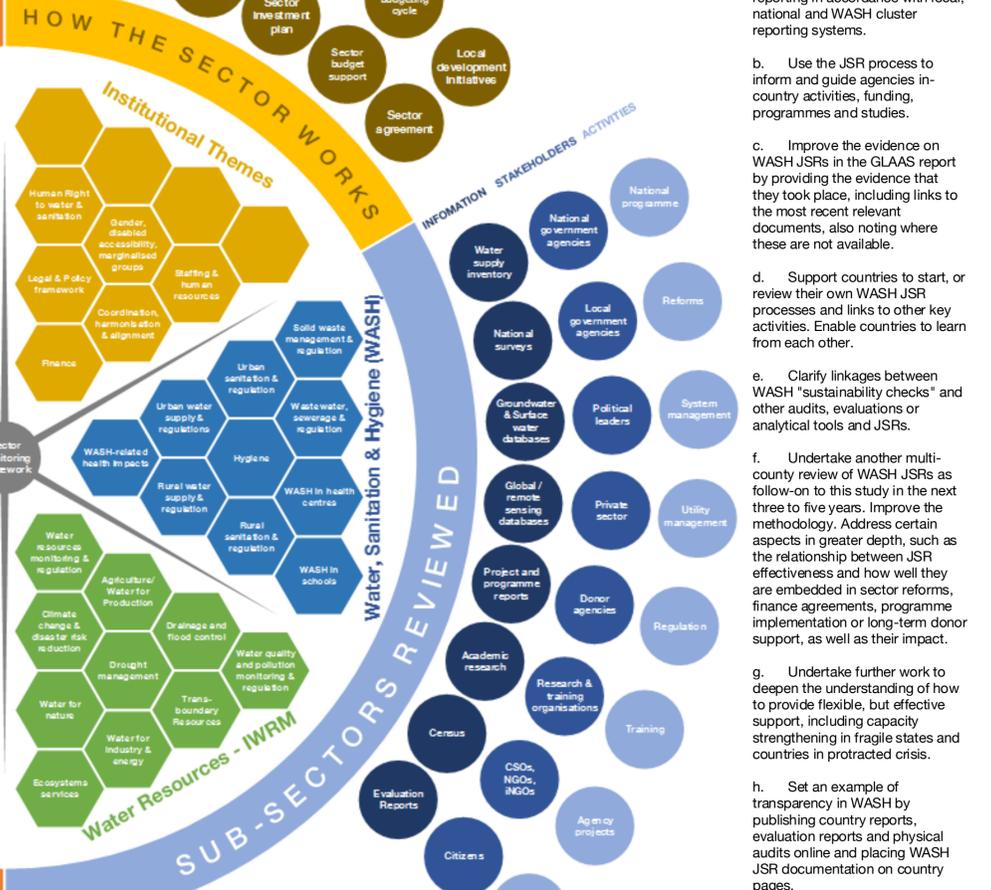
- The 2011 and 2015 meetings in Burkina Faso were both entitled "national Forum" and prepared for the participation of country in the World Water Forums in Marseille, France (2012) and Daegu-Gyeongbuk, South Korea (2015).
- Indonesian International Water Week (2016) had many features of a JSR Gathering.
- Technical review meetings (a second review type meeting, or half-yearly meeting) have taken place in Burkina Faso (2013), Ethiopia (some years), South Sudan (2010), Uganda and Rwanda.

Figure 2: Known JSR and JSR-type events since 2002

Wider context of activities and processes



Wider context of laws and policies



Wider context of implementation, stakeholders & reporting

Figure 3. A proposed framework of detailed components of a Joint Sector Review (JSR) process, from 25 examples analysed