



MILLENNIUM WATER  
ALLIANCE

# Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

October 2023 – September 2024

*The Millennium Water Alliance is a permanent global alliance of leading humanitarian, research, and business organizations in water, sanitation, and hygiene that serves as a hub for collective impact, accelerates learning, and influences priorities and funding to scale sustained water security, sanitation, and hygiene services globally.*

## MILLENNIUM WATER ALLIANCE MEMBERS IN FY 2024



*Our member organizations collectively work in more than 100 countries around the world to bring safely managed drinking water, better sanitation, and hygiene practices to more than 50 million of the world's poorest people every year.*

### **Message from Chief Executive Officer, Keith Wright**

As we reflect on 2024, The Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) was able to more than sustain our mission; we significantly strengthened our collaboration and invested in innovation required to tackle the world's most complex water security challenges. This was a year of decisive transition, characterized by three major achievements: 1) proving the power of innovative financing, 2) successfully shifting our programmatic focus toward long-term system resilience, and 3) ensuring our voice remains strong in volatile policy environments.

In our field programs, we advanced from traditional project delivery toward pioneering sustainable solutions. In Kenya, our DRIP-FUNDI initiative moved from proof of concept to scalable reality, installing sensor technology on 130 boreholes to underpin a new model for long-term operations and maintenance funding — a genuine game-changer for service reliability. We also expanded our footprint in East Africa by securing \$7.1 million in new resilience funding from USAID-BHA and the Coca-Cola Foundation, integrating these efforts with major localization programs to ensure that ownership and capacity remain firmly at the county and community levels. In Ethiopia, we strategically completed our large-scale service delivery program (Sustainable WASH Program – SWP), immediately leveraging that success to launch a new research initiative dedicated to professionalizing water service management across the country (Strategic Transition Program – STraP).

Our core strength, naturally, lies in our network. We significantly invested in our institutional backbone this year by hiring essential new leadership for Knowledge Management & Learning and Partnerships. This investment quickly yielded results, resulting in new tools to help our members find funding and collaborate more efficiently.

And despite unprecedented instability in US politics, our advocacy efforts successfully stabilized critical Congressional funding for the sector and ensured the bipartisan Global Water Security Caucus remains strongly led, protecting our ability to influence future policy.

MWA is not just managing water access. We are building financial sustainability, institutional expertise, and political resilience into the WASH sector. Our achievements in 2024 lay a firm foundation for expanding our influence and accelerating scalable, lasting water solutions globally in the years to come.

### **Executive Overview and Strategic Positioning**

In 2024, MWA focused on strengthening its institutional foundations while advancing practical innovation across its programs. Despite a challenging global context, MWA continued to deliver results through its three strategic pillars (Convene, Accelerate, and Influence) emphasizing systemic resilience, new approaches to financing, and stronger local ownership of WASH services.

#### *Financial Stability and Institutional Growth*

The organization demonstrated robust financial stewardship, which allowed for strategic investments necessary to drive future value for the Alliance. MWA anticipates continued growth in unrestricted net assets during the year, driven by Global Hub revenues exceeding expenditures. MWA's stable financial position in 2024 allowed the organization to advance planned capacity-building efforts outlined in its annual budget. Two key positions were added to the Global Hub team, a Learning and Knowledge Management (KML) Officer (Audrey Caprio) and a Programs and Partnerships Officer, strengthening MWA's ability to coordinate learning, partnerships, and member support. These recruitments reflect a deliberate investment in institutional capacity, ensuring MWA remains equipped to generate evidence, share knowledge, and build collaborative opportunities across the Alliance.

## **MWA Programs**

MWA's 2024 field efforts concentrated on the complex, climate-vulnerable arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya and Ethiopia, successfully managing the completion of long-term grants while launching innovative new programs focused on system professionalization and sustainable financing.

### *Kenya Programs*

The Kenya portfolio was characterized by diversification of funding, securing two major new grants totaling over \$6.2 million, and a strong strategic alignment across all initiatives, focusing heavily on localization, climate resilience, and pioneering Results-Based Financing (RBF) models. Progress made during the year on the country programs in Kenya included:

- **Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development Plus (RAPID+)**: The program completed its Mid Term Review (MTR) in the fourth quarter, refining its approach to enhancing economic resilience and growth in arid and semi-arid lands. Key personnel, including the MEL Specialist and Rangelands Intervention Coordinator, were successfully onboarded to guide the strategy for the remaining term.
- **USAID BHA Program (DRIP FUNDI)**: This RBF-CC initiative successfully completed the installation of Virridy sensors on 130 boreholes, preparing for a carbon verification exercise in early 2025 to secure long-term Maintenance, Repair, and Operations (MRO) funding. MWA drafted a costed expansion proposal for submission to USAID BHA in December 2024, seeking to extend the program's innovative RBF model to additional communities.
- **Sustainable Transformational and Accessible Water Interventions (STAWI) Mashinani Activity**: This \$12.6 million localization effort successfully onboarded nine Local Development Organizations (LDOs) and key personnel, starting initial assessments and capacity-building efforts. Following a first-year lower start-up phase, MWA submitted the Construction Plan and Environmental Mitigation plans, anticipating a significant increase in the pace and rate of implementation.
- **Think and Do Tank Initiative**: This Euro 1 million, three-year knowledge and learning program formalized its operations in 2024, initiating county entry meetings and completing a Research Agenda Validation Workshop focused on accelerating resilience building in the ASALs. The program successfully onboarded its Capacity Strengthening and Networking Specialist, preparing for its second-year work plan and upcoming donor report.
- **Sustainable Safe Water Access (SASaWa) Initiative – The Coca-Cola Foundation**: This new \$5.2 million, five-year grant kicked off in August 2024, with the rapid onboarding of a Program Manager and strategic entry meetings to align efforts with existing programs like DRIP FUNDI and STAWI. The initiative aims to enhance water resilience and sustainability by leveraging strategic partnerships and innovative financing models, including carbon credits.

### *Ethiopia Programs*

The Ethiopia portfolio successfully managed the closeout of major grants while strategically pivoting resources toward specialized, evidence-based learning initiatives aimed at professionalizing service delivery and generating knowledge for future investment. Progress made during the year on the country programs in Ethiopia included:

- **Sustainable WASH Program (SWP)**: The SWP successfully completed its core project activities, receiving endorsement from regional government entities through terminal evaluations and achieving improved WASH access for over 72,000 beneficiaries. Following a one-year No Cost Extension (NCE) to March 2025, MWA launched a data consolidation project using mWater to streamline learning from SWP and other Hilton-funded projects.
- **Strategic Transition Program (STraP)**: This 18-month research and learning initiative officially commenced in August 2024, focusing on expanding the Strategic Transition Program to enhance

climate-resilient water services in Ethiopia's lowland regions. The project aims to professionalize water service delivery in the Amhara region through system strengthening, research, and stakeholder engagement.

- **Integrated Watershed Management for Environmental Security and Livelihood Enhancement (WALE) Project:** This Integrated Water Resource Management program, in partnership with WRI and WaterAid, continued successful watershed conservation efforts throughout 2024, including activities that increased water infiltration and reduced soil erosion in North Mecha Woreda. The project remains on schedule, supporting community development and enhancing local water availability
- **WASH in School (WISE) Project:** This two-year program, implemented in collaboration with Splash and FH, reached successful completion in 2024, fulfilling its goals of creating better learning environments through improved sanitation and water access. Successful implementations led to enhanced hygiene and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) training in schools, significantly benefiting students' health and education.

### **Alliance Development: Membership and Knowledge Management**

In 2024, MWA strengthened its core network and accelerated internal learning mechanisms, positioning the Alliance as a more efficient hub for collaboration and sector influence.

#### *Progress made on Membership Development during 2024*

MWA continued to expand the depth and diversity of its network, welcoming new members, managing key governance transitions, and building a strong, specialized pipeline for future growth.

The organization welcomed The Water Project as an Affiliate member, bringing the total membership to 21 organizations. By the fourth quarter, MWA had vetted and supported applications from two organizations that would add unique value: RTI International (Non-Profit Affiliate) and LifeStraw (Business Large), both recommended for a vote by the full board. The organization is also actively engaged in discussions with several other strategic organizations regarding possible membership, including Engineers Without Borders, iDE, and Green Empowerment.

This deliberate effort to attract new members, particularly large business and consulting entities like LifeStraw and others in the pipeline, reflects a successful strategy to engage non-traditional players. This is essential for leveraging private-sector expertise in innovative financing and technological deployment required to scale sustained WASH services, especially in complex models like RBF-CC. Furthermore, despite multiple changes in board representation from key member organizations throughout the year, MWA reported zero attrition of members as it entered the new fiscal year, indicating strong member confidence and organizational stability amidst external shifts.

#### *Progress made on Knowledge Management and Learning (KML) during 2024*

2024 marked the year MWA successfully executed its KML strategy overhaul, transitioning from a planning phase (informed by a Q1 member survey 1) to implementation, driven by new leadership. The Knowledge Management & Learning Officer (Audrey Caprio) was successfully onboarded, immediately launching new initiatives to energize and guide how the Alliance generates thought leadership. A major achievement was the publication and dissemination of the Carbon Credit Feasibility and Learning Study (CFLS) findings in Q1/Q2, including a learning paper and webinar. This effort positioned MWA as a leading technical voice on innovative sustainable WASH financing and provided the foundational evidence necessary to support its RBF field programs in Kenya.

The organization also initiated the development of critical KML tools designed to enhance member collaboration and strategic decision-making. These include the WASH & Resilience Opportunities List, a curated, real-time digest of global funding prospects, and tools for mapping member capabilities. This

tool development shifts KML from being a post-implementation reflection activity to a proactive, strategic business development function. By aggregating funding opportunities and mapping member skills, MWA significantly increases the efficiency of its convening pillar, enabling members to quickly identify and pursue collaborative proposal opportunities. Work also commenced on revamping MWA's website and SharePoint platforms to improve functionality and resource accessibility, further supporting the learning ecosystem.

### **Influence and Advocacy**

MWA's influencing efforts in 2024 focused on securing stable funding for the WASH sector and ensuring long-term political continuity for water security policy, despite highly contentious legislative and electoral environments.

#### *Progress made on influence and advocacy related work with Congress or on the Hill*

MWA played a critical, successful role in the volatile US appropriations process. During the year, MWA worked with coalition partners to limit the final cut to USAID WASH funding to only 5.1% (\$451 million), a significantly better outcome than the 31% cut proposed by the Senate. This effort successfully preserved the crucial Sub-Saharan minimum set-aside, protecting funding allocations where the need is greatest.

MWA demonstrated strong engagement on Capitol Hill by conceiving and leading the highly successful Tenth Anniversary of the Water for the World Act event in March 2024, which attracted nearly 200 attendees and amplified the visibility of WASH advocacy. A key strategic accomplishment was managing the crucial leadership succession within the bipartisan Congressional Global Water Security Caucus. MWA co-organized the farewell for retiring Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and successfully welcomed Representative Madeline Dean (D-PA) as a new, high-energy co-chair to the caucus. Securing a dedicated and respected leader like Representative Dean was vital as it successfully mitigates political risk during a time of significant turnover, ensuring that WASH advocacy maintains bipartisan continuity and influence even as new Congress committee assignments are processed in early 2025.

In parallel, MWA continued its work to position WASH within the global climate agenda. The organization hosted an advocacy session at the UNC Water Conference dedicated to increasing the WASH sector's involvement in climate discussions, urging professionals to integrate WASH into climate resilience conversations. MWA drafted a formal position statement on WASH and resilience to guide external and coalition messaging, establishing a broader, more influential advocacy mandate that connects the sector to major global policy discussions and funding frameworks, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP).

### **Financial and Programmatic Context**

MWA's financial data and program burn rates confirm strong stewardship and strategic management of program velocity in 2024. The overall program expenditure remains on track, with cumulative expenditures of \$18.3 million against a total budget of \$27 million, representing an average of 68% across all ongoing projects as of September 30, 2024.

For financial reports, please visit our MWA website at [this link](#).