

BUSINESS PLAN FOR WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

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Executive Summary

The Water and Sanitation sector is highly unreliable and inadequate in Sierra Leone. There have been no efforts over the last decade in improving the quality of water and sewage disposal methods and its related plumbing issues. The households here are therefore forced to rely on river water and the bucket system and open defecation methods. Furthermore, there has also been no implementation of temporary structures or devices such as communal taps and portable toilets. This has led to an accumulation of toxic fumes that contribute to displeasing odors and public health problems.

This Business Plan presents possible approaches to introducing sustainable business models for water and sanitation services in Sierra Leone, with focus on small towns and rural settlements. This is an urgent and challenging task for rural areas, as the coverage borne piped water supply in these areas has been in its lowest ebb with no donor support.

Therefore, the next urgent task for many small towns and rural settlements is to develop water supply and sanitation systems. The absence of a sustainable business plan represents probably the major institutional barrier to this improvement. Water and sanitation systems in small towns and villages are usually too small and fragmented to raise the revenues and gather the capacities needed to operate and maintain them.

Several criteria were used to assess the sustainability of the business models: the capacity to operate and maintain the service; the capacity to raise revenues to cover the operation and maintenance costs; impacts on affordability of water and sanitation services. The later criterion is very important as affordability constraints are among the major barriers to financial sustainability of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) systems in Sierra Leone.

The project employs participatory methodologies that promote inclusion and community decision making, and is building the capacity of community based organisations including Water Management Committees (WMC), Community Health Clubs (CHCs) and School Health Clubs (SHCs). HACEM-SL Limited and its local partners are building dialogue between communities and local government in order to increase government support for and investment in hygiene, sanitation and water supply interventions.

Unsafe drinking water and poor toilet facilities can be a significant carrier of diseases such as trachoma, cholera, typhoid, schistosomiasis and other pathogens that cause diarrhoea. In addition to this, access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities are particularly important for time use of women and children who bear the primary responsibility for obtaining and carrying water—tasks that can take a great deal of time due to long distances and/or waiting times that are often required

Introduction

According to a work put forward by the European Commission “the water and sanitation sector covers infrastructure and services related to providing safe and quality drinking water and sanitation services to households” (2015). This sector is highly important seeing as many activities and daily functioning of society depend on it. For quite a while, access to clean water and sanitation has been an exceptionally large issue around the globe. Many studies show that numerous Communities throughout the world have a very limited access to clean water, and its supporting infrastructure. Moreover, many people have limited access to proper hygiene and Sanitation services.

Access to clean water and proper sanitation has been a significant issue particularly in developing nations. Therefore, this sector has gained much attention globally since it has become a major threat to the lives of these people living there. To address these issues, many international corporations and bodies have assisted in providing humanitarian help, specifically in these nations, to help in providing safe drinking water and good sanitation for all. According to Schlein, “The United Nations reports nearly 850,000 people die every year from lack of access to good water, sanitation and hygiene” (2017). Since the human body comprises about 70% of water, going without it for a long period of time can lead to dehydration and furthermore death. At the same time a large intake of unclean or toxic water can also lead to terminal illnesses.

The lack of access to sanitation can be linked to a global deficiency in hygienic toilets, poor service provision and a low level of household income. Due to this lack of service provision, the sewage wastewater that communities produce is left untreated and therefore causes many diseases. This in turn can contribute to the death rates of a country. Schlein states that “the joint report by the World Health Organization and United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) finds people living in rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia are most at risk of disease and death from poor water and sanitation-related sources” (2017). The water and sanitation sector are both affected by and affects the economic, political, social and socio-economic aspects of a country. Gomez (2019) speaks of how water and sanitation is an irreplaceable commodity that

serves as a basic resource for economic activity, agriculture, industrial activities and commercial activities. She talks about how this sector is one of the most important ones to keep a country and its people functioning.

The water and sanitation sector stand as one of the most important sectors in society. It consists of a combination of our most basic human rights. This combination of a clean, steady water supply and hygienic sanitation structures or facilities is essential for a functioning society and a thriving economy. Ganter says that population growth; urban development, farm production and climate change are increasing competition for fresh water and producing shortages (2019). The sector is also highly important in the fight against poverty, hunger, starvation and the countries high child mortality rate. According to UNICEF, “2.1 Billion people lack access to safe water and 4.4 billion people lack basic sanitation” (2020). This can cause a number of illnesses and deaths, as well as contribute to increasing poverty and an economic decline. Therefore, it is imperative for solutions to be put into place before the situation becomes too drastic.

Scope of the Business Plan

Our Company will adopt a stronger sanitation focus, aiming to address the serious deficit in sustainable and equitable sanitation services, along the whole chain from latrine use to safe disposal or reuse of faecal matter. We will continue to address the huge challenge of catalyzing and maintaining improved hygienic behavior, which is essential to ensuring that improved services lead to improved health impact. To achieve this, we will launch a program on sustainable water and sanitation services for the attention of donors.

To all this work we bring five primary areas of expertise namely policy influence, knowledge brokerage, thematic innovation, capacity building and training, and monitoring and learning.

Business Areas

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector is facing deep-seated challenges. People have a basic human right to be able to access safe water and hygienic sanitation but the reality is that at least two billion have no way to maintain a safe separation between themselves and

their own or other people's untreated excreta. At the same time, some 800 million people get their drinking water from an unacceptable and probably unsafe source. Despite decades of sector reform and billions of dollars of investment, progress towards universal access to basic WASH services has been frustratingly slow, particularly for sanitation. The net result is that millions of people have poorer health and lower than necessary life expectancy.

A major reason for slow progress is the lack of sustainable service provision. Investments in infrastructure are failing to provide reliable and secure WASH services as a consequence of inadequate maintenance, weak management and ineffective governance. The bigger picture becomes even more challenging when consideration is given to factors and trends with the potential to impact on future provision of, and demand for, WASH services, such as population growth, urbanization, water scarcity, increasing energy costs and climate change. It is notable that many of these factors are outside the control of WASH sector professionals. The simple fact is that the WASH sector is struggling to meet current demands for basic WASH services let alone for higher levels of service. It is probable, given current trends that the scale of the challenge will increase, both in absolute numbers and in complexity.

Operational Area

Sierra Leone is located in West Africa between about 10° and 13° W and 7° to 10° N. The country's total area is 71,740 km² and it has a North-South extension of about 340 km and a maximum East-West extension of about 300 km. Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea in the North and East, and by Liberia in the East and South. Its Atlantic Ocean coastline in the South and West is about 400 km long. The country's highest point is Loma Mansa (Bintimani) reaching 1,948m. Sierra Leone is divided into 5 Regions, 16 Districts and 149 Chiefdoms.

Sierra Leone has suffered from 11 years brutal rebel war and the scourges of Ebola disease outbreak in 2014, in which credit was suspended by Financial Institutions, reducing the much needed capital investment to boost the economy and get it off the ground. The stalemate was further compounded by the corona virus which ravages the whole world including Sierra Leone. The real growth of the economy has been hampered by high inflation, which on an average has been 65 percent per annum for more than 10 years. Out of Sierra Leone's population of 7.2

million (2015 Housing and Population Census), 5 million (70%) live in rural areas which are selected for these project due to the following: Projected community growth, opportunity for disease increase, population demographics and limited WASH facilities

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation services are highly underdeveloped in Sierra Leone. In rural areas, access to piped water services remains very low, whilst wastewater treatment is almost non-existing. Toilet facilities are nothing good to talk about.

According to the Population and Housing Census 2015, 70% of the Sierra Leone population had no access to safe drinking water and 84.5% of the population had no access to toilet facilities and have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).

Most of the potable water in Sierra Leone comes from groundwater resources. In rural areas the population relies almost exclusively on groundwater sources for their water supplies, and by far the majority obtains their water from shallow wells. Frequently water from those wells does not meet health and epidemiological standards. Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) report (2018) contained the following conclusions regarding the water supply situation in rural areas of Sierra Leone:

- The yield of shallow wells in Sierra Leone is generally suitable for manual abstraction, but is unlikely to be sufficient for pumped supplies.
- Water quality in shallow wells is impacted by its location with respect to housing rather than agriculture. High levels of Fluoride are related to geological factors rather than land use.
- Higher yields can be obtained from deeper aquifers, but the investment and running costs can be deterrents to low income communities.
- Groundwater quality problems in Sierra Leone include high levels of Hardness, Total dissolved solids, Selenium, Nitrates, Sulphates, Fluoride and Chloride.

The data of Statistics-Sierra Leone (SSL) indicates that in 2020, 80% of rural population did not have access to piped water networks.

The MoHS (2020) assessment of access to water supplies in rural settlements made the following observations:

- Supplied with in house piped supplies: <2%

- Supplied by yard standpipes : < 3%
- Shallow wells and other sources: 95%.

About the Company

HACEM-SL Limited is a fully registered entity both nationally and internationally that seeks a worldwide network of partner organizations to mitigate the hard conditions in which rural people live in Sierra Leone. We embark on Health, Agriculture, Construction, Education and Mining hence the name, HACEM. Our roots and expertise lie in advocacy, production, information dissemination, knowledge management and capacity building. We have built a strong reputation for cutting-edge innovation with a track record in action research aimed at delivering both new and tested knowledge and sector change. We believe that the solutions to the challenges faced by the WASH sector are found only partially in higher levels of financing – more money for more pumps, pipes, taps and toilets. Rather, we believe that the longer term solutions lie in the knowledge and practices of the people and organizations who are involved in providing and using WASH services. It is therefore, in the areas of knowledge and information management, systems innovation, institutional development and behavioral change that our Organization works: as a catalyst of change, a provider of information, and a developer of new and innovative practices.

HACEM-SL Limited sees itself as a modern Company in the sense that it is thoroughly professional and solution oriented. Its staff and partners have a level of commitment and social values that are both “profitable and non-profit” sectors, while aiming for a level of professionalism in line with global best practices. The result is that HACEM is able to assemble and manage multi-disciplinary teams that have the necessary experience capacity, flexibility and aptitude to work on a wide range of issues ranging from pro-poor WASH service delivery to the technical design of WASH infrastructure and the life-cycle costs of different levels of services. We are able to mobilize teams to work on assignments ranging from a few days to many years at all institutional levels and scales

Vision and mission

Our Company subscribes to a broadly-shared sector **vision** of *a world in which all people are able to enjoy their fundamental human right of access to appropriate and sustainable water and sanitation services that they use and can afford; and where these services are in turn based on sustainable use of water and environmental resources.*

The main reason that this vision is yet to be achieved, despite decades of investment, is found primarily in weaknesses in Governments and the organizations working on the WASH sector. While it can be argued that past problems were essentially related to lack of investment, it is increasingly clear that the challenges facing the WASH sector today relate primarily to systemic issues around management and governance.

In our experience both technical and financial challenges, while real, are of secondary importance, particularly once the initial hurdle of providing infrastructure for the first time has been met. The real challenge lies in managing the infrastructure and finance needed to deliver reliable and sustainable WASH services at levels that are acceptable to users. It is this understanding that helps us to identify our own position and **mission** in the WASH sector as *a knowledge broker, innovator and enabler of change within the sector, in selected focus areas, working to ensure that services are extended to the poor and are better attuned to their needs while being more sustainable, better managed and governed.*

In line with this mission it is our ambition over the next five years to develop and grow our role as a leading Company, with a global outreach, that leads, catalyses and supports pro-poor change in the delivery of WASH services; thus contributing to a better performing sector.

By 2024, the language and concepts of the sector should be couched in terms of delivery of services, investment and monitoring should be targeted at providing sustainable services, and the whole sector should measure itself against the goal of ensuring that people have access to internationally and nationally agreed levels of basic services. We say that this represents a new service delivery paradigm that governs sector thinking and action. We need financial support for the implementation and adoption of service delivery models that showcase the potential for this shift in policy and practice.

Key features of the Plan

This document is the Business Plan for the Water and sanitation Programs of Sierra Leone. It sets out the 5-year plan for that activity and the means of delivering upon that plan.

The document maps out the Organization's proposed continuous improvement journey including the key initiatives to be progressed over the life of the Plan. This program of key initiatives has undergone a risk-based prioritization. This is important, given the Organization operates within an environment of constrained resourcing.

Key features of the Plan include:

- The Plan's focus is to provide safe, healthy and efficient water and sanitation services to contribute to the overall livability of the our deprived communities;
- To achieve this outcome, there are three objectives including ensuring
 - a) the appropriate levels of service are delivered and sustained,
 - b) there are robust support systems to enable the delivery of these services, and
 - c) it is done in a financially viable manner;
- An acknowledgment that the provision of water supply and sanitation services is an asset intensive business. Hence there is a strong focus on putting in place robust asset management plans and condition based renewal programs;
- The sustainability of these services is a key area of attention in the plan. This includes making sure procedures are well documented so practices can pass from one generation of operators to another, and that there are sound succession and training plans in place for key people within the Organization; and
- Continuing to ensure the Organization provides safe drinking water and proper sanitation services to the Community.

a) Sanitation

Sanitation, combined with good hygiene, especially hand-washing with water and soap, can save the lives of the 1.5 million children who die each year from diarrheal diseases. Inadequate sanitation services act as an impediment to economic growth and slow down development. A recent study in Sierra Leone showed that poor sanitation costs the country economy US\$5 million annually. Although sanitation coverage has increased, at the current rate of progress,

the Sierra Leone will miss the MDG target for sanitation. Moreover, the MDG target focuses only on hardware and not on sustainable use, improved hygiene or safe end disposal, or reuse of excreta.

Our Company is working on sanitation and hygiene issues. In line with the overall direction of the business plan 2023 – 2028, our Company will focus to a greater extent on the delivery of sustainable sanitation and hygiene services to rural poor households; the majority of which will not have access to piped sewerage. Sanitation is likely to be characterized by a large number of service delivery models from a range of providers, including self-provision and small-scale private providers, operating at different points of the sanitation chain.

The effective delivery of sustainable, full-cycle sanitation services for all moves beyond the MDG focus on providing access to improved sanitation, and recognizes that sanitation services need to address safe containment, safe and hygienic use, including the safe transportation, treatment, and safe end-disposal or productive use of treated excreta. To maximize environmental, public health and economic benefits, sanitation services need to cover entire communities: households, public places, schools, clinics, markets and other institutions. Sanitation goods and services need to be available to households that may want to replace or upgrade existing facilities, as well as to households that currently have no safe service. For the next five years, our Organization and partners will successfully develop elements essential for a sustainable service delivery approach. Combining these elements into a comprehensive and sustainable service requires:

- The creation of **demand for improved sanitation** and ensuring the continuous hygienic use of these facilities.
- **Supply** of affordable sanitation technologies and components through the creation of viable sanitation value chains.
- Access to a mix of **finance** instruments to support construction, use of, operation and maintenance of latrines.
- An adequate **institutional framework** and a supportive enabling environment to ensure continuity, scaling up and sustainability.

In the initial phase of the delivery of sanitation services, we see a greater role for public sector actors to stimulate demand and to raise awareness of the need for sustained and improved sanitation and hygiene behaviour, and to regulate and control all aspects of the sector, including private sector actors. With the evolution of adequate sanitation services, it is expected that governments, over time, will be able to redefine their roles and focus more on planning, financing, monitoring and coordination. Governments have the main responsibility for regulation and oversight with respect to the whole sanitation chain, and for providing finance or other support mechanisms for groups with specific needs, such as people with disabilities and the poorest households.

In rural sanitation, HACEM Company and partners will build on earlier experiences, especially in supporting large scale sanitation and hygiene programmes during the period 2023 – 2028. We will document and disseminate these experiences and fill gaps in our knowledge through action research into the actual delivery of sustainable rural sanitation services. We will continue to map and analyze the range of actors and roles across the sanitation chain, while looking into who delivers which services to whom at each point of entry.

Challenges for the rural framework will be addressed in depth at our seminar “Sanitation for the Rural Poor: Partnerships and Governance” and through area operations workshops. We will promote affordable and effective commercial services for safe collection and use of treated excreta as an entry point to work on sustainable sanitation services for all. We will focus especially on end-of cycle enterprise services at scale. The safe disposal or productive reuse of human waste is the least developed and currently most risky part of the urban sanitation chain. As a consequence, untreated and indiscriminately disposed of human waste is contaminating the environment and freshwater sources

b) Hygiene

Sustainable water and sanitation services are crucial in improving livelihoods and public health, but unless these services are used effectively and hygienically, the benefits will be dramatically undermined.

It is widely accepted that effective and sustained hygiene behaviour change requires ongoing activities with consistent and targeted messages through multiple communication channels, over a considerable period of time.

Hygiene promotion can be seen as a function of public or environmental health where the service delivery approach should be overseen by public or environmental health departments and undertaken by service providers, as well as by health and education sector actors. The range of activities within a particular area needs to be coordinated and integrated. The development of institutional models for integrated hygiene promotion, requiring work across sectors, is an area of keen interest in our focus operational areas.

Our Company action research focuses on a greater cost effectiveness of hygiene promotion interventions with better research and documentation. Key activities are to disseminate the lessons from experiences within the country and provide a framework for effective hygiene promotion. Some key issues include hygiene promotion for men, assessment of costs and service levels as part of the WASH Cost project and assessment of cost-effectiveness in country programmes. The aim is to make a substantial contribution to the evidence base for effective and efficient hygiene promotion investments. For both hygiene and sanitation, HACEM-SL will be involved in three main types of activities:

- Action research for sanitation and hygiene related issues with the aim of filling the gaps in our existing knowledge on the delivery of sustainable sanitation and hygiene services at scale.
- Combination of action research with support to large-scale delivery of sanitation and hygiene services.
- Improved learning and sharing through documentation and dissemination of good practices packaged in tools, briefing notes, training materials and background literature

c) Water supply

Water supply is ahead of sanitation not only in terms of coverage, but also in the sophistication of available service delivery models. Despite relentless urbanisation, the majority of unserved people still live in rural areas. However, the rapid and often unplanned nature of urbanization leads to a special set of problems in peri-urban and informal (slum) areas.

Rural water supply will increasingly come to resemble “professional” urban water supply in being managed in a business-like manner – whether by community, public or private providers. With growing wealth and expectations we will see more rural water services being provided through small and medium sized pipe networks, with attendant needs for a higher level of managerial capacity. Issues traditionally seen as belonging to urban utilities (such as asset management and tariff setting) will become increasingly important in rural areas.

HACEM-SL limited will encourage and support these changes as part of our scaling up agenda, and we will continue to do so. In the focus areas, we will contribute to measurable improvements in the sustainability and quality of services provided to rural water users, thus improving the cost effectiveness of financing service provision by others. At the same time we will aim to document, scrutinize and widely disseminate our own and our partners’ experiences.

In sub-urban areas, HACEM-SL Limited will support the development of Innovative service delivery models that reach unserved populations and the poor. We will focus on stimulating the development of flexible models that ensure that sub-urban areas benefit from services of an acceptable quality – as part of a planned approach that will eventually result in all rural dwellers living in housing of an acceptable quality with on-site water and sanitation. These models include supporting informal sector providers, as well as creating innovative partnerships and regulation regimes that start from a recognition of how water is actually supplied in difficult-to-reach areas.

They encompass enabling regulations and support for utilities, the private sector and community-based associations to ensure access to and sustainability of water services.

An important area for HACEM- SL Limited and key partners is the approach that rural water services must take into account the needs of rural users not just for drinking water but also for water for a wide range of other activities (such as livestock, horticulture and small businesses).

Two different types of water supply systems will be embarked by this business plan

- i) **Solar water well or Artesian Aquifer drilled well:** These are wells drilled into rock to intersect the water table and reaching far below it. They are constructed by either cable

tool (percussion) or rotary-drilling machines. Drilled wells that penetrate unconsolidated material require installation of casing and a screen to prevent inflow of sediments and collapse. They can be drilled than 1,000 feet deep. The space around the casing must be sealed with grouting materials of either neat cement or bentonite clay to prevent contamination by water draining from the surface downward around the outside of the casing. This type of well produces safe drinking water and cannot be easily contaminated.

The quality of materials is very important factor in well construction. Casing must meet certain standards and specifications, since substandard pipes do not have sufficient strength to withstand driving and formation collapse pressure without potential damage to the joint. Such damage may allow shallow or surface water to enter the well. Therefore, casing may be one of various classes of steel or thermoplastic (PVC). Solar power is being used to pump the water into the water tank for distribution to the consumers.

The filtration system is done by casing where the lower portion of the borehole is the intake through which water enters the well. After drilling, removal of fine materials remaining from the drilling process can be done so that water can more readily enter the well. The well needs proper disinfection with the use of chlorine and capped to provide sanitary protection.

- ii) **Hand pump water well:** Hand-pump water well opens access to deeper groundwater that is often not polluted and also improves the safety of the well by protecting the water source from contamination. Pump such as the Afridev pumps are designed to be cheap to build and install, and easy to maintain with simple parts

Capacity Building and Training

Capacity building continues to be a core activity for our Organization, especially in action research which brings together practitioners and researchers to learn how to do things

differently and better. Capacity is about the right people with the right skills being in the right place, and having the tools to do their jobs and meet their responsibilities. It involves everything from the village waterman (or woman) having the right skills and spare parts to mend a hand-pump, to national laws, rules and protocols giving support to sector policies and people.

Training is a critical part of capacity building. We recognize that training is a key channel for catalyzing sector change and in developing and maintaining human capacity in the sector. HACEM-SL Limited has taken a strategic decision to once again make training a core activity, to be delivered by our experts in operational areas.

An ambitious international training program will be developed to target future leaders, senior consultants and managers, as an integral part of our sector change programmes. We aim to build a new training programme on a solid basis of partnership with other training organizations including universities, training centres and NGOs. At operational area level we will use training to advance sector change agendas.

Monitoring and Learning

While it is impossible for our Company to be truly accountable to something as diffuse as “the WASH sector”, we will be transparent and honest in talking about what we do, how we do it and how much it costs. Learning is central to transparency and to our planning and monitoring systems, and will be a core part of all our internal and external processes. A commitment to collecting information and sharing lessons is therefore a fundamental part of how we will work to achieve a loop of analysis, planning, action and monitoring. Assessment and evaluation will be an integral part of this business plan.

Monitoring and learning, using a combination of methods and tools, will take place primarily at the level of programmes. We will develop outcomes-based indicators as integral parts of all our programmes. There are exciting developments in monitoring effectiveness to support social transformation, including narrative-based approaches that link monitoring to learning, rather than ticking boxes and counting beans.

Thematic Innovation

Our thematic innovation activities will enable sector change through a combination of innovation, action research, knowledge management and advocacy. We will maintain a portfolio of innovative international thematic areas. Regional and country programmes will each work on a selection of these themes, selected to align with policy priorities of donors and the sector and demand from regions, countries and other sector players

Policy and Advocacy

HACEM-SL Limited seeks to engage in the international policy arena and to position itself as a National think-tank in WASH with capacity in research, providing policy advice, convening groups and alliances etc., all with the aim of influencing debate and development partner approaches. We will need to reach beyond the traditional WASH sector with core messages to generate a tipping point in support of sustainable WASH services, using evidence-based advocacy and new channels and opportunities, including social media. Under this heading we will:

- Work with like-minded and existing partners to share advocacy plans and messages, and to collaborate on joint initiatives and research Engage and create new/strengthen existing alliances with a series of sector organizations and platforms which HACEM-SL Limited wishes to influence, including the World Bank, WSP and the African Development Bank.
- Reach out to non-sector organizations that can influence public views and opinion-leadership.
- Publish a series of policy publications and briefings that bring policy relevant experiences from country programmes to an international audience.
- Engage with the public sector and private corporate sector through training and partnerships.
- Advocate for information literacy, open access and the right to information.

Training

HACEM-SL Limited will establish both national and international training programmes to make our concepts, frameworks, tools, ideas and experiences available to international development partner staff, practitioners and policy makers to further embed concepts and approaches to sustainable WASH service delivery. The approach will include the development of short courses, distance learning packages, bespoke training on demand, support for training institutions to strengthen their curricula, and programmes for HACEM-SL staff and partners. Content already piloted or under development includes local governance, transparency, sustainable service delivery, sustainable services at scale, information literacy skills and management of national WASH information services

Thematic platforms

As already noted, HACEM-SL is part of a wider range of national thematic platforms to pursue sector change in areas as diverse as knowledge management, public finance management and training. We aim to maintain and expand our network and membership of key international and regional platforms.

Current priorities are:

- Water scarcity and water resources management, with innovation in reuse of wastewater.
- Costing and financing, national investment planning and (macro) financing studies.
- Aid effectiveness, through advocacy, documentation and synthesis of lessons learnt, and supporting organization in WASH programs
- Sustainable sanitation, including urban sanitation, advocacy for scaling up rural sanitation and hygiene for men.
- Capturing innovation from Triple-S in three main service delivery models: community-based management, self-supply and private sector models. Innovative work on public-public and public-private partnerships will be undertaken.
- Learning for change with learning alliances, resource centre development and strengthening capacity in the context of decentralization.

- Advocacy and support in developing accountability and transparency tools and innovation in regulation for WASH services.
- Sector monitoring focusing on post-MDG global monitoring.
- Continued advocacy for multiple uses of water (MUS).

a) Opportunities

There is increasing recognition internally and within border countries that the challenges of sustainability and the vulnerability of the sector to external shocks, such as rapid demographic growth and environmental (climate) change, require new models and knowledge that take into account the local contexts, and a need for organizations that can support the processes to develop these models and knowledge. With high levels of investment in the sector, and slow but steady progress on the quality of governance, the WASH sector environment is ripe for HACEM-SL Limited and our partners to have significant impact.

b) Threats

There are also threats to the sustainability of our programmes. Much past success has been enabled by generous funding from our government that provided the space for us to identify gaps, launch new initiatives, and develop programmes that responded to the identified needs of the areas in which we work.

Maintaining HACEM-SL's current level of funding is critical to our continued success, but is likely to be challenging given a number of observable sector trends. These include the tendency of a number of traditionally generous sector donors to gravitate towards direct budget support to governments, while governments may lack the self.

In a fragmented sector multiple NGOs compete for the same small and fragmented grants. There may be a tendency towards aid fatigue among some donors, while new entrants to the sector may have a suspicion of public- or NGO-based approaches and a preference for the private sector. Lack of maturity and policy clarity among new entrants may exacerbate a tendency to prefer the simple over the complex, the quick win over the long slog and the silver bullet over incremental change.

Core business areas

To continue our mission and to achieve our goals, we will need to adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach to developing and financing activities over the next five years.

To this end, we have identified five core business areas, which will probably overlap, enable efficient use of resources, and be mutually reinforcing. This encompasses our core expertise in sector knowledge and information management, and underpins our role as one of the WASH sector's leading think-tanks. Through it, we influence the main discussions and debates in the sector, and bring about change in a direction that is in line with our goals. We offer proven skills in information and knowledge management, cutting edge content, and widely respected catalyzing and facilitation of change and learning processes. Our value is as a trusted, professional, innovative and content rich sector resource centre and think-tank. This business area remains ultimately reliant on supportive and like-minded donors, a role that in the past has been fulfilled largely by the Sierra Leone government and other Donor Agencies.

Our five core Business areas are Health, Agriculture, Construction, Education and Mining (HACEM).

Organizational framework

Principles and values

As a Company that defines ourselves as trusted, professional and content rich facilitators of change, we subscribe to guiding principles and core values that govern how we work to achieve our ambitions.

HACEM –SL Limited Principles

a) Inclusiveness

Decision making is, to the fullest extent, possible based on consultation and involvement of people concerned. The way to achieve inclusiveness is through fostering broad/joint discussions, and our chosen method is dialogue. Our guiding principles in operational terms are that we work with rather than work for our counterparts and colleagues, and that in all our dealings we respect them.

b) Subsidiarity

Adopting a principle of subsidiarity means looking for decision making to take place, and for empowerment to occur at the lowest appropriate level

We believe in empowering our constituents to make decisions for them armed with information and skills that allow them to do so. Our own staff should also be responsible for making their own way with appropriate support. We have a vision of what changes should happen to achieve sustainable WASH services, and how to facilitate those changes.

HACEM-SL Limited Core Values

a) Poverty focus

HACEM-SL focuses on the needs of the marginalized and the poorest. This stems from a shared sense of justice and a commitment to inclusiveness. We will be guided by local people's perspective of what constitutes poverty and vulnerability.

b) Excelling

We wish to excel in what we do and to provide top quality services. We believe that the route to excelling is to innovate and challenge and to allow ourselves to be challenged.

c) Transparency

We strive to enhance transparency and accountability, both internally and externally.

Business Model

As a Company, HACEM-SL Limited's business model is rooted in the need to manage twin boundary lines. Our primary boundary line is about our mission and impact on sector change, leading to the achievement of sustainable and equitable WASH services. Our second boundary line is financial. As a company we are not driven by the need to make an exorbitant profit and are not primarily motivated by financial factors. Nevertheless, our operations need to be properly funded, and we cannot sustain loss-making activities without some form of cross-subsidization. As a professional organisation, our aim is to work in a business-like manner to

ensure that our medium term activities are properly funded while our day-to-day work is neither ad-hoc nor unduly affected by unpredictable financial flows.

Our business areas have been identified based on the need to support a flexible business model that is reliably able to deliver a set of long term activities to support the core business areas outlined above.

Staff and staff development

As a knowledge-centred Company, our single most important resource is people – our staff, associates and network of partners. To bring about sector change we require a multi-disciplinary team of world class experts. At the same time, our move towards more area level work puts our existing model of a core staff of long-term experts based in Sierra Leone under increasing pressure.

To achieve this we will:

- Increase the number of staff who works with us in a flexible way, linked to one or more specific programs.
- Extend and expand our associate program to ensure a wide network of top international quality experts available to work with HACEM-SL.
- Increase the recruitment of top quality staff to our programs, and ensure a good level of exchange between HACEM-SL staff in different offices and programs.
- Explore the options for outsourcing support functions currently housed in Sierra Leone
- Explore more cooperation with international universities to offer students work experience.

Financial Framework

HACEM-SL is open to funding from governments, foundations, NGOs and other donors. Identifying new sources of project and programmatic finance, and maintaining existing ones, are essential to our twin boundary conditions.

To achieve our goals, it is essential that we maintain a well-balanced financial flow across our five main business areas. We will seek to maintain a ratio of different sources of finance in

which programmatic core funding does not fall below 30% of the total, with the balance made up of project financing (50%) and advisory financing (20%). While these may vary from year to year (and region to region), a great reduction in programmatic core funding will significantly constrain our ability to innovate or provide thought leadership; while a major reduction in project financing would leave us with an insufficient presence and grounding in practical realities and lead to loss of influence in countries and regions.

The bulk of Company's resources are spent in-country. HACEM-SL Limited's country programmes generally have a total annual budget of around \$1 million, of which about 20% comes from 'un-earmarked' sources, used for core activities such as supporting resource centre networks, publishing sector newsletters, and as seed money for new knowledge development activities. HACEM-SL's budget is expected to increase rapidly over the years from almost \$1 million in the 2023 period to €2 million for 2024. Our planning for 2025-2027 is for a total budget of \$5 million. One result of this rapid growth in the budget is that the core or programmatic funding we are looking for is at a substantially lower level, in relative terms, than in previous business plans (although not in absolute terms).

In this business plan we aim to stabilize this funding at no lower than 30% of the total. Although the total represents a large (34%) increase, the budget for the period 2025-2027 is based on annual budgets of approximately \$1.5 million shared across our portfolio of multi-annual programmes and projects. This is approximately the level of our actual budget in 2023 and is the level of financing needed to deliver the ambitious multi-country programme that our donors and financiers expect from us, and we are confident that we can maintain this level of funding with support from existing and new donors