

How can I claim my human right to water?

How can we get everyone to follow the rules on water?

The annual sector review results are never implemented!

Why is that factory still allowed to pollute?

We're paying for toilets to be emptied – it never happens!

They said this was inclusive – but where are the women?

COVID response funding for WASH has arrived – but where is it?

Where does all that climate finance go on water?

Who can I complain to?

Donors never deliver what they promise! What can we do?

All the money for water is spent on fancy cars & big meetings!

Why am I paying more than my neighbour for water?

Flooding is on the rise – but we never get warned – there's no action!

The big farm is taking all the water from the river – how come?

Why should we comply when no-one else does?

How can we better listen to water users and their needs?

Those NGO's claim big impact – we don't see it?

The forest where our springs rise is being cut – what can we do?

Why don't those investors need SEIA?

# Accountability for Water



ACTION & RESEARCH PROGRAMME





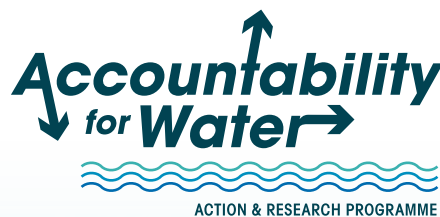
Accountability for Water is a new programme of action & research which will improve water governance & water service delivery, accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Too often good water policies, wise water laws and promising water programmes have failed because of weak accountability.

Stronger accountability for water is at the heart of the fairer water future we all seek.

80% of cases explored by our global evidence review associate accountability interventions in the water sector with beneficial outcomes and positive impacts.<sup>1</sup> These include improved:

- operation, maintenance, & monitoring
- enforcement & compliance
- investment & financing
- pollution control & equitable allocation
- reduced corruption & misuse of funds
- institutional effectiveness
- access to safe water & sanitation
- security of water tenure & rights



**Accountability is relevant to us all.** Increased accountability can strengthen all parts of the water governance system and is central to realising the human right to water and sanitation. It can improve the performance of all water users and managers: from government, utilities and regulators to private sector, NGOs and development partners. **To fully harness the potential of stronger accountability, better knowledge is needed about 'what works and why?' in different water management contexts.**

The Accountability for Water team have worked with stakeholders since 2016 to design this action research programme which will **address priorities, produce relevant knowledge, and leave a legacy of change.**

We invite you to join us in this groundbreaking initiative - as a Professional Research Fellow, a Host Organisation, a Strategic Advisor, or Learning Partner.

### Accountability is essential:

**FOR** universal access to safe water, sanitation, & hygiene

**FOR** sustainable & equitable water resource management

**FOR** resilience to climate impacts of flooding & drought

**Accountability can be understood through the five 'R's' model** (see Figure): the existence of **appropriate rules**; fulfilment of **clear responsibilities**; **reporting on performance**, and **review** to inform an **effective reaction**. These are needed in any context, whether social, regulatory or judicial. Without each 'R' in place accountability breaks down, leading to governance and service failures. **Worse, this prevents lesson learning and our collective ability to improve performance and strengthen systems.**



### Accountability 'interventions' can be driven by:

**Government:** for example, through new complaint mechanisms, audit systems or sector reviews.

**Civil-society:** for example through citizen report cards, budget analysis or public interest litigation



## What will the Accountability for Water Programme deliver?



The programme will support **cross-country and case study research** through **Professional Research Fellowships**. This will produce **applied research of practical value** with the organisations and professionals working at the forefront of water resource management and WASH service delivery, whether as decision-

makers, practitioners, or civil society. **Findings will be used to shape policy and practice** through training, dialogue, action planning and advocacy.

The initial focus will be on Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as at a pan-Africa scale, but the lessons and outputs will have global relevance.

### Delivery across three workstreams:

**1. Research and knowledge generation:** At the heart of the programme are the **Professional Research Fellows** who will be supported over an 18-month period to undertake research of practical value to their organisations. Engagement with over 160 stakeholders has identified the following themes for exploration.

#### Enabling and sustaining accountability for water

What works in different contexts and why? What methods and metrics can be used to support accountability and are these transferable? What are the main barriers to effective practice, policy and impact? How can ICT be best harnessed?

#### Accountability for communities

What factors stimulate or constrain, citizen engagement and voice? How inclusive are accountability interventions on water? How do socio-cultural, religious and customary institutions interact with accountability processes?

#### Accountability for government

What factors stimulate or constrain, government mechanisms for accountability and responsiveness to citizens? How equitable are government mechanisms and responses? What are the best strategies and tactics for government to increase accountability?

**2. Outreach and uptake:** We will organise peer-to-peer learning, meetings, and regional events. We will publish practice papers, methodological guidance and case studies. We will support webinars and an online knowledge platform at [www.accountabilityforwater.org](http://www.accountabilityforwater.org)

**3. Ensuring legacy:** We will support the growing community of practice and learning to develop country, regional and global Accountability for Water strategies. We will establish a new dynamic research group and learning network which will sustain action for accountability.

#### When accountability fails...

The collapse of Brazil's Samarco Dam in 2015 was the biggest environmental disaster in mining history, killing 19 people, destroying 700km of river and imposing a humanitarian crisis. The incident was preceded by 'relaxation of laws, reduced funding for regulators and the absence of effective enforcement.'<sup>2</sup> In short, **rules, responsibilities and reactions** were lacking, and the disaster was an avoidable failure of accountability.



<sup>2</sup> Flávio Fonseca do Carmo et al, 2017, Fundão tailings dam failures: the environment tragedy of the largest technological disaster of Brazilian mining in global context, Perspectives in Ecology and Conservation, pp145-151

#### ...and when accountability works

Community scorecards (CSCs) **transformed WASH services** in Timor-Leste. With local government, WaterAid supported gender sensitive ranking of service quality, feedback and action planning. Evaluation found better services as a result: contracts with poorly performing contractors were cancelled; communities helped construct infrastructure; tariff collection improved; stronger Water User Groups emerged, and new national level guidance and training were delivered.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Hepworth et al. 2020. Accountability and advocacy interventions in the water sector: a review of global evidence. Part 1. Overview and Summary Results. Water Witness International, Edinburgh, UK.

## Who can benefit, and how can you be involved?

The programme is relevant to all organisations working to improve water security, and will establish a strong legacy through new knowledge, outputs, skills and networks. All stakeholders are welcome to collaborate, and interested organisations and individuals can benefit in the following ways:

	Become a Professional Research Fellow	Professional Research Fellow Host Organisation	Join the National or Global Advisory Group	Become a Learning Partner
Who?	Early or mid-career professionals working on water  Capable of carrying out original research with training & support	Any organisation involved in water with an interest in accountability: government, regulators, utilities, civil society, NGOs, researchers, development partners, or transnational bodies	Ministries, Regulators, Ombudsmen, National Audit Offices  NGOs, CSOs and networks  Universities, Knowledge networks, Think-tanks, Communications & training hubs  Multi-lateral & bilateral donors, Development banks, Global initiatives & Foundations	
What is involved?	Participation in initial training – Sign up now!  Proposal development  Research Grant and mentoring over 60 days per year  Research write-up & dissemination support	Contribute staff time for research & logistical support  Commit to a Partnership Agreement  Receive & administer Research Grant  Help disseminate research & drive uptake	Shape & guide programme implementation for maximum impact  Support for communication & uptake  Meet every 6 months  Access to regional & global learning	Register for updates learning outputs & engage on topics of interest  Give feedback & participate in two-way learning events
What are the benefits?	Transform performance of the sector  Mentoring & training from world leaders in accountability, water & research.  Training certificate of excellence & Fellowship Award.  Authorship of peer-reviewed articles  Become a leader of Accountability for Water	Targeted research & outputs to improve organisational & sector performance  Staff mentoring & training from leading experts – improving skills, motivation & retention  Evidence-based practice & policy  Global networking & learning with other organisations.	Influence the direction and focus of the research  Participate in further development of the programme and action on findings  Opportunity for national, global and regional networking, learning and action	Access state-of-the-art learning & support for effective accountability interventions  Join the global community of practice & learning on Accountability for Water

To find out more please contact your National or Regional Research Coordinator

KENYA  
ETHIOPIA  
TANZANIA  
REGIONAL/GLOBAL

Joan Kones  
Mulugeta Gashaw  
Jesper Katomero  
Tim Brewer

J.Kones@kewasnet.co.ke  
mulugetagashaw@waterwitness.org  
jesperkatomero@shahidiwamaji.org  
timbrewer@waterwitness.org

The Accountability for Water Programme is managed by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (Kenya) and Water Witness (UK) in collaboration with these current partners:

