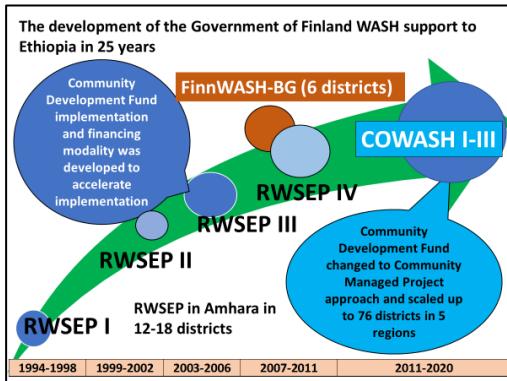
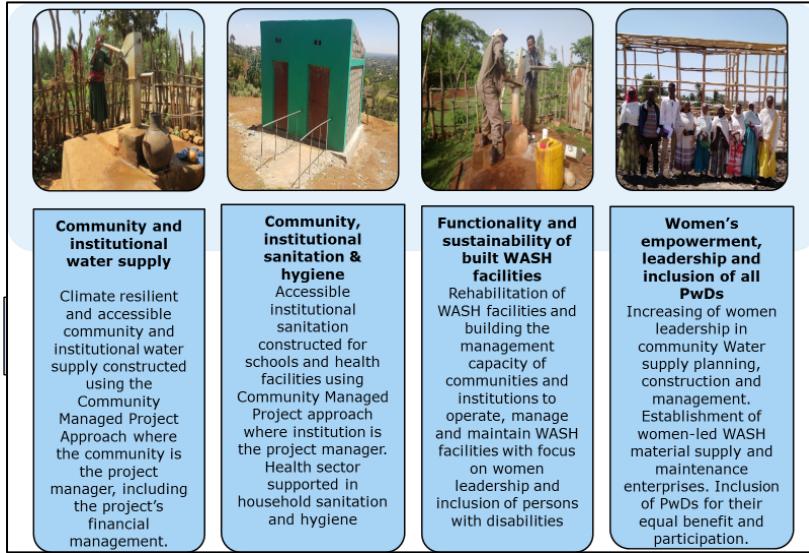
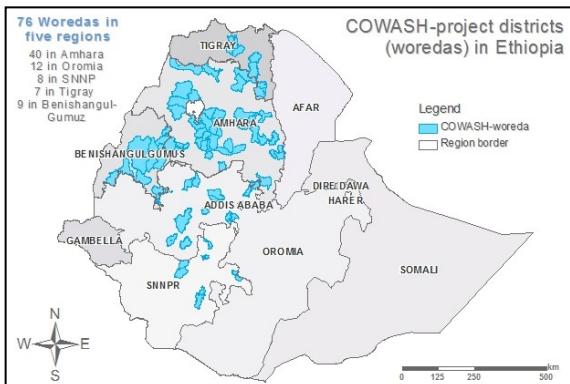


# Results of the Community-Led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) Project.

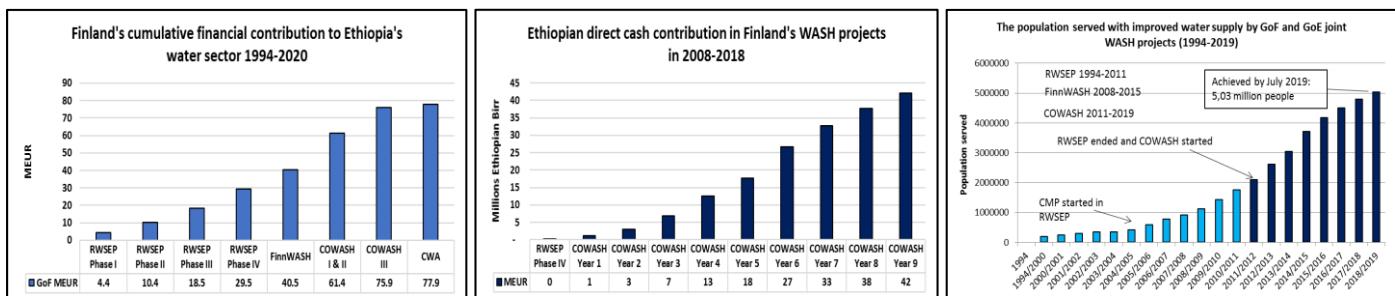
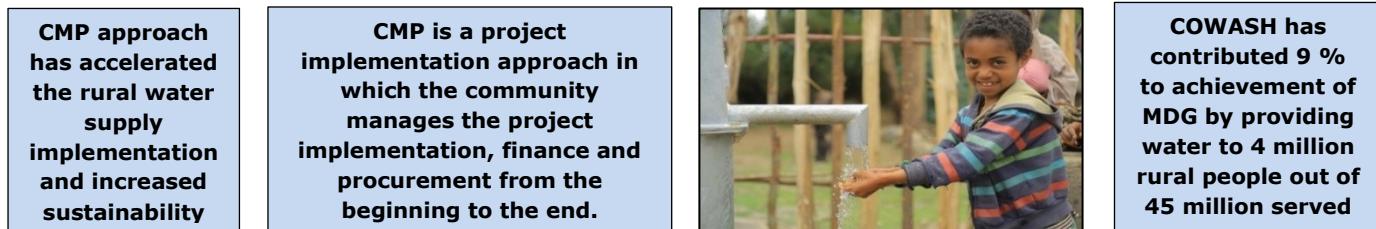
September, 2019

**The Community-Led Accelerated Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Project, COWASH**, is a bilateral project between Government of Finland and Ethiopia aiming to accelerate the rural WASH targets of the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) of the country through Community Managed Project (CMP) approach. COWASH is led by the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy. The project started in July 2011 and its third phase is completed by the end of June 2020. Technical assistance is provided by Ramboll Finland Oy (lead consultant), Niras Ltd and IRC WASH. COWASH is essentially a capacity development project and cuts across all WASH. The project is implemented in 76 rural districts of Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz and Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' regions.



illustrates the four major COWASH intervention areas. To understand on how COWASH evolved, we need to look back its history.

The Government of Finland has provided financial and technical support in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Ethiopia for over 25 years through various projects. The total financial contribution and major results of this support are illustrated in the graphs below. Currently, the Phase III of COWASH is implemented with strong aspirations and optimism to replicate the successes, best practices and lesson learnt during the past nine years.



**COWASH has created access to safe and clean rural water and promoted health and wellbeing in all COWASH Districts:** As a result of the water, sanitation and hygiene education, training, awareness-raising and capacity building water borne diseases have reduced and the residents have become healthier. Diarrhoea, typhoid, typhus and many other water borne diseases are no more major issues in COWASH districts. Due to the COWASH support project districts have met the national targets for water supply access coverage calculated according to the Growth and Transformation Plan II standards. The project has not made clean water available only for drinking but also for cloth washing, showers and animals.

**COWASH has constructed 14,874 community water schemes serving 3.1 million rural people**

**Improved water supply functionality:** Water supplies in COWASH districts are highly functional. Reasons behind are the enhanced community ownership achieved through CMP approach and the emphasis given to the O&M on the ground. COWASH developed **Rural Water Supply Operation and Maintenance Manuals** for Ethiopia, currently serving as the only manual for maintaining rural water supplies in Ethiopia. It is also approved by the ministry and used beyond COWASH.

Water supply non-functionality in COWASH districts has reduced from 27 % to 6.7 %.

**WASHCO chair:** "Leeches killed our cattle before COWASH. Due to this worm, we lost many cattle as they drink unsafe water. Today, the cattle have got relief due to the construction of the water supply from the spring by COWASH" (Abichu Gneä district)

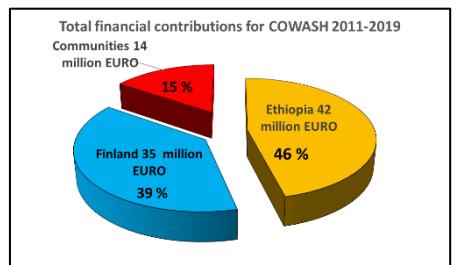
**Reduced female workload.** COWASH has brought clean drinking water to homes in the rural communities and secured the water access. Due to this, women and girls do not have to spend daily over 3 hours in average to fetch water. Availability of water in the community allows women better to focus on the family, production and personal wellbeing.

"Fetching water to the family is the most difficult task and traumatising experience of women and girls".

14,874 water schemes constructed by COWASH and serving 3.1 million people

**Enhanced community ownership:** CMP approach promotes community empowerment, transparency and ownership. This has created firm basis for the community to contribute both financially and in kind and labour. The community contribution in COWASH is the highest among all WASH projects in Ethiopia.

**Leveraging Government of Ethiopia's money for project implementation.** The Regional Government allocates 70% of COWASH budget. No other bilateral or civil society organization in the country has enjoyed this privilege. From 2011 to-date, 42 million Euros have been spent by the Regional Governments to COWASH projects.



**Disability Inclusive and Accessible WASH:** COWASH is a proud pioneer in inclusion of persons with disabilities in WASH implementation and management in Ethiopia, as well as in promoting disability inclusive water supply for schools and health institutions. COWASH has been the national leader in promoting and cascading disability inclusive water schemes and institutional sanitation. COWASH has managed to convince its partners from the office heads and technical experts down to the community level about of the importance of inclusion. Change of the mentality towards disability inclusion at the community level has started. However, it is a long process and still needs more work to be done.

Over 16,000 people trained in disability inclusion.

24 women-led WASH enterprises have been established in sanitation marketing, water supply construction and maintenance and in spare parts supply.

**COWASH plays a pioneer role in promoting Women-led WASH enterprise development** on pilot-basis. COWASH empowers women through ensuring women leadership in community-led WASH management and in establishing women-led

businesses. COWASH also supports the establishment of district level spare part stores in five regions so that women-led WASH enterprises could start the supply and selling of spare parts for community and institutional water schemes.



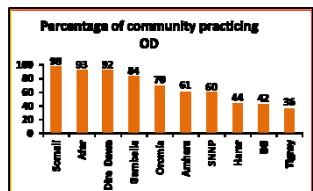
**COWASH introduced and established safe and climate resilient water supplies.** COWASH developed and successfully implemented the social, environmental and climate risks screening and management instrument combined with the pioneering of the climate resilient water safety planning in rural water supply. This has led to improved water quantity and quality. Besides promotes new thinking towards sustainability and environmental protection

Water quantity and quality have clearly improved.

COWASH has constructed WASH facilities to 967 schools and 419 health institutions which have benefitted nearly 600,000 students, teachers and staff.

**COWASH has contributed to improved enrolment of girls in school and reduced drop out of school attendance:** One of the prevalent reasons for low attendance of girls in school, school absence and eventual drop out has been due to the socially assigned

roles of girls to fetch water. The COWASH's intervention has made it possible for increasing number of girls to join school. The absenteeism and school dropout have significantly reduced.



**Improved sanitation and reduced Open Defecation (OD).** COWASH has promoted and advocated the Community-Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene with the health sector stakeholders. This was done through provision of finance for training of district and village level health staff. Due to this all COWASH regions are the lowest in open defecation, as illustrated in the graph.

**Contribution to the achievement of MDG Goal 7 target C:** According to Central Statistics Agency report in June 2018, during the Millennium Development period Ethiopian water supply access coverage increased from 14% to 57%. RWSEP, FinnWASH and COWASH played an important role for the achievements of MDG in water for Ethiopia. It is estimated that COWASH's contribution to MDG Goal 7 target C amounts to 9 %. COWASH provided clean and safe water to 4 million out of 45 million rural people served.

**Contribution to the achievement of MDG Goal 4&5, Reduce Child Mortality and improve maternal health:** By creating access to clean water in the rural community, COWASH has contributed to the reduction of infant and child death caused by contaminated water, lack of sanitation and inadequate hygiene.