

Promoting Sustainable Growth Through Sanitation, Hygiene & Menstrual Health



Images on the front cover:
sourced from SHF and partner archives,
Shutterstock and Pexels.



Contents

Acronyms	4
About SHF	5
Message from the Board Chair	6
Message from the Executive Director	7
1 2024 At a glance	8
1.1 Global context: a year of change	8
1.2 2024 Summary results	10
2 Catalyzing finance to transform sanitation and menstrual health markets	11
2.1 SHF at work: economic growth, social impact	12
[BOX 1] Investing in a gender-equal future	14
2.2 Catalyzing finance for sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health	15
[BOX 2] Leveraging public and domestic funding for non-sewered sanitation	16
3 Accelerating impact through Next Generation Sanitation	17
3.1 Transforming sanitation through non-sewered solutions	18
[BOX 3] Assessing market maturity: the sanitation market maturity framework (SANEMAT)	19
3.2 Laying the foundations for a thriving sanitation economy in Kenya	20
[BOX 4] Towards a circular sanitation value chain	22
3.3 Investing in climate-resilient sanitation in Uganda	24
[BOX 5] Assessing the cost of inaction for sanitation in Uganda	26
3.4 Improving health outcomes through Next Generation Sanitation in Nigeria	28
4 Building thriving menstrual health markets for all	30
4.1 Capital M: the market-led moonshot for menstrual health	31
4.2 A pivotal year for the menstrual health market	33
[BOX 6] Environmental impact of menstrual health products in low- and middle-income countries	34
4.3 Kenya: a fast-growing menstrual health market	36
4.4 Developing a thriving menstrual health market in Uganda	38
5 Global positioning and strategic partnerships	40
5.1 Strategic partnerships	41
[BOX 7] The Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFFC)	42
5.2 Global positioning	43
[BOX 8] The Menstrual Health Funders Group	44
6 Forward look	46
7 SHF board	48
8 Donor acknowledgment	50

Acronyms

DBN		Development Bank of Nigeria
GLAAS		UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-water
GTFCC		Global Taskforce on Cholera Control
ISO		International Organization for Standardization
JMP		WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
KPIs		Key Performance Indicators
LEAP		Landscape and Projection of Reproductive Health Supply Needs
LMICs		Low- and Middle-Income Countries
MHH		Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MPTF		UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Catalytic Finance in Sanitation, Hygiene, and Wastewater
NGS		Next Generation Sanitation
NSB		National Standards Bodies
ODA		Official Development Assistance
RHSC		Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition
SANEMAT		Sanitation Economic Maturity Assessment Tool
SDC		Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG		Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SHF		Sanitation and Hygiene Fund
SIS		Swedish Institute for Standards
UNCDF		United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP		United Nations Development Programme
UNEP		United Nations Environment Programme
UNOPS		United Nations Office for Project Services
WASH		Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEF		World Economic Forum

About SHF

The United Nations' (UN) Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) is dedicated to improving access to sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health (MH) through market-based approaches.

SHF works with Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) to build robust and climate-resilient sanitation economies and MH markets through catalytic financing.

We do this by working in partnership with governments, development partners, development financing institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to tackle barriers to inclusive growth and accelerate sustainable markets.

We put women and girls - their choice and agency - at the center of our approach, with gender responsiveness being integrated into the design and delivery of sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health products and services thereby contributing to human, social and economic development outcomes.

By promoting circular and sustainable sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health value chains, we support climate mitigation and adaptation, and minimize environmental impact.

Our donors



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Gates Foundation



Message from the Board Chair

As I enter my fourth year as Board Chair of the UN Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF), I am more convinced than ever that there will be no progress for sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health without bold approaches and effective solutions. In this quest to deliver, SHF continues to be the credible partner of choice.

Midway to 2030, it is no mystery that the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets related to hygiene, menstrual health, and wastewater – cornerstones of public health, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability – are largely off-track. A new approach is not just necessary: it is imperative.

In a context marked by global crises, instability, and a profound reappraisal of financing and channels for development, SHF's market-based approaches can turn intractable development issues into investment opportunities, offering the sustainability that traditional approaches have failed to deliver in the sector.

This was the message that I shared at the One Water Summit in Riyadh in December 2024. Co-hosted by the Republic of France, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the World Bank in partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this Heads of States Summit marked a significant milestone in positioning water and sanitation as core global issues, in the lead up to the 2026 UN Water Conference.

2024 was also a year when SHF drove concrete, transformative change at the country level. In close collaboration with Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, SHF laid the foundations for Next Generation Sanitation,

supporting investment analysis and sector reform, while building the capacity of the private sector and exploring catalytic financing capability to scale non-sewered sanitation. Additionally, SHF also engaged with Governments and other partners to launch Capital M, its market-led moonshot for menstrual health.

Finally, in 2024, SHF made strides in strengthening its catalytic financing capacity. Through the launch of its Multi-Partner Trust Fund, an inter-agency financing facility co-designed with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), SHF is gearing up to catalyze much-needed investment – and impact – in sanitation and menstrual health. I am also excited about the new partnership with the Development Bank of Nigeria, as a good practice to leverage local banking systems to unlock sustainable finance.

Let me conclude by extending a warm welcome to Wendy Anderson, the Co-Founder of The Case for Her, who joined the SHF Board in 2024. I also want to acknowledge the invaluable guidance of inaugural board member, Hank Habicht, who concluded his term this year. His leadership has been monumental in SHF's establishment and early years.

Looking ahead to 2025, there is no doubt that SHF is poised to further transform financing and the capacity to deliver sanitation, hygiene, wastewater management and menstrual health, building on the strong partnerships established to date.

Cecilia Akintomide

Chair

The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF)



Message from the Executive Director

The past months have ushered in profound changes within the international development landscape and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may still seem like a distant ambition. The shifts we've witnessed signal a long-term transformation that began years ago; the reduction in Official Development Assistance (ODA), the growing push for private sector-led solutions, greater local leadership, and the increasing demand for innovations that attract private capital reflect a broader movement toward more financially sustainable development outcomes. This shift aligns with the mission that SHF has pursued since its inception in 2021.

SHF was created because the leading voices in the sector knew that a refreshed and innovative approach to financing sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health was needed. It was understood that the business as usual approach was not moving the dial on SDG Target 6.2.

Starting with the assumption of decreasing development assistance, our ambition has always been to support Governments and local businesses while catalyzing new and additional finance including, household, public and private finance. Our rationale has always been about fostering financial innovation to support job creation and economic growth through increased investment in sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health.

In 2024, SHF made significant progress toward its mission of transforming sanitation and menstrual health markets worldwide. The past year marked key achievements that have furthered our impact, in our key partner countries, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. In these countries, we have laid the foundations for equitable access to safely managed sanitation through a pioneering approach: Next Generation Sanitation, focusing on non-sewered sanitation.

SHF has also focused on the development of menstrual health markets through its Capital M global initiative, starting in particular groundbreaking work to help shape global standards for menstrual products.

Developing market-based approaches in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) requires adaptability and innovation. Through the establishment of a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), we are betting on the power of partnerships by collaborating with UNEP, UNCDF and other public and private partners to identify the right funding models to move forward. This new initiative is designed to enhance SHF's financial flexibility, enabling us to attract additional partners and expand our impact.

These early results would not have been possible without the support of our visionary donors, the Governments of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Switzerland as well as the Gates Foundation. Looking ahead to 2025, we are optimistic about the opportunities before us. While global funding dynamics continue to shift, we are focusing on expanding our resources through new and innovative partnerships.

With South Africa preparing to host the first-ever G20 summit on the African continent—a powerful symbol of the region's growing influence in reshaping the global economy and development paradigms—SHF stands united with partners across Africa, Asia, and beyond to chart a new course for sanitation, hygiene, menstrual health, and wastewater.

We are excited about the future of SHF, as we continue to transform the sanitation and menstrual health landscapes for the betterment of communities worldwide.

Dominic O'Neill

Executive Director

The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF)

1 2024 At a glance

1.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT: A YEAR OF CHANGE

A DAUNTING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE



Nearly half of the world's population lacks access to safely managed sanitation



1/4 women and girls globally struggle to manage their menstruation safely and with dignity



Over 75% of countries report insufficient funding to implement their WASH national strategies



Basic water and sanitation only receive about **0.07%** of global climate finance



At the current pace, SDG target 6.2 – safely managed sanitation – will not be realized before **2070**

INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS FOR SANITATION AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Today, nearly half of the world's population still lacks access to safely managed sanitation, and one in four women and girls globally struggles to manage their menstruation safely and with dignity – jeopardizing health, economic growth, equality and sustainability.

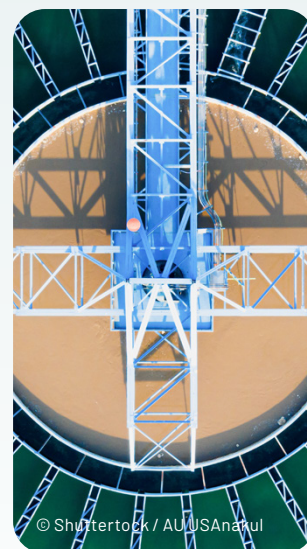
The effects of climate change – floods, water scarcity, droughts, and sea level rise – are setting back progress for billions of people without safely managed sanitation services, and improper wastewater management is a threat to water security. Meanwhile, rapid urbanization contributes to the growth of informal settlements where sanitation is inadequate, increasing public health and other risks.

GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN DEVELOPMENT

Achieving equitable access to safely managed sanitation and to quality menstrual products is an imperative if we are to move the needle on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, 2024 witnessed a growing recognition of the role of sanitation and hygiene in development, with unprecedented political momentum for water and sanitation.

The first ever UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation was adopted, while the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Indonesian Retno L.P. Marsudi as the first Special Envoy on Water. The Global Commission on the Economics of Water released a landmark report, calling for a 'new water economics' that acknowledges water's connections to environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic efficiency.

At the G20 Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2024, WASH was highlighted as a key development issue and the G20 Call to Action on Strengthening Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services¹ urged G20 members to boost international technical cooperation for WASH services across the rural-urban continuum, mentioning SHF as a key stakeholder.





We support a Call to Action to scale up regulatory support to national and local water, health and environmental institutions, small water suppliers and decentralized sanitation systems in rural areas, such as through the UN Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, RegNet, the International Network of Drinking-water and Sanitation Regulators supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) G20 Call to Action."

In December 2024, the One Water Summit co-hosted by the Republic of France, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the World Bank in partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia brought the issues of water and sanitation to the Heads of States level. These key global moments brought global visibility to long overlooked issues, paving the way to the 2026 UN Water Conference, to be co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Senegal, and convened in UAE in December 2026.



NON-SEWERED SANITATION: THE MISSING PIECE OF THE ACCESS PUZZLE

Current investments in sanitation are not scaling fast enough to increase access, particularly for those who are most marginalized. Most large-scale projects in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) focus on sewer systems, yet the majority of the population in these countries still relies on non-sewered sanitation solutions.

As the approach to innovative sanitation solutions evolves, non-sewered sanitation has emerged as the most cost-effective and water-efficient option to reach underserved populations in developing countries. South Africa has been a pioneer in advancing non-sewered sanitation, and in Kenya, where SHF is actively operating, the government aims to achieve 60% safe sanitation coverage through non-sewered solutions.

STRENGTHENED LINKS BETWEEN SANITATION AND CLIMATE ACTION

While there is growing recognition of the connection between sanitation and climate change, climate finance for sanitation remains largely untapped. In 2020, basic water and sanitation received only about 0.07% of global climate finance.

However, some countries are beginning to reverse this trend. In Uganda, the government has placed sanitation at the heart of its climate-resilient Health National Action Plan (H-NAP)—the first of its kind in Africa. This move ensures that market-based approaches are integrated and unlocks financing for climate-resilient health and sanitation services. SHF has played a pivotal role in supporting this important initiative.

GROUNDBREAKING DEVELOPMENTS FOR MENSTRUAL HEALTH

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee led by the Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS), is presently working to develop global menstrual product standards in four categories – single and multi-use products worn externally or internally, covering everything from pads and tampons to period-underwear and menstrual cups, by mid-2027. SHF is actively supporting this work, along with other partners such as the Gates Foundation and The Case for Her, ensuring that LMICs are well represented in both the development and eventual national adoption of these standards.



A NEW PARADIGM FOR FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Currently, over 75% of countries report insufficient funding to implement their WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) national strategies, with the use of innovative finance in the sector remaining limited.

As global funding for development is increasingly questioned, new financial sources must be explored to achieve the SDG targets for universal access to safely managed sanitation by 2030, including attracting private capital.

SHF's business model is able to respond to shifts in development funding primarily through transformational partnerships, for example with national development banks, a largely underutilized but promising source of finance to accelerate local sanitation economies and the menstrual health market through local currency instruments.

¹ [G20 Call to Action on Strengthening Drinking-water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services.](#)

1.2 2024 SUMMARY RESULTS

DRIVING ACCESS, PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPACT



610,000 individuals gained access to safely managed sanitation in Kenya and Uganda



68 private sector sanitation enterprises were supported in Kenya and Uganda



USD 2.5M unlocked in public financing, and USD 4M leveraged in private finance for sanitation in Kenya and Uganda



Catalytic financing capacity expanded through creation of **MPTF**



First partnership with a **national development bank**: the Development Bank of Nigeria



Launch of **Capital M**, SHF's market-based moonshot for menstrual health



New partnership secured with the Gates foundation: Menstrual Hygiene Product Incubator for Small-Medium Enterprises in **LMICs**

Traditional approaches have struggled to unlock financing and achieve sustainable outcomes in sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health. To accelerate progress, SHF introduced two initiatives in 2024: Next Generation Sanitation, and Capital M, a bold, market-driven approach to advancing menstrual health. These transformative initiatives are firmly aligned with the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation.

In 2024, significant progress was achieved: 610,000 individuals gained access to safely managed sanitation in Kenya and Uganda thanks to SHF and partners. This was driven by connecting households with sanitation products and service providers, and supporting sanitation enterprises through marketing efforts across multiple locations.

In addition, 68 private sector enterprises received capacity-building and financing, laying the groundwork for a flourishing sanitation economy. This performance highlights the effectiveness of the Next Generation Sanitation approach, focusing on the entire value chain.

In 2024, SHF further expanded its catalytic financing capacity by launching the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for

Catalytic Finance in Sanitation, Hygiene, and Wastewater, in partnership with UNEP and UNCDF. This unique initiative will provide greater financial flexibility, attract new partners, and amplify impact across the sector.

A new partnership with the Development Bank of Nigeria is opening new perspectives for local currency financing to support the development of the sanitation economy in Nigeria. Policy advocacy efforts also helped secure government funding, unlocking USD 2.5 million in public financing, while USD 4 million were leveraged in private finance for sanitation in Kenya and Uganda.

The launch of Capital M further solidified SHF's role as a pioneer in shaping the menstrual health market in LMICs. This initiative addresses critical structural challenges, such as the absence of global ISO standards for menstrual products, while evaluating market potential in Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda to foster the development of sustainable markets. With the support of the Gates Foundation, SHF completed the foundational work for an accelerator to assist Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in East Africa to bring innovative menstrual health products to market.

2

**Catalyzing finance to
transform sanitation and
menstrual health markets**

2.1 SHF AT WORK: ECONOMIC GROWTH, SOCIAL IMPACT

WHY INVEST IN SANITATION, HYGIENE AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH?

- Sanitation plays a key role in preventing exposure to diseases such as soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, trachoma and diarrhoeal diseases such as cholera and dysentery, as well as typhoid and polio.²
- Inadequate access to sanitation is estimated to cost African countries 4.3% of their GDP.³
- Poorly managed wastewater is estimated to generate up to 9 percent of human-caused global methane emissions.⁴
- Through the sanitation economy, the cost of sanitation provision can be transformed from a cost of US\$ 200 per person to a net value of US\$ 10 per person.⁵
- About 800 million people in LMICs are ready and willing to pay for reusable menstrual products.⁶
- The average return on investing 1\$ in menstrual health and hygiene is estimated at US 3\$ in Kenya.⁷



Sanitation economies in five African countries—Benin, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda—could be worth nearly US\$ 19 billion by 2030.⁸ Meanwhile, the sanitary pad market in Africa is estimated at US \$772 million with significant growth potential given unmet needs. Yet, the full potential of the sanitation economy and the menstrual health market in LMICs remains largely untapped.

Through strategic partnerships, SHF aims to catalyze both the sanitation economy and menstrual health market, driving job creation and economic growth while enhancing the efficiency and impact of donor funding and national investments. A key component of this strategy is exploring financial innovation, with a particular focus on mobilizing local finance to support private sector development.

At its core, SHF is focused on large-scale transformation. Through its Next Generation

Sanitation initiative, SHF is positioning itself to reshape the sanitation economy in LMICs. Similarly, with its global Capital M initiative, SHF aims to accelerate the menstrual health market, ensuring that millions of women, girls, and menstruators who are currently underserved gain access to essential products and services.

SHF places women and girls at the center of its efforts, integrating gender responsiveness into the design and delivery of sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health solutions. In doing so, SHF contributes to positive human, social, and economic development outcomes.

Additionally, SHF is committed to minimizing environmental impact and supporting climate mitigation and adaptation by promoting circular and sustainable value chains in sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health.

² [World Health Organization \(WHO\)\(2024\).](#)

³ These estimates cover both, water supply and sanitation. Source: Hutton, G (2013). [Global costs and benefits of reaching universal coverage of sanitation and drinking-water supply](#). In: Journal of Water and Health, 11.1.

⁴ [The World Bank \(2021\).](#)

⁵ Toilet Board Coalition (2019). [Scaling up the sanitation economy 2020-2025.](#)

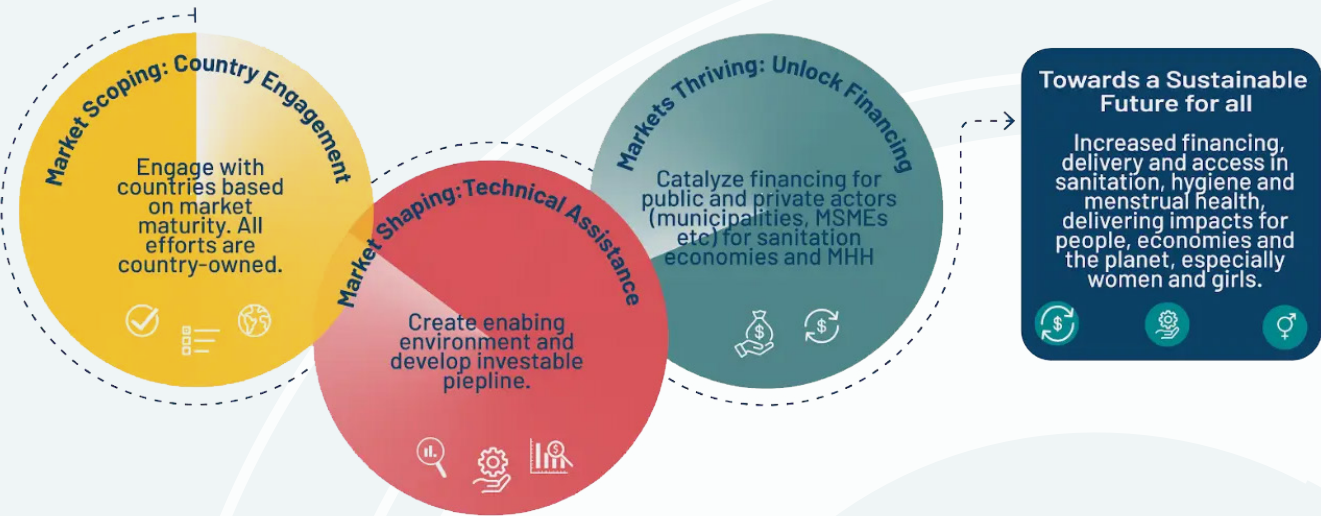
⁶ Hystra (2023). [A business case for selling reusable menstrual health products in the Global South.](#)

⁷ The Sanitation & Hygiene Fund (2023). [SHF briefs on investment in MHH.](#)

⁸ The Sanitation & Hygiene Fund (2023). [From Human Waste to Prosperity.](#)



The SHF approach



[BOX 1]

INVESTING IN A GENDER-EQUAL FUTURE

SHF puts women and girls – their choice and agency – at the center of its approach, with gender responsiveness being integrated into the design and delivery of sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health products and services thereby contributing to human, social and economic development outcomes.

Through Next Generation Sanitation, SHF supports women as leaders, workers, agents of change and end-users. In Uganda, SHF and partners are actively promoting women's involvement and leadership as catalysts and champions of sanitation transformation.

Through Capital M, SHF builds and strengthens the menstrual health market, fostering sustainable, market-based solutions that provide access to safe, quality, affordable menstrual products and unlock opportunities for women and girls worldwide. Creating a sustainable and inclusive menstrual health market does not only improve health outcomes, it also supports gender equality, enabling individuals to participate fully in education, work, and social activities without the constraints imposed by inadequate access to menstrual health and hygiene (MHH).

Gender equality is central to SHF's vision of thriving sanitation economies and the menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) markets. In June 2024, SHF's Executive Director joined the International Gender Champion Network as an international gender champion on behalf of SHF. The International Gender Champions (IGC) is a leadership network that brings together decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence.

In 2024, SHF also became a member of 2X Global, joining a community of like-minded actors looking into increasing impact investments for women and girls. As a global membership and field-building organisation for investors, capital providers, and stakeholders, 2X Global works to cultivate a thriving global community dedicated towards unlocking gender-smart capital at scale. Through this membership, SHF participated in the 2X Global Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2024, where SHF presented its unique approach to new partners and explored deeper connections with the investment community.



© Pexels / Retha Ferguson

2.2 CATALYZING FINANCE FOR SANITATION, HYGIENE AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health offer a unique opportunity to re-think development financing and explore innovative financing through market-based approaches. SHF seeks to catalyze finance by reducing risk and accelerating the flow of funds towards activities in the sanitation economy and menstrual health market. This often involves leveraging public funds but also requires access to innovative financing capability.

In 2024, SHF launched the first Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for Catalytic Finance in Sanitation, Hygiene and Wastewater, joining forces with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). This is the only UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund dedicated to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target, 6.2. Sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health, and SDG target 6.3 on improving wastewater treatment and reuse; and focusing on market-based solutions.

This joint initiative, aligned with the recently adopted UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, will unlock catalytic financing to support the development of markets where investments have been scarce. Working closely with development

banks and other funders, the MPTF will bridge the gap and make the unbankable, bankable, thereby ensuring improved access to sanitation and hygiene to those left furthest behind.

In 2024, SHF partnered with the Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) to strengthen the capacity of local financial institutions and enterprises within the sanitation and hygiene sector. The goal of this collaboration is to establish a pathway for nationwide scaling, using local currency financing to support sanitation and hygiene initiatives across Nigeria.

Building on existing government efforts to enhance sanitation and hygiene services, the partnership will leverage DBN's established infrastructure and networks. Initially, the focus will be on Lagos and Bauchi states as pilot regions for scaling efforts, with targeted capacity-building initiatives aimed at unlocking local currency financing.

This initiative will serve as a proof of concept for a scalable and replicable model, with potential for expansion both throughout Nigeria and across the wider region.



I am confident that the MPTF will contribute to the creation of strong national sanitation economies and thus underpin efforts to ensure the delivery of essential sanitation, hygiene, and wastewater services. The UN-Water family is pleased to learn that the MPTF's terms of reference align with the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation.

Alvaro Lario

Chair of UN-Water and President of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

[BOX 2]

LEVERAGING PUBLIC FINANCE AND HOUSEHOLD INVESTMENTS FOR NON-SEWERED SANITATION

At the heart of SHF's catalytic approach is the ambition to unlock further public and private financing from governments, households, and financial institutions for Next Generation Sanitation. This leverage effect means that SHF funding acts as a catalyst—unlocking public budgets, encouraging household spending, de-risking private sector investment, and crowding in co-financing from donors and investors.

By building national capacity, improving enterprise bankability, and supporting standards and enabling environments, SHF ensures that its investments generate sustainable, multiplied returns for communities.

In 2024, SHF's support to sanitation economies in Kenya and Uganda leveraged both public and private funding through Government budgets and household financing.

PUBLIC FINANCE

Through SHF-supported technical assistance and policy engagement, public funding for sanitation was leveraged in both Kenya and Uganda. In Uganda, the Ministry of Health allocated an additional USD 1.5 million toward sanitation and hygiene, while the Ministry of Water committed another USD 0.5 million. In Kenya, SHF's influence contributed to a public funding increase of USD 0.5 million for sanitation.

HOUSEHOLDS INVESTMENTS

SHF also played a key role in driving household investments. Through SHF's support, household spending on improved sanitation facilities totalled USD 3.5 million, including 4% through loan-based mechanisms in Uganda.

In Kenya, household contributions reached almost USD 0.5 million, of which 8% included local currency loans from microfinance institutions to purchase sanitation products and pay for emptying services to exhausters' operators, artisans, products' suppliers and pit emptiers in SHF's areas of intervention.



© Pexels / Mjombadii

3

**Accelerating impact
through Next Generation
Sanitation**

3.1 TRANSFORMING SANITATION THROUGH NON-SEWERED SOLUTIONS

At the current pace, the target of SDG 6.2—universal access to safely managed sanitation—will not be met until 2070. However, a solution is within reach.

Next Generation Sanitation (NGS) is an ambitious, market-driven approach that brings investment and innovation to decentralized, non-sewered systems—the primary sanitation solution for most people in LMICs. This approach is helping to build thriving sanitation economies and setting a new benchmark for delivering sustainable, inclusive, and impactful sanitation services.

Pioneered in South Africa, which has been at the forefront of innovative non-sewered sanitation approaches, NGS promotes locally adapted, decentralized sanitation facilities that can be deployed in homes, communities, and rural areas. These solutions do more than simply manage waste—they transform it into valuable resources, strengthen sanitation systems, and generate lasting health, economic, and environmental benefits. By fostering circular and sustainable sanitation value chains, NGS also supports climate mitigation and adaptation, while minimizing environmental impact.

Offering a unique investment opportunity and a business response to the global sanitation and hygiene crisis, NGS identifies catalytic financing mechanisms—such as public-private

partnerships, blended finance, impact investing, and microfinance—to scale solutions and build robust sanitation markets. The approach is particularly focused on addressing the needs of women and girls, ensuring that sanitation is accessible, inclusive, and sustainable for all.

With a strong initial presence in Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda, SHF aims to expand this approach to additional countries in 2025. At the same time, SHF has been supporting global and regional efforts to support the roll out of Next Generation Sanitation, including working in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) on WASH Accounts, and developing an innovative open source tool, the SANEMAT, to improve the understanding of local economies.

Since 2022, SHF has been collaborating with WHO to support the development of WASH Accounts in six countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Concluded in November 2024, this project has allowed to strengthen the enabling environment in these countries by improving the tracking of financial flows through WASH accounts. In addition, the project helped establish better processes, higher quality materials, tools and systems for all countries developing WASH accounts.



Water and sanitation are intrinsically linked to sustainable development and serve as an excellent starting point for collaboration, innovation and impact. As the climate crisis deepens, investment in next generation sanitation can drive these essential pillars of development forward and transform lives and markets, sustainably.

Eva Schreuder

Head Water, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands

[BOX 3]

ASSESSING MARKET MATURITY: THE SANITATION MARKET MATURITY FRAMEWORK (SANEMAT)

Current investments in sanitation in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) remain limited due to perceived risks, insufficient understanding of market opportunities within the sanitation economy, and regulatory barriers.

For the sanitation economy to reach its full potential and contribute to sustainable economic growth and job creation, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of market maturity in specific country contexts, as well as to identify bottlenecks that hinder the development of an investment project pipeline.

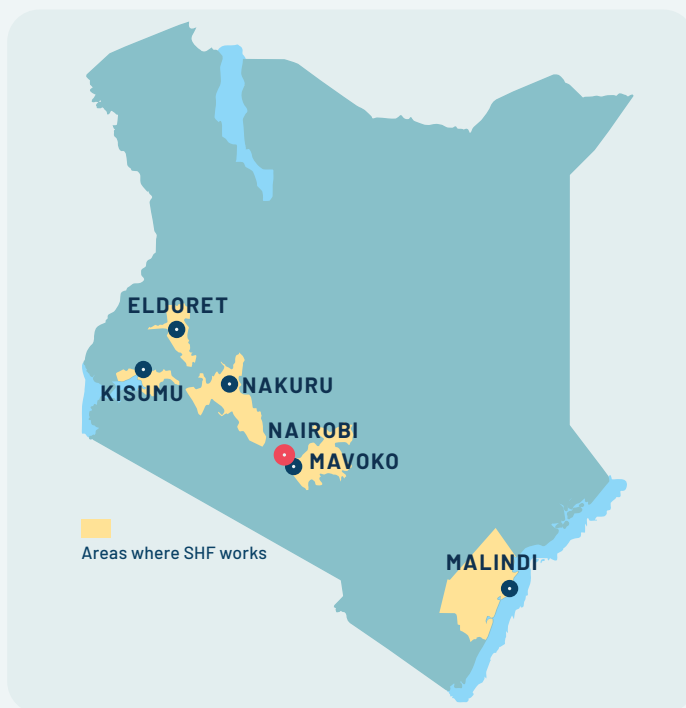
While various frameworks have been developed to assess the sanitation economy in LMICs, providing valuable insights into the sector, none offer a comprehensive view of the sector's maturity. This leaves significant gaps in understanding investment opportunities and risks. In response, SHF has supported the development of a unified Sanitation Economy Maturity Assessment Tool (SANEMAT) throughout 2024.



SANEMAT is designed as an open-source tool that will guide decision-makers by providing insights into market potential, barriers, and opportunities. The tool is expected to stimulate information sharing and investment in the sector. By applying SANEMAT, investors—SHF included—will be able to determine the types of support needed in different countries and the actions required to ensure the sanitation economy thrives. SANEMAT will be piloted in Kenya and other countries in early 2025.

KENYA

3.2 LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A THRIVING SANITATION ECONOMY



In Kenya, over two-thirds of the population lacks access to safely managed sanitation services. Rapid urbanization and population growth demand urgent sanitation solutions. With only 16% of the population currently connected to a sewer system, investments in Next Generation Sanitation could be a game-changer.

According to SHF estimates, Kenya's sanitation economy could grow from USD 1.7 billion in 2022 to USD 2.75 billion by 2030,⁹ offering a unique opportunity to turn an intractable development burden into an economic development opportunity. Non-sewered sanitation solutions, which are decentralized, low-cost, and eco-friendly, could in particular be a game-changer, especially in underserved rural areas, informal urban settlements, and peri-urban regions.



Kenya has always been at the forefront of innovation and Kenya's sanitation economy offers incredible scope for growing jobs, businesses and impact locally. Through our work with SHF, we are committed to scale innovative, circular sanitation solutions that meet the needs of people, especially women and girls, sustainably and forge a future for Kenya as Africa's sanitation powerhouse.

Eng. Mary W. Wainaina, Ag.

Director, Water, Sanitation and Sewerage Development Department, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Kenya.

⁹ The Sanitation & Hygiene Fund (2023). [Sanitation Economy Estimates: Kenya 2022](#).

KEY RESULTS - 2024



With SHF support, almost **600,000** people have gained access to safely managed sanitation in Kenya in 2024. This achievement was driven by connecting households with sanitation products and service providers, as well as supporting sanitation enterprises through marketing efforts across multiple locations amongst others.



20 enterprises were assessed and received targeted training on customer acquisition, marketing, branding, and technical skills.



Sanitation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined to support progress monitoring.



USD 0.5M leveraged in public funding for sanitation.

INVESTMENT ANALYSIS AND SECTOR REFORM

In 2024, SHF collaborated with the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation, the Ministry of Health, the Water Services Regulatory Board, and the Water Sector Trust Fund to lay the groundwork for a thriving sanitation economy and promote public-private partnerships in the delivery of non-sewered sanitation services across the entire service chain.

This collaboration was supported by the recently enacted National Sanitation Management Policy (NSMP), which provides an inclusive policy framework and guidelines to strengthen sanitation management systems and ensure sustainable access for all.

SHF also played a pivotal role in leading the development of Sanitation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in partnership with the Water Services Regulatory Board. Following the Presidential Executive Order of 2018, which transferred the sanitation mandate from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation, there has indeed been an increasing need for a structured system to track and report on sanitation progress.

The Sanitation KPIs are a critical addition to the sector's regulatory and accountability framework. Once implemented, these indicators will help Water Service Providers improve their planning and budgeting for onsite sanitation, fostering more inclusive and sustainable sanitation solutions. This structured approach is expected to drive greater scale and impact in sanitation service delivery while reinforcing confidence in public sector reforms aimed at enhancing sector efficiency and resilience.

In 2024, SHF also partnered with the Government of Kenya to host the Water and Sanitation Investors Conference (WASIC) in Nairobi. The conference, held in March 2024, focused on "Accelerating Investments for Sustainable Access to Water and Sanitation for All." It provided a platform for debate, business partnerships, and financing opportunities to promote sustainable access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. At WASIC, SHF played a central role in shaping strategic discussions on sustainable sanitation financing, regulatory frameworks, and private sector engagement.

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

In collaboration with Water and Sanitation for the Urban Populations (WSUP) and other partners, including city and municipal boards and utilities, SHF has been advancing a market-based sanitation project in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, Malindi, and Eldoret, promoting a socially inclusive market systems development approach and laying the foundation for Next Generation Sanitation in Kenya.

In 2024, the project supported supply-side interventions to meet the demand for sanitation products and services in low-income urban areas. It also helped private sector SMEs and public service providers expand market share through financially viable, scalable, and sustainable approaches. This included addressing capacity gaps in 20 local businesses with targeted training in customer acquisition, marketing, branding, and technical skills, resulting in increased visibility and business growth.

WSUP formalized partnerships with private sector players like Freshlife and LIXIL/SATO, outlining responsibilities for market expansion. In Kisumu, SHF supported six enterprises, enhancing visibility through marketing campaigns, radio slots, and website development. In Nakuru, SHF improved business models for enterprises like NAWASSCOAL by refining marketing strategies and exploring new revenue streams, such as carbon credits and seedball products.

In Nairobi and Malindi, training on marketing, branding, and operational best practices helped enterprises boost sales and visibility. Additionally, WSUP partnered with WASREB and ESAWAS to roll out the Sanitracker app, enabling real-time monitoring of desludging operations and improving data capture across the sanitation value chain.

Market assessments in project cities identified gaps in the sanitation sector, guiding enterprise support, boosting household access to services, and increasing market reach. The project also promoted the inclusion of manual pit emptiers in formal sanitation processes, addressing stigma and improving working conditions.

[BOX 4]

TOWARDS A CIRCULAR SANITATION VALUE CHAIN IN KENYA

Saniwise Technology, a local enterprise in Kisumu, Kenya has transformed plastic waste, including discarded menstrual products, into affordable toilets. Going beyond sanitation, the company also converts toilet waste into black soldier fly larvae, a high-protein poultry feed. Saniwise exemplifies the innovative potential and circularity within the sanitation sector. However, it also highlights the sector's challenge of limited access to capital and capacity—an issue SHF is dedicated to addressing.



Through the Kenya Market-Based Sanitation (KMBS) project, which supports private sector SMEs in building capacity and expanding market share through scalable, financially viable, and sustainable approaches, SHF's funding has helped Saniwise improve its operational capacity and outreach. This support has included branded service trucks, enabling the company to scale its solutions and reach a revenue of approximately \$48,000.

"Before our collaboration with SHF, many low-income areas had limited access to clean and durable toilet facilities. Existing toilets were poorly maintained, and many people resorted to 'flying toilets.' At the same time, the accumulation of plastic waste posed a serious environmental threat, with little recycling infrastructure in place. Now, we have been empowered to show that waste can be valuable. We are creating jobs, protecting the environment, and feeding the future," says Ms. Vera Ouko, Director of Saniwise.

Looking ahead, the company aims to process 100,000 tons of plastic waste annually by 2025, helping to create a cleaner environment and generate more green jobs.

In 2025, SHF will continue engaging with a range of public and private sector partners in Kenya to further lay the foundation for Next Generation Sanitation.

CATALYTIC FINANCING

In 2025, SHF will launch a program aimed at building capacity and providing catalytic financing for sanitation SMEs in East Africa. The program will focus on strengthening sustainable on-site

sanitation value chains and increasing access to safely managed sanitation. It will support SMEs with the potential to scale sanitation solutions and collaborate with municipalities and governments, but that currently lack the necessary support and funding. These enterprises play a crucial role in developing sustainable sanitation value chains, as they are well-positioned to form catalytic partnerships with public entities and integrate seamlessly into municipal sanitation programs.



UGANDA

3.3 INVESTING IN CLIMATE-RESILIENT SANITATION



To achieve universal access to sanitation and hygiene by 2030, Uganda must provide safely managed sanitation to 51 million people. The country also faces significant challenges in wastewater treatment, especially in urban areas.

Meanwhile, an estimated 60% of the country's disease burden is linked to sanitation and hygiene. And in Kampala alone, estimates suggest that sanitation could represent more than half of total city-level emissions.

The sanitation economy is expected to grow from USD 1.7 billion in 2022 to USD 2.7 billion by 2030, creating tremendous investment opportunities across the value chain.¹⁰ With one of the fastest growing economies in East Africa, the sanitation market has the potential to contribute to both job creation and economic development.

Non-sewered sanitation in particular presents a compelling investment opportunity, especially in rural areas and urban slums where access to centralized sanitation infrastructure is limited or nonexistent.



When SHF started, we agreed with the team to aim for the highest level of integration to have the most catalytic impact. With the launch of the SHF project in March 2024 with the highest level of engagement from the government, the Prime Minister's Office and all relevant ministries, we have really hit the nail on the head and this is testament to how well aligned the SHF model is with our own thinking and ambitions.

Dr. Herbert Nabaasa
Uganda's Health Commissioner

¹⁰ The Sanitation & Hygiene Fund (2023). [Sanitation Economy Estimates: Uganda 2022](#).

KEY RESULTS - 2024



Over **53,000** people gained access to improved sanitation, including **40,739** accessing basic sanitation and 12,608 benefiting from safely managed services.



50 SMEs active in the sanitation economy received capacity-building and financing.



Cost of Inaction in **WASH** Services
Investment in Uganda published, showing the imperative to invest more in sanitation.



USD 2M leveraged in public funding for sanitation.

INVESTMENT ANALYSIS AND SECTOR REFORM

In Uganda, SHF collaborates closely with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Water and Environment, and the Ministry of Education and Sports to enhance investment readiness in the sanitation economy.

In partnership with Water for People, SHF has supported the establishment of an interministerial coordination mechanism and a steering committee to pool resources and expertise across key ministries and agencies. As a result of this coordinated effort, an additional USD 1.5 million has been unlocked for Environmental Sanitation within the Ministry of Health.

Under the Ministry of Health's leadership, the Budget Implementation Guidelines for all districts and local

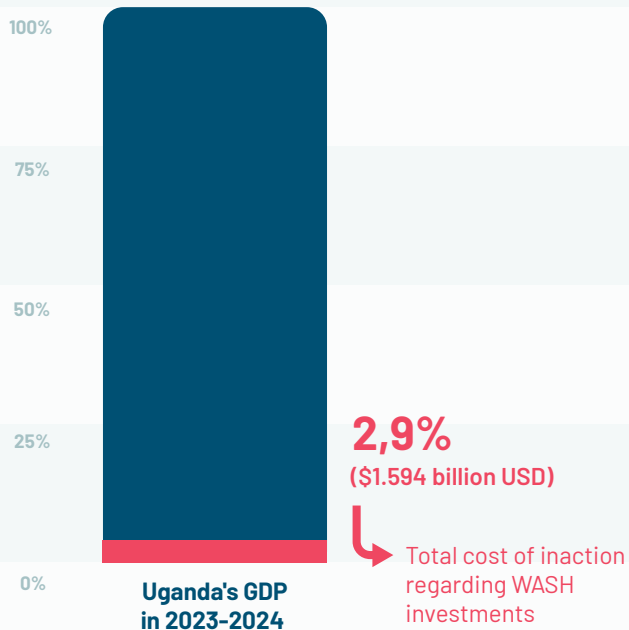
governments will, for the first time, allocate 9% of the Primary Health Care (PHC) budget for sanitation (non-wage) starting in 2025. This marks a significant step in institutionalizing sanitation financing at the district level.

Uganda has been a leader in integrating sanitation into the climate-gender-health nexus. Through its new Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), the country aims to enhance governance and leadership on climate change and health while building resilience for the future. In 2024, market-based sanitation solutions were included in the country's Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), ensuring that climate resilience is a core component of sanitation policies.



[BOX 5]

ASSESSING THE COST OF INACTION FOR SANITATION IN UGANDA



A major achievement in 2024 was the completion of the Cost of Inaction in WASH Services Investment in Uganda assessment, conducted by the Economic Policy Research Centre, Uganda with support from SHF.

This assessment highlights the critical importance of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) investments in Uganda, analyzing the economic and social costs of inadequate WASH infrastructure and services. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the economic impact of underinvestment in WASH, offering evidence-based recommendations for future policy and investment decisions.

The findings reveal that the total cost of inaction regarding WASH investments amounts to approximately \$1.594 billion USD, representing about 2.9% of Uganda's GDP in 2023-2024. It also shows that every USD 1 invested in sanitation yields a return of USD 4, primarily due to lower healthcare costs and other benefits.

The assessment advocates for increased investment in WASH to mitigate health risks, boost productivity, and drive socio-economic development. It proposes a comprehensive strategy to address funding shortfalls and improve service delivery.

Looking ahead, this vital publication will serve as the foundation for high-impact policy briefs and advocacy tools aimed at underscoring the consequences of insufficient WASH investment on Uganda's economy, health outcomes, and broader sectors. It will provide actionable recommendations for key decision-makers, including the Ministry of Finance.





PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

In Uganda, the Ministry of Health's Market-Based Implementation Approach guidelines provide a framework for strengthening the entire sanitation value chain, including private sector participation, technology innovation, financing, and community investment. Against this background, SHF has built capacity among sanitation value chain actors, such as local government health and water staff, sanitation promoters, local artisans, hardware shops, village saving and lending associations, and households.

SHF has in particular supported the development of a National Curriculum for training sanitation artisans (masons), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, to standardize latrine construction services nationwide. In total, 371 masons (367 men and 4 women) were trained in improved sanitation technology construction and marketing, leading to the construction of 7,618 facilities—5,919 basic and 1,699 safely managed—each with handwashing stations.

This initiative professionalizes service provision by licensing service providers, creating business growth, job opportunities, and a standard framework for government and stakeholders to build, finance, and support the sanitation value chain.

Additionally, SHF and Water for People (WfP) supported 50 enterprises and launched market activation activities in Kamuli Municipality, Kayunga Town Council, and Fort Portal City to raise awareness and build demand for fecal sludge management (FSM) services, while strengthening the regulatory environment. These efforts aim to scale FSM services, such as pit emptying and toilet construction, particularly in underserved areas, and improve private sector coordination, supervision, and service delivery in both urban and rural settings.

In 2024, SHF began collaborating with the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) to enhance private sector involvement in sustainable sanitation management. This includes developing Service Level Agreements for private sector actors (mechanized and semi-mechanized toilet emptiers), launching a campaign for increased household sewer connections in Kampala's informal settlements, and strengthening sector coordination through workshops and progress reviews.

In 2025, SHF will continue supporting Next Generation Sanitation in Uganda, including through a capacity-building and financing programme for sanitation SMEs in East Africa.

NIGERIA



3.4 IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH NEXT GENERATION SANITATION



Only one-third of Nigeria's population has access to safely managed sanitation services. Poor sanitation contributes significantly to waterborne diseases, particularly cholera, and other infections. Non-sewered sanitation solutions present viable alternatives to traditional sewer systems, especially in underserved and rapidly urbanizing areas, helping to address the country's significant sanitation challenges.

Nigeria's sanitation economy presents significant growth potential. Valued at US\$ 5.8 billion in 2022, it is projected to exceed US\$ 12 billion once universal access is achieved.¹¹ The private sector is already investing in the development and distribution of sanitation products, such as low-cost toilet components, pit emptying services, and waste management systems. Scaling these investments has the potential to greatly enhance sanitation as well as public health outcomes.



“Access to sanitation is not only a basic right but also a cornerstone for building climate resilient communities.”

Engr. Prof. Joseph T. Utsev

Hon Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Nigeria

¹¹ The Sanitation & Hygiene Fund (2023). [Sanitation Economy Estimates: Nigeria 2022](#).

KEY RESULTS - 2024



Launch of the **Accelerating Inclusive Sanitation and Hygiene Economy in Nigeria** project with the Ministry of Water Resources, Nigeria, being implemented by WaterAid Nigeria to create a viable sanitation economy and improve access to sustainable sanitation and hygiene services in Bauchi State for 904,000 people, especially women, children, and internally displaced persons.



New partnership launched with the **Development Bank of Nigeria** to unlock local currency financing

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Sanitation and health are deeply interconnected in Nigeria, with poor sanitation contributing to various health issues, including waterborne diseases like cholera and other infections. Bauchi State, in particular, has faced recurring cholera outbreaks, especially in vulnerable communities. These challenges are largely driven by widespread open defecation, inadequate access to clean water, and poor hygiene practices.

In response, SHF launched the Accelerating Inclusive Sanitation and Hygiene Economy in Nigeria project in 2024, in partnership with the Ministry of Water Resources and WaterAid Nigeria. Aligned with the National Action Plan (NAP) and the National Cholera Plan (NCP), this 30-month intervention addresses key market challenges and engages the private sector to foster a sustainable sanitation economy. It aims to improve access to sanitation and hygiene services in Bauchi State, directly benefiting 904,000 people, particularly women, children, and internally displaced persons.

This project is a core component of SHF's Next Generation Sanitation approach, emphasizing the need for sustainable, financially viable, and innovative sanitation solutions tailored to the specific needs of communities, especially women and girls. It will support policy development, drive private sector growth, and ensure access to affordable, high-quality sanitation products, contributing to the broader goal of growing Nigeria's sanitation economy.

CATALYTIC FINANCING

In 2024, SHF partnered with the Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) to advance the development of the sanitation and hygiene market in Nigeria. This collaboration focuses on targeted capacity building to catalyze local currency financing and leverage partnerships for scalable financial solutions.

Building on local government efforts to improve sanitation and hygiene services, this partnership will leverage DBN's existing infrastructure and networks. Initially, the collaboration will concentrate on Lagos and Bauchi states as key areas for scaling, with a focus on implementing capacity-building initiatives to unlock local currency financing.

In its first phase, the initiative will provide technical assistance and training to DBN's partner financial institutions, particularly smaller lenders like microfinance institutions. Additionally, it will enhance the bankability of micro and small enterprises in the sanitation and hygiene sector by offering tailored business model support, technical assistance, and guidance on consumer credit schemes.

This initiative will serve as a proof of concept for a scalable and replicable model, with the potential for broader implementation across Nigeria and beyond.





4

**Building thriving menstrual
health markets for all**

4.1 CAPITAL M: THE MARKET-LED MOONSHOT FOR MENSTRUAL HEALTH

In 2024, SHF launched Capital M, to tackle the chronic lack of regular access to menstrual products faced by women and girls in LMICs. With over 600 million women and girls in LMICs still relying on non-purpose-made materials to manage menstruation, Capital M is focused on building a thriving market with reliable supply chains for safe, affordable, and effective menstrual products to transform access.

Current solutions, such as free distribution policies and programs, address only part of the problem and for a limited time. Women and girls menstruate for about 35 years and need consistent access to affordable, reliable products. Subsidized products should be considered within a woman's life course—like helping girls stay in school during their periods—but must ultimately be part of a broader strategy to remove structural barriers to product access. Capital M's market-driven strategy addresses these gaps by tackling restrictive policies, assisting governments to position subsidy programs in the bigger picture for greater impact.

At the heart of Capital M's approach is the recognition that investing in menstrual health is both a business opportunity and a catalyst for social progress. By attracting private investment through innovative mechanisms such as blended finance, impact investing, and de-risking strategies, Capital M enables scalable business models and empowers enterprises to reach their market with sustainable solutions.



© Unsplash / Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC)

This initiative ensures that women and girls have access to products that meet their needs while driving economic growth and creating opportunities across the value chain. Capital M is reshaping the menstrual health landscape, demonstrating that systemic change is possible by making markets work for women and girls everywhere.



“Menstrual health is not only a human rights issue, it is an issue of human dignity, public health and economic development.”

Ambassador Christian Frutiger

Vice-Director-General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

**CAPITAL M UNDERSTANDS THAT REMOVING 4 STRUCTURAL BARRIERS
WILL HELP TO UNLOCK MENSTRUAL PRODUCT ACCESS:**



Lack of Clear Product Standards: The absence of globally standardized regulations makes it difficult for companies to enter markets and improve product quality.



Absence of Scalable Business Models: There is a shortage of commercially viable models focused on providing affordable menstrual products to low-income populations. This is hindering product innovation and local entrepreneurship.



High Regulatory and Trade Barriers: Taxes, levies, fees and the lack of specificity in trade codes and trade inefficiencies, hinder market knowledge and increase the cost of products, limiting access.



Limited Access to Financing: The lack of both public and private investment opportunities, hindering market growth and innovation.



4.2 A PIVOTAL YEAR FOR THE MENSTRUAL HEALTH MARKET

GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

In 2024, Capital M contributed to ongoing global efforts to support the long-overdue development of global quality standards for menstrual products under ISO. This work uncovered a troubling reality: products used by hundreds of millions of women and girls worldwide currently lack the rigorous safety and quality standards applied to everyday items like ballpoint pens or paper clips. The absence of these standards—essential for manufacturing, retail, and trade—has been a significant barrier to the growth of the menstrual health market in LMICs.

With a global process now underway, Capital M is collaborating with the Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS), together with other partners such as the Gates Foundation and The Case for Her, to ensure greater participation from LMICs in this critical process, which is set to conclude in 2027. This participation is vital for ensuring that the final standards are adopted and disseminated in these countries, laying the groundwork for increased manufacturing, retail, and trade, and ultimately improving access to safe and reliable menstrual products. It will also guarantee that this global process is informed by the local reality of women and girls living in LMICs.

To further promote this groundbreaking work, SHF launched a Commitment to Action (CTA) at the 2024 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting. The CTA aims to raise awareness about the importance of LMIC involvement in the standard development process and to secure support for this critical initiative.



“Give a girl a disposable pad, and you may improve her level of comfort for up to 4 hours. Give a girl the opportunity to walk into a marketplace, select her own period product of choice and quality, pay a reasonable price for it and walk out with dignity and security, and you’ve created a world where she may thrive.”

Wendy Anderson

Co-founder, The Case for Her and SHF Board Member

[BOX 6]

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRODUCTS IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES (LMICs)



© Pexels / Karolina Grabowska

Despite the significant gap in access to menstrual products in LMICs, the widespread use of single-use menstrual products has a considerable environmental and infrastructural impact. Among those who can afford purpose-made products, 93% rely on single-use options like pads and

tampons. These products are resource-intensive to produce, with both organic and plastic components, and when disposed of in landfills or flushed down toilets, they pollute waterways and block sewers. This pollution disrupts waste management systems and poses serious health risks due to untreated sewage.

Reusable menstrual products offer a more sustainable alternative, and product innovations are working toward making single-use items fully biodegradable. Continued support for these innovations is crucial to reducing the environmental footprint of menstrual products while addressing the needs of women and girls in these communities. As Capital M expands across various LMIC markets, it will prioritize supporting innovative solutions that reduce the environmental and infrastructural impact of menstrual products.

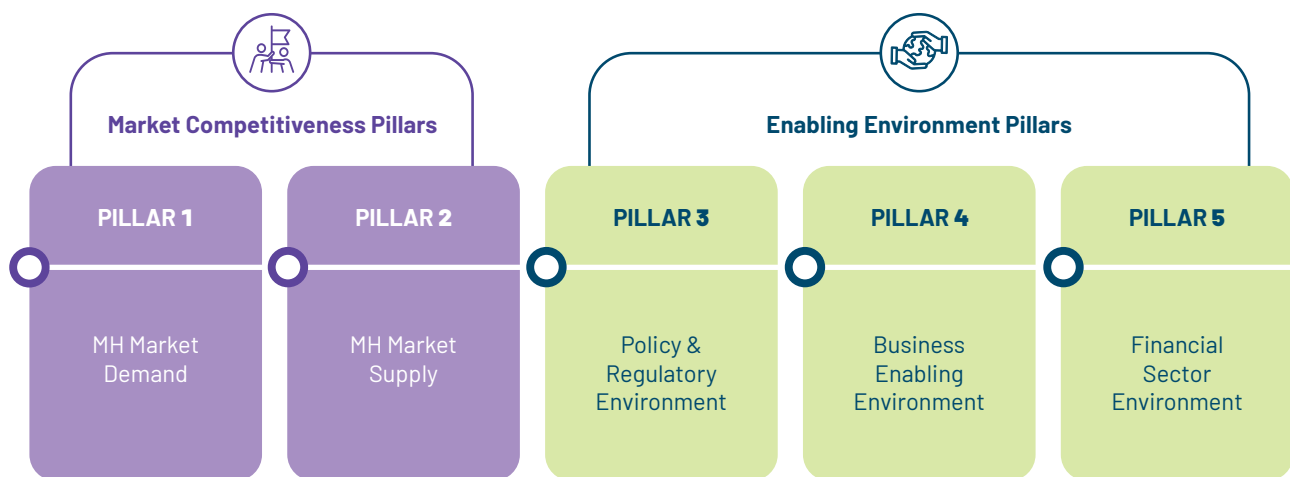
MARKET MATURITY FRAMEWORK

Building thriving menstrual health markets begins with a deep understanding of their maturity and identifying the key challenges they face. In 2024, SHF developed an open-access tool to systematically assess the maturity of the menstrual health market across different countries: the Menstrual Health Market Maturity Assessment Tool (MH-MMAT).

Over 40 partners and experts contributed to the development of this tool through key informant

interviews, draft reviews, and sharing resources and reference materials. Finalized in December 2024, this valuable public resource will help guide decisions and actions aimed at strengthening the market. It will engage menstrual health enterprises, supply chain actors, policymakers, regulators, investors, funders, and technical stakeholders.

The MH-MMAT uses a pillar-and-sub-pillar design to assess market maturity, focusing on market competitiveness and the enabling environment for the menstrual health market.



Looking ahead to 2025, SHF plans to pilot the MH-MMAT in two countries to test its practical implementation. Insights from these pilots will help refine the framework and enhance the data collection and maturity assessment methodologies.

MENSTRUAL HEALTH MARKETS SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES)

In 2024, SHF launched the Menstrual Health Markets Support Program for SMEs in East Africa, funded by the Gates Foundation. This program aims to expand the number of companies offering innovative

menstrual products in LMICs. SHF will collaborate with existing companies to explore new ways of working, including strengthening product design and quality, developing new business models, and leveraging actors throughout the value chain—from production to delivery—along with menstrual product innovators who have a deep understanding of their products and markets.

The program will provide technical support and grant funding to develop and trial these new approaches. While the program’s in-person components will be hosted in Kenya, participants will be selected from across East Africa.

4.3 KENYA: A FAST-GROWING MENSTRUAL HEALTH MARKET



© Unsplash / Jeffrey Erhunse

THE POTENTIAL OF THE MENSTRUAL HEALTH MARKET

In Kenya, an estimated 15 million women and girls menstruate each month. Of these, nearly 60% still rely on toilet paper, rags, and other non-purpose-made materials to manage their menstruation.¹² Commercially available menstrual products are often too expensive for many women and girls, while more affordable innovations—available in other markets—remain out of reach in Kenya.

The Kenyan menstrual product market is dominated by imported single-use pads, which make up 97% of the market and largely dictate pricing. Although reusable products are available, they account for less than 3% of the market due to limited availability, low awareness, and higher upfront costs. While free and subsidized distribution programs support a small portion of the population, they are insufficient to meet the broader demand.

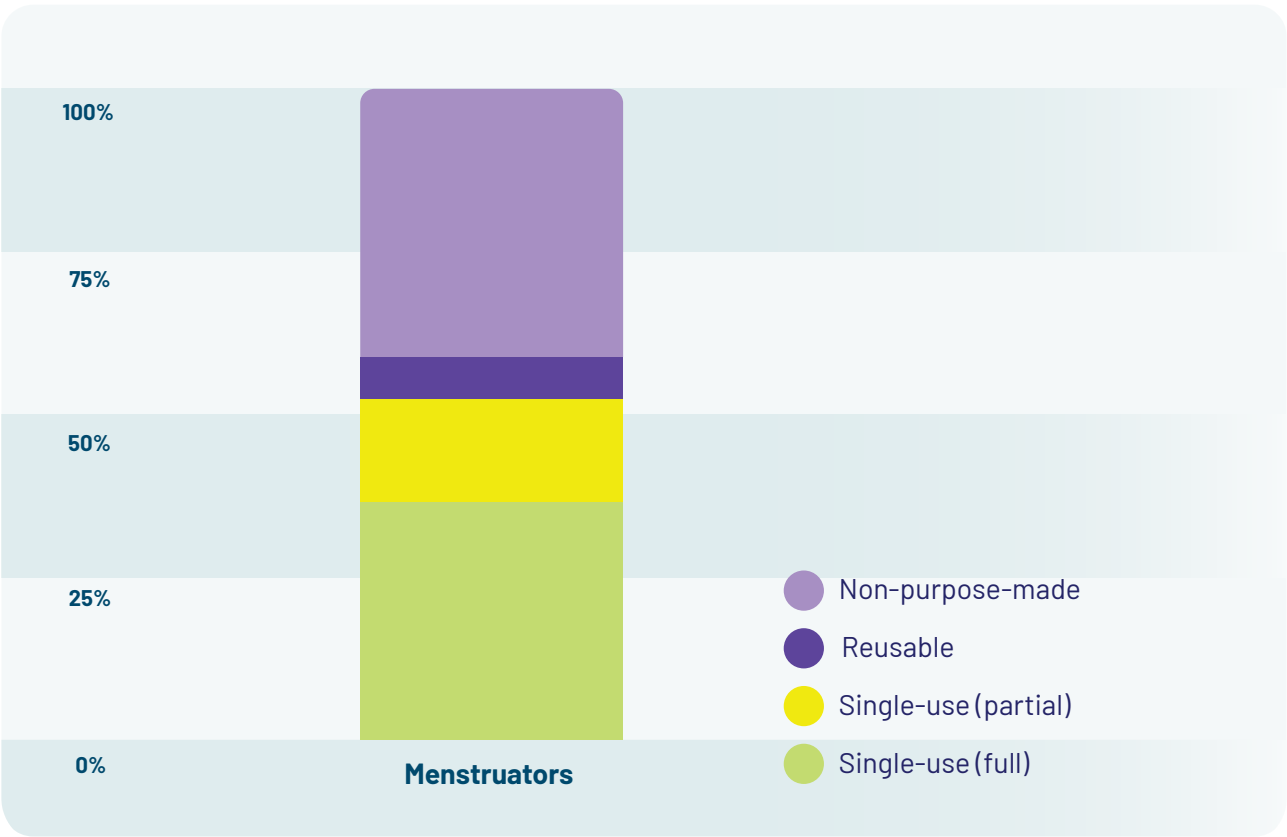
Several factors, including limited investment, a lack of private sector capacity, and both national and global regulatory challenges, have hindered the growth of this market. The limited access to menstrual products has far-reaching consequences, impacting women's health, education, and economic participation. It leads to absenteeism and dropouts in schools, ultimately reducing future earning potential and perpetuating gender disparities.



Kenyan women have consistently been at the forefront of innovation and leadership. Their lived experiences—mirrored across many emerging economies—deserve recognition and inclusion in the development of global standards for menstrual products.

Ken Oduor
Kenya Bureau of Standards

¹² Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (2024). [LEAP Report](#).



Source: <https://leap.rhsupplies.org/menstrual-health/overview>

Kenya is home to a range of innovative products and business models, from compostable pads to social enterprises delivering safe, affordable, and high-quality menstrual products in areas with limited market access but growing demand.

Through Capital M, SHF aims to transform the menstrual health market by improving market analysis, providing technical assistance, driving policy improvements, supporting SMEs, and increasing financing. SHF has been advancing investment readiness through the development of a Menstrual Health and Hygiene Investment Case, a Menstrual Health and Hygiene Financing Strategy, and an analysis of Public Reform Opportunities for Menstrual Health and Hygiene. These documents have been shared with the Government of Kenya, and SHF is actively working to implement these recommendations.

SHF is also supporting Kenya's participation in the global effort to develop standards for menstrual products by collaborating with the Kenyan Bureau of Standards (KEBS) to ensure their involvement in the ISO committee. A national convening will be held in 2025, bringing together stakeholders from UN agencies, NGOs, consumer groups, and the private sector. This event will amplify the voices of both public and private stakeholders, emphasizing the urgency of adopting these global standards.

Additionally, in 2025, Kenya will launch the Gates-funded Menstrual Health Markets Support Program for SMEs. This program will provide technical support and funding to trial innovative approaches and develop novel menstrual products to increase equitable access to quality products across East Africa.



4.4 DEVELOPING A THRIVING MENSTRUAL HEALTH MARKET IN UGANDA

LIMITED ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRODUCTS IN UGANDA

In Uganda, 64% of menstruating women and girls still rely on clothes, cotton wool, or toilet paper to manage their menstrual cycle. Access to menstrual products remains limited due to high prices and a lack of product variety.¹³

Poor menstrual health has a significant impact on the country's economic productivity, with annual losses estimated at USD 272 million. Additionally, 70% of adolescent girls identify menstruation as

a major barrier to their academic performance, contributing to absenteeism and higher dropout rates. This, in turn, reduces future earning potential and overall productivity.

The menstrual health market in Uganda is steadily growing, from USD 122 million in 2019 to USD 130 million in 2021. This trend is expected to continue, driven by population growth and rising incomes. With favorable conditions for suppliers and potential new market entrants, the market is projected to reach USD 164 million by 2030, improving access to menstrual products for thousands of women and girls.

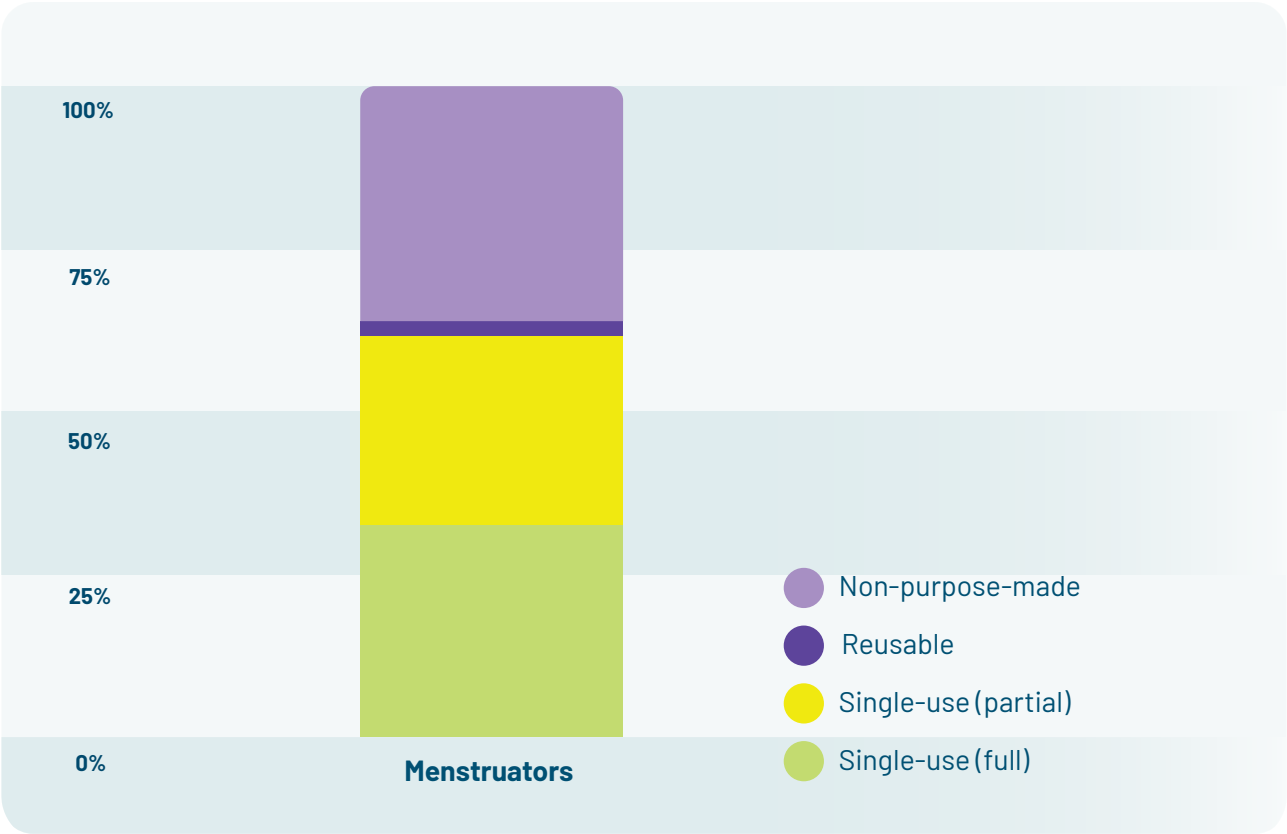


“Uganda is one of the countries that has made significant progress in menstrual health products standardization and we can offer expertise and share the information and research we have conducted. This will be beneficial in the development of the international standards.”

Elijah Kiwanuka

Technical Product Manager, AFRipads while representing the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) at a ISO meeting in Copenhagen in June 2024.

¹³ Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (2024). [LEAP Report](#).



Source: <https://leap.rhsupplies.org/menstrual-health/overview>

To enhance investment readiness in Uganda, SHF has supported the development of a Menstrual Health and Hygiene Investment Case, a Menstrual Health and Hygiene Financing Strategy, and an analysis of Public Reform Opportunities for Menstrual Health and Hygiene. SHF is actively exploring ways to assist the Government of Uganda in advancing these recommendations.

In the coming months, SHF will also support Uganda's participation in the development of global quality standards for menstrual products. This will ensure alignment with emerging global industry benchmarks, allow Uganda to contribute its expertise to the global process, and elevate product quality for users. This initiative aims to remove a major barrier to market entry for affordable

menstrual product innovations, fostering broader accessibility and market growth.

This will involve capacity-building to allow Uganda to best engage in the ISO Menstrual Products Technical Committee (TC 338), as well as the development of a national stakeholder engagement platform on standards and regulatory improvements between government, regulatory institutions, NGOs and Ugandan private sector together with UNFPA.

Finally, Uganda will be part of the Gates-funded Menstrual Health Markets Support Program for SMEs to be rolled out in 2025, which will provide technical support and funding to trial new approaches and propose novel menstrual products.



5

Global positioning and strategic partnerships

5.1 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- SHF brings a unique approach to scaling access to sanitation and menstrual health in LMICs, focusing on reducing reliance on continuous donor funding while incorporating a clear exit strategy.
- By engaging governments, donors, philanthropic partners, private sector actors, financial institutions, and investors, SHF drives market-based, sustainable solutions that ensure access to essential products and services for those who need them most. This approach aligns with national priorities and attracts both international and local finance and investment, enhancing SHF's ability to scale globally.
- Tackling these complex challenges requires collaboration, and in 2024, SHF facilitated key technical and knowledge partnerships to drive meaningful impact.



KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS

As SHF supports the development of frontier markets, developing and sharing knowledge will be essential to rapidly scale innovative approaches. In 2024, SHF entered partnerships with several knowledge institutions to advance the understanding of sanitation and menstrual health markets.

A Memorandum-of Understanding (MoU) is in the process of being signed with the City University of Hong Kong, whereby the University will be working on several research topics related to sanitation and menstrual health.

With a global outcry over the presence of heavy metals and PFAs in tampons from Europe and the US, identified by research from the Columbia University in the summer of 2024, SHF has led the efforts to scale up the assessment of contaminants in menstrual products. Bringing together the metals lab at Columbia University, the Austrian research firm ÖFI and the Gates Foundation, a global risk assessment of contaminants in menstrual products will be conducted in 2025, forming the basis for stricter requirements in the new ISO standards currently under development, and providing insights into the potential health effects on women and girls globally.

TECHNICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Reflecting SHF's efforts to create a coherent global response to menstrual health and hygiene, one that builds on consensus and avoids duplication of efforts, SHF has established a new collaboration with the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC). The Coalition is the world's largest network of reproductive health supplies organizations, with over 500 public, private, and non-governmental organizations.

This partnership will see concrete outputs designed to strengthen market understanding and global market reform. This includes an analysis of the cost burden of taxes, levies and fees on raw materials and finished products throughout the value chain, supporting in the advocacy for and engagement with LMICs on the development and adoption of global ISO standards, supporting a global initiative on trade reform and improved market data with the World Trade Organisation and the World Customs Organisation, and a study on the climate impacts and vulnerabilities of menstrual health supply chains.

The partnership will also continue to build upon the coalition's existing work with the Landscape and Projection of Reproductive Health Supply Needs (LEAP), a global database providing a comprehensive picture of the supplies that women need to meet their reproductive health needs, including for menstrual health.

SHF has also been partnering with WASH United, the secretariat for Global Menstrual Hygiene Day, since 2024. Now entering into its 11th year, MH day is the largest global conversation about menstruation bringing together individuals, organizations and governments for a period-friendly world. WASH United also organized events on menstrual health and investment in different areas such as the menstrual health market at World Water Week in Stockholm and on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on behalf of SHF and other partners.

Recognizing the link between sanitation and climate offers opportunities to harness climate finance to

address the significant gap in sanitation financing, SHF has been engaging closely with the Green Climate Fund to leverage its catalytic financing, and with the Global Green Growth Institute to explore collaboration and alignment in common countries.

SHF also continued its engagement with other stakeholders such as the African Development Bank, the Africa Urban Sanitation Investment Fund and the World Bank Water Resources Group 2030, exploring catalytic financing solutions, including aligning with gender and climate finance, to build thriving sanitation and menstrual health markets.

[BOX 7]

THE GLOBAL TASK FORCE ON CHOLERA CONTROL (GTFCC)

As cholera outbreaks see a marked increase globally, deeper, stronger action and collaboration are needed to deliver fit-for-purpose sanitation for all that is operationally, financially, and environmentally sustainable and gender-responsive.



In October 2024, SHF joined the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC) as a member of the WaSH Technical Working Group (TWG).

The GTFCC, with its secretariat at the World Health Organization (WHO) is a network of more than 50 partners focused on cholera control globally, including academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations' agencies.

As a member of the TWG, SHF will provide key insights into sanitation markets, whose stakeholders play a critical role in controlling and eliminating waterborne diseases, including cholera. SHF will foster partnerships for innovative approaches, particularly in building resilient next generation sanitation solutions and supply chains, and building public-private partnerships, to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH) infrastructure globally.



5.2 GLOBAL POSITIONING

Leading the charge on creating a sea change in how sanitation, hygiene, menstrual health and wastewater are valued and financed requires high and deep engagement with global, regional and national stakeholders and decision-makers. Through 2024, SHF was actively present in sector-defining events and fora to move the needle on public and private investments and mainstream recognition of their development and investment opportunities, and impacts.

NEXT GENERATION SANITATION

In 2024, SHF engaged in the G20 Development Working Group to position sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health centrally in the G20 agenda. SHF's participation in the G20 Development Working Group discussions on WASH resulted in official endorsement of the SHF model in the G20 final declaration.

In the context of the One Water Summit, co-organized by France, Kazakhstan, and the World Bank, in

partnership with Saudi Arabia, SHF engaged strategically with France and other partners to position sanitation centrally in this global event agenda. As a result, SHF's unique innovative finance offer for sanitation was recognized in the Summit, and SHF's Board Chair, Cécilia Akintomide was invited to chair the session on 'Govern, innovate and finance' focusing on water planning and management.

SHF also engaged at the regional and country levels. For instance, at the Africa Water Week in Cairo, in October 2024, SHF hosted a session titled "The Role of a Conducive Enabling Environment in Enhancing Non-Sewered Sanitation: Lessons from Kenya," to share insights on market-based approaches to sanitation in Kenya. SHF also participated in the organization of the Water and Sanitation Investors Conference (WASIC) in Nairobi in March 2024 together with the Government of Kenya to promote business partnerships and financing towards sustainable access to water and sanitation services in the country.

CAPITAL M

Recognizing the importance of partnerships and collective action to achieve success in the menstrual health frontier emerging market, SHF continued the convening of the Menstrual Health Funders Group with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 2024, bringing together various experts and funders to exchange good practices and co-create a success pathway for a thriving menstrual health market.

In January 2024, SHF in partnership with SDC, organized the first menstrual health-dedicated event in Davos at the House of Switzerland. Attended by representatives from governments, private sector, financial institutions and philanthropic organizations, the event kickstarted our outreach around Capital M and building a thriving menstrual health market.

In 2024, SHF championed Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day), a key global moment to break taboos and raise

awareness about menstrual health and hygiene.

Through a partnership with WASH United, advocates at the organisational and individual level were engaged with the #PeriodFriendlyWorld campaign, reaching 966 million people worldwide, making it the largest global conversation about menstruation to date. SHF's support for MH Day is part of its broader goal to mainstream menstrual health into political, financial, and economic agendas.

SHF also launched a Commitment to Action with the Clinton Global Initiative to support the development of inclusive global menstrual product standards and menstrual health markets, raise awareness and secure additional support for Capital M.

Finally, SHF pitched Capital M in front of impact investors and other financiers at Building Bridges in Geneva in December 2024 to close out a year of building momentum on menstrual health and the need and potential for impactful public and private partnerships.

[BOX 8]

THE MENSTRUAL HEALTH FUNDERS GROUP



© Pexels / Sora Shimazaki

In 2023, SHF established the Menstrual Health Funders Group together with the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), in order to bring together key partners and champions to support the development of menstrual health markets in LMICs. The group is convened bi-annually to share good practices, align action and drive the agenda on menstrual health markets.

Today, the group has grown significantly to include 30 bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropic funders, foundations, investors and financial institutions interested in funding and investing in menstrual health. It has led to new collaborations and has helped sustain political momentum on these important issues.





6

Forward look

Improved access to sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health is not only a fundamental human right, but also a crucial factor in unlocking individual potential, particularly for women and girls. Proper sanitation fosters healthier, more resilient communities that are better equipped to thrive in the face of climate challenges and economic opportunities. When women and girls can manage menstruation safely and with dignity, they can fully engage in education, work, and their community.

As we approach 2025, SHF is entering an exciting new chapter, poised to deepen our impact and expand our partnerships. On the ground, we will continue working with governments, communities, and stakeholders to develop robust sanitation economies and menstrual health markets that increase access, create jobs, and drive lasting change. Our early investments in Kenya and Uganda are already yielding transformative results, strengthening the SME landscape and enhancing utilities' capacities.

We look forward to bringing these insights to Nigeria in 2025, focusing on one of the country's most vulnerable cholera hotspots. Our engagement in Nigeria will be supported through a groundbreaking collaboration with the Development Bank of Nigeria, setting a new benchmark for local currency financing in sanitation both regionally and globally.

To scale Next Generation Sanitation, SHF will continue collaborating with key financing institutions, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, and other multilateral development banks (MDBs), as well as national development finance institutions. These partnerships will integrate non-sewered sanitation solutions into their financing strategies.

As SHF expands its presence in LMICs, ensuring that sanitation solutions are gender- and disability-sensitive will remain a core priority. We aim to create inclusive solutions that address diverse physical needs, ensure safety and access, and support climate-resilient systems that contribute to both mitigation and adaptation efforts.

We are particularly excited about the growth of Capital M, which has the potential to transform societies and economies by fostering vibrant menstrual health markets. Through Capital M, SHF is shaping a future where menstrual health is not a barrier, but a catalyst for opportunity and societal change.

Given increasing pressures on ODA, SHF is committed to developing a forward-thinking strategy for the next decade. This strategy, based on the new MPTF, aims to transform the financing of sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health in collaboration with UNCDF and UNEP.

In 2025, SHF will remain actively engaged both locally and internationally, ensuring that sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health are central topics at the 2026 UN Water Conference, co-hosted by the UAE and Senegal in December 2026.

As Africa prepares to host the G20 for the first time, we are excited to collaborate with South Africa and other G20 countries to drive the paradigm shift necessary for sustainable development financing, ensuring the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda is realized and that no one is left behind.

7 SHF Board

The SHF Board, chaired by Cecilia Akintomide, comprises exceptional leaders and experts in development financing, impact investing, entrepreneurship, innovation and accountability. All board members work with SHF on a voluntary and honorary basis and are subject to UNOPS ethics and compliance.

In 2024, SHF welcomed the Co-Founder of The Case for Her, Wendy Anderson, to its board. The year also marked the last year of service of inaugural board member Hank Habicht whose guidance to SHF has been monumental through our establishment and initial years.



Cecilia Akintomide, OON*
Chair, SHF
**Officer of the Order of the Niger*



Wendy Anderson
Co-founder and Investing Partner
at The Case for Her



Anita Bhatia
Former United Nations Assistant
Secretary-General and Deputy
Executive Director, UN Women



Jennifer Blanke
Chair, SHF Innovation and Impact
Committee, Global Development and
Development Finance Expert



Jingdong Hua
Vice Chair, ISSB, Former Vice-
President and Treasurer, The
World Bank



Katherine Meighan
Chief Legal and Governance
Officer, IFAD



Monish Mahurkar

Head of Climate Transition at ARGA
Investment Management LP



Rakesh Nangia

Chair, SHF Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee, Partner and COO at the
Centennial Group



Naomi Tulay Solanke

Founder Executive Director
of Community Healthcare
Initiative (CHI)



Sarah Djari

Climate Investment Manager
for the Private Sector, Green
Climate Fund (GCF)



Joanna Yeo

Founder and CEO of Arukah



Andrew Kirkwood

Director of the UNOPS
office in Geneva



Dominic O'Neill

Executive Director of the
Sanitation and Hygiene Fund

8

Donor acknowledgment

We are profoundly grateful to the Governments of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Switzerland for their visionary support as founding donors of SHF. Their steadfast commitment to enhancing sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health globally has been pivotal in advancing our mission to create healthier, cleaner, and more equitable communities.

The generous contributions from Switzerland and the Netherlands underscore their dedication to sustainable development, global health, equitable access to sanitation, private sector growth, and the empowerment of communities worldwide. Through their partnership, we are building a future where dignity, safety, and health are accessible to all.

We are also deeply appreciative of our new partnership with the Gates Foundation in 2024, which supports market-based approaches to menstrual health in LMICs. This collaboration further strengthens our efforts to address critical development challenges on a global scale.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our donors for their leadership and invaluable support in making the ambition of SHF to promote inclusive, sustainable growth through sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health a reality, and we look forward to continued collaboration in 2025.



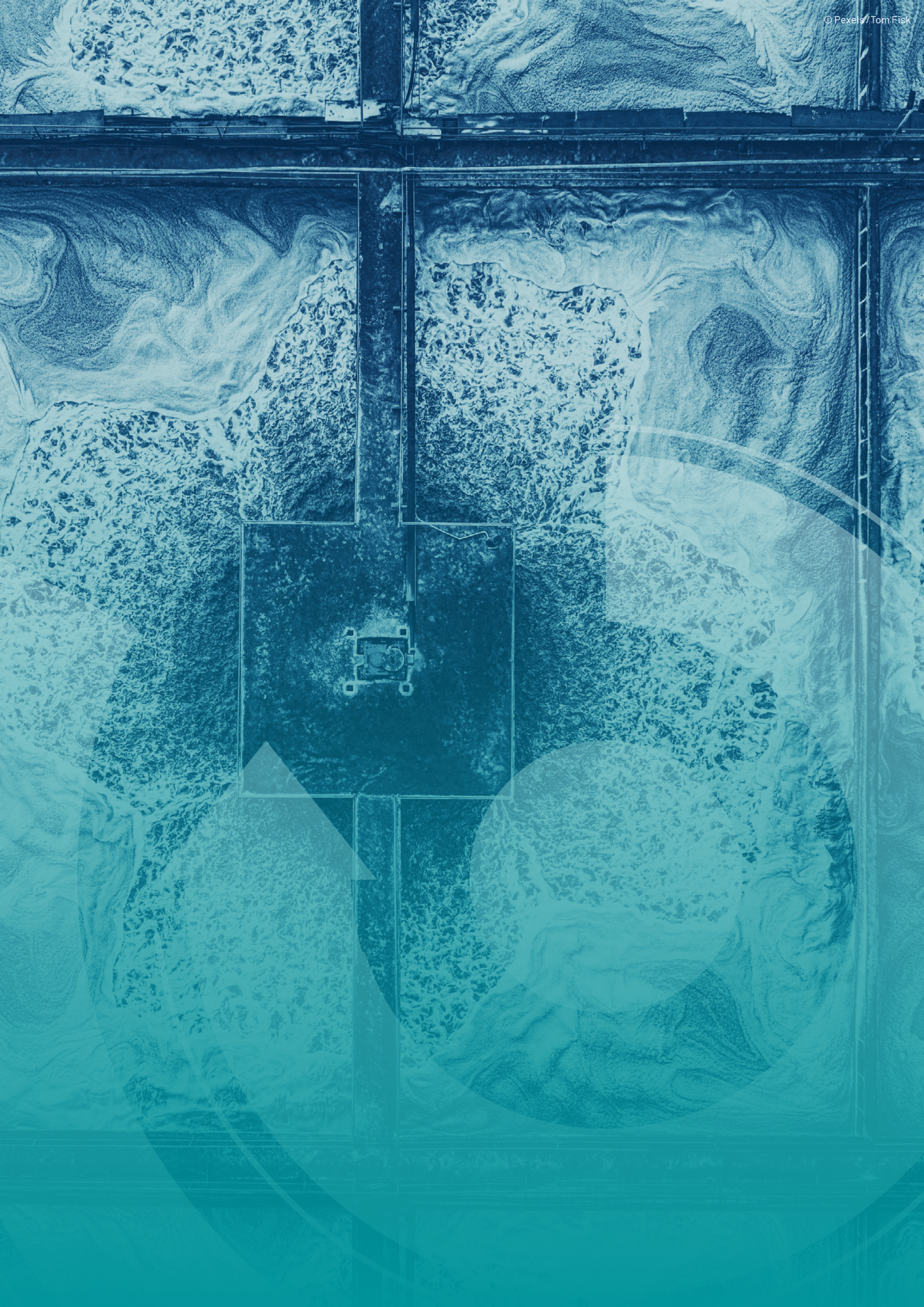
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Gates Foundation



The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) is a part of UNOPS.

