

# OBJECTIVE

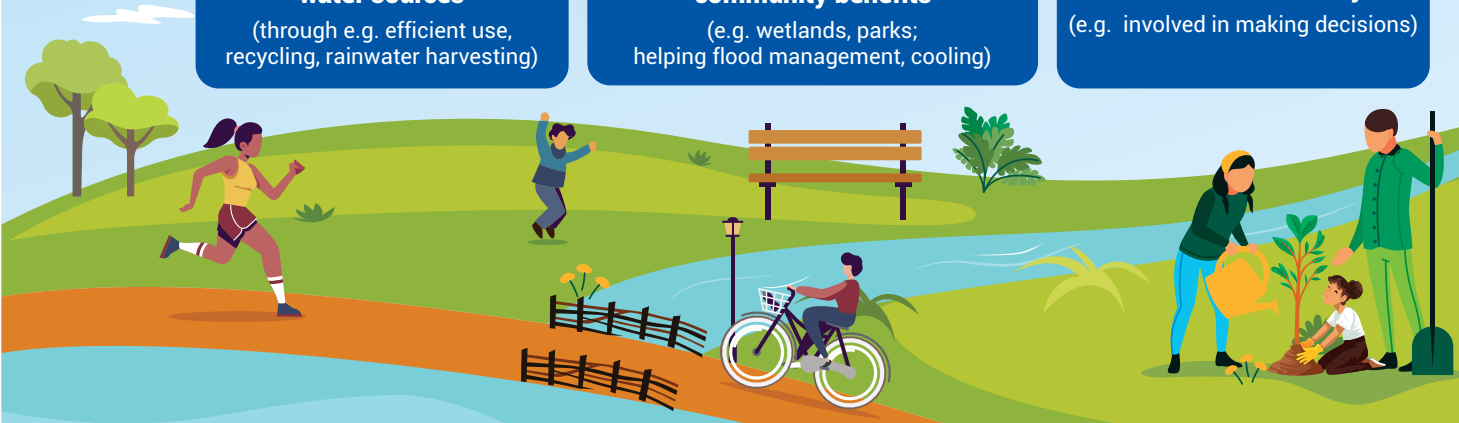
The South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI) program (2021-2025, AUD20 million) focused on improving access to safe water and sanitation in urban areas in the South Asia region, through promotion of the 'Water Sensitive Cities' approach.

The main features characterising the 'Water Sensitive Cities' (WSC) approach include

**Water self-sufficiency with access to a variety of water sources**  
(through e.g. efficient use, recycling, rainwater harvesting)

**The natural environment and healthy ecosystems providing community benefits**  
(e.g. wetlands, parks; helping flood management, cooling)

**An informed and involved community**  
(e.g. involved in making decisions)

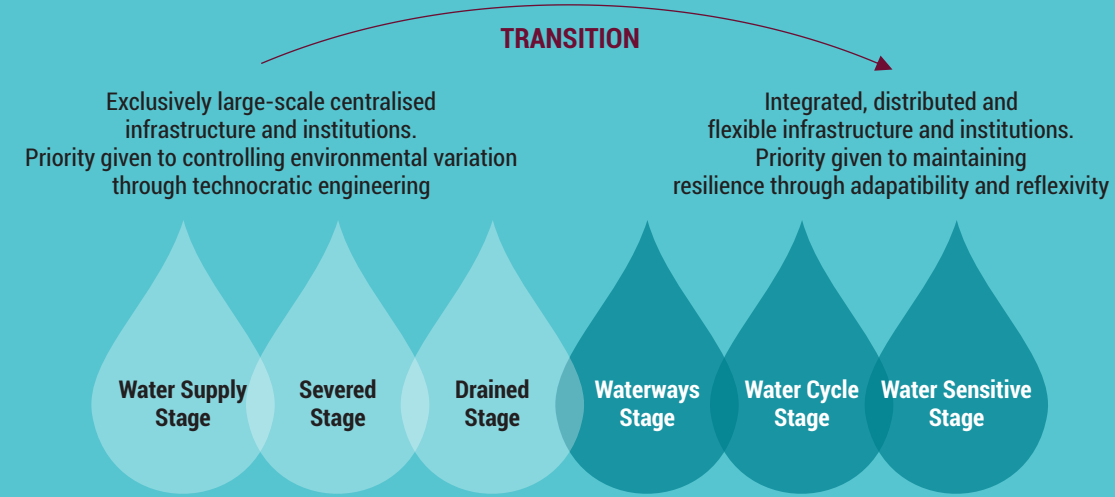


# PROGRAM SUMMARY

The SAWASI Program had three components:

**1 Community Demonstration Projects (CDPs)** involved moving four urban disadvantaged communities along the water security spectrum from a predominantly 'Water Supply' stage towards a 'Water Sensitive' stage. The stages that cities/areas normally go through towards achieving a 'Water Sensitive' status are depicted below.

Figure: Adapted from Moving Towards Water Sensitive Cities (2016) manual of the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities



**2 Technical Assistance (TA)** provided to the governments in South Asian countries to introduce WSC approaches in urban planning and design.

**3 Regional and city level learning workshops** supported to promote and share learnings on the WSC approach.

# KEY RESULTS

## Community Demonstration Project

- PAKISTAN**
- Over 250 participatory meetings held including 2,000 community members.
  - 2,090 students were sensitised through water clubs.
  - Focused on installation of WSC structures such as 650 rainwater harvesting systems (RWHS), 4 ablation water reuse systems, 10 solarised filtration plants, sewerage connections to 450 houses, landscaping 5 green spaces, and 37 recharge interventions amongst other outputs.
  - Community reported positive feedback on the WSC structures which have restored water recharge and feedback loops.
  - Communities involved in active operation and maintenance of WSC structures.
  - Meetings with the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Islamabad to discuss issues related to implementation.
  - Several city level learning workshops held to discuss SAWASI interventions towards becoming a water sensitive city.

- INDIA**
- 450 community meetings with over 7,000 participants contributing to WSC design and discussions.
  - Women leaders of Community Action Groups actively engaged with government officials to advocate for better services, including water provision, sewage and solid waste management services.
  - Installed 62 household level RWHS, distributed 2,180 dustbins, installed community composting bins and irrigation systems in schools, restored nearly 1,200 sq mtrs as a barrier-free park with recharge pits and over 650 native plants, re-laid water pipelines benefitting 50 households.
  - Convened the Delhi City Learning Workshop to discuss the scale-up of the WSC approach.

# SAWASI

The South Asia Water Security Initiative



## Technical Assistance (TA)

- INDIA**
- Contributed to the implementation of Government's Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT 2.0).
  - Outputs produced on a range of sectors connected to circular economy of water; wastewater recycling and reuse; ground water management and waterbody rejuvenation.
  - Government stakeholders appreciative and value the TA capacity building efforts.
- PAKISTAN**
- Findings of hydrological analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the likely adverse impacts of extreme rainfall events across urban Lahore and the resultant challenges to the drainage system.
  - A learning exchange and exposure visit by five senior officials to Australia has helped in formalising strategic long-term relationships between Australia and Pakistan.
- NEPAL**
- Developed a water balance model for supply optimisation and investment planning in Pokhara and Tulsipur, including a data collection and management plan.
  - Trained water supply engineers, planners, and system managers in using and upgrading the model for scenario planning and optimisation.
  - Developed an institutional framework for GEDSI incorporation in water supply planning and management, and recommendations for reforming laws and policies related to women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities.



Working on government relationships with the ministries by responding to their immediate needs



Adaptive, with removal of COVID-19 travel restrictions enabling face-to-face interactions and better engagement for TA with government stakeholders

Effective in ensuring that communities are aware of the Water Sensitive Cities approach, and involved in planning rainwater harvesting structures and filtration plants in line with the approach

And that communities and the government generally perceive the program to be positive

Relevant to the strategic objectives of Australia's capacity development goals



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- In future projects, the WSC approach could be better contextualised to the South Asian context.
- Project site achievements and extensive learnings from India, Pakistan and Nepal need to be shared in policy circles to ensure program influence.
- Tracking future WSC initiatives within the government would help measure the reach of TA and enable further collaboration with Australian expertise in the area.