



## Project: Implementation of WASH and SAHTOSO Actions for Improving Coverage and Sustainability of Services

Guatemala has large gaps in access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, especially in rural areas. According to data from the Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) in 2022, at the rural level, 3% of the population still practices open defecation and 37% use limited sanitation services and 3% consume surface water, while 8% use limited and unimproved services.

For this reason, the project combines comprehensive WASH actions that encompass municipal governance, community empowerment, social behaviour change, access to appropriate technologies, strengthening value chains and climate resilience. Its objective is to move towards the elimination of environmental fecal contamination (ECOFAM) and the improvement of water and food security, linking the strategy with national and international frameworks such as SDG 6 Water and Sanitation for All, the K'atun National Development Plan: Our Guatemala 2032 and the Great National Crusade for Nutrition.

The general intervention is part of three joint programs and responds to the national plans and policies of the current government. Municipalities in the departments of San Marcos, Chiquimula, Jalapa, and Quiché are prioritized, focused on improving community resilience, local governance, and access to appropriate technologies for water and sanitation.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:

The implementation strategy builds on the experience accumulated by HELVETAS in previous years, incorporating key learnings and strengthening successful interventions, in an articulated way between local governance, social behavior change, access to technologies and private sector participation. Community participation, municipal institutional strengthening, intersectoral articulation and the progressive involvement of the private sector are prioritized as sustainable ways to improve WASH services and reduce environmental fecal contamination.

- 1. Strengthening municipal governance of the WASH sector through OMAS/DIMAS in Quiché and San Marcos:** Municipalities are accompanied in strengthening their Municipal Water and Sanitation Offices (OMAS) and Municipal Water and Sanitation Directorates (DIMAS), promoting a local management model focused on participatory planning, the technical formulation of projects and the articulation with community actors. Through training processes and technical assistance, it seeks to consolidate the capacities of the OMAS/DIMAS for the planning and management of WASH projects. It is expected to consolidate the process of strengthening at least 6 OMAS in the prioritized municipalities of San Marcos and continuity in the planning and management of projects in 3 OMAS/DIMAS in the department of Quiché.
- 2. Implementation of the SAHTOSO methodology in the dry corridor:** The implementation of the methodology continues, through the modality of municipal strengthening in two prioritized municipalities in Chiquimula (San Juan Ermita and Camotán) with the transfer of capacities, involving municipal technicians and facilitators from the OMAS, Environmental Management Units (UGAM), Municipal Directorates for Women (DMM) and MSPAS personnel. The strategy considers the certification of communities and at least 1 ECOFAM municipality, all based on criteria and protocol already institutionalized and the strengthening of technical capacities of municipal governments and their technical units (OMAS, UGAM, DMM) and health personnel of the MSPAS.

The methodology was institutionalized by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) in 2023 through Ministerial Agreement 105-2023. The Sustainable Total Sanitation and Hygiene Project – SAHTOSO is aimed at eliminating environmental fecal contamination (ECOFAM) from communities and municipalities, through a certification process led by the communities with the SAHTOSO Committees and the Municipal and Departmental Commissions for Food and Nutritional Security (COMUSAN and CODESAN).

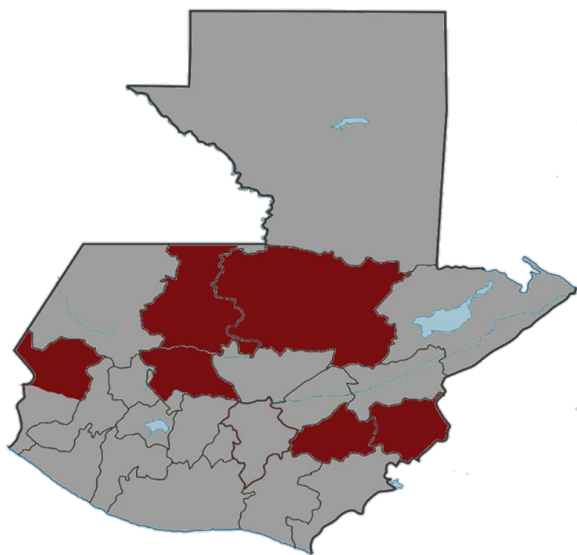
**3. Access to safe water through rainwater harvesting systems in dry corridor:** It is expected to use the already tested rainwater harvesting designs and adapt them to the specific geographical conditions of the communities of the municipalities of San Juan Ermita, Camotán in Chiquimula and the municipality of San José Pinula in Jalapa. Families will be prioritized, based on criteria of extreme poverty, malnutrition and participation in the SAHTOSO methodology. Training will also be provided to beneficiary families on the operation, maintenance, basic filtration with Eco-filters and good practices for the use, storage and handling of safe water at home. Georeferenced monitoring of the benefited homes will be carried out, with basic information on family members, age distribution and photographs of the installed systems.

**4. Market-Based Sanitation (SBM):** the sanitation value chain will be strengthened through the focus of activating supply and demand, promoting the articulation between hardware stores, bricklayers, microfinance institutions and mainly rural users in the Ixil area in the department of Quiché. The implementation of the marketing plan developed in 2024, under the "Baño Pro" initiative, will be monitored, linking microfinance actors to agree on credit mechanisms and expanding the catalog of products with hardware stores with the development of at least one sanitation fair.

## RESULTS

- 1.1. Strengthened local governance and management:** At least 6 OMAS/DIMAS have an ASH model in place and consolidate their technical capacity to plan, manage and monitor WASH projects.
- 1.2. Communities and municipalities free of environmental fecal contamination:** Certification of communities and at least one municipality certified under the approach of Elimination of Environmental Fecal Contamination -ECOFAM- and the progressive reduction of open defecation and inadequate hygiene practices, improving child health and nutrition.
- 1.3. Access to safe water and climate resilience:** Installation of rainwater harvesting systems and water treatment technologies at the household level in vulnerable households in the Dry Corridor.
- 1.4. Value chain and access to markets strengthened:** Hardware stores, masons and local distributors of sanitation products in the Ixil area of Quiché participate in the sanitation value chain, expanding access to quality products and promoting access to credit with microfinance institutions to facilitate the acquisition of products and services through the Baño Pro initiative.

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



## FAST FACTS

### Geographical location:

The general intervention is part of three joint programs and responds to the national plans and policies of the current government. Priority is given to municipalities in the departments of:

- **Alta Verapaz:** Panzos
- **Chiquimula:** Camotán, Jocotán, Olopa, San Juan Ermita,
- **Jalapa:** San Luis Jilotepeque, San Pedro Pinula,
- **Quiché:** Chajul, Nebaj, San Juan Cotzal,
- **San Marcos:** Concepción Tutuapa, San Miguel Ixtahuacán, Sibinal, Sipacapa, Tacaná, Tejutla

<b>Phase and duration:</b>	8.5 months
<b>Start date:</b>	June 5, 2025
<b>End date:</b>	February 16, 2026
<b>Phased budget:</b>	\$ 2,266,262.05

### Key players and partners:

The implementation of the project will be developed in close coordination with a network of institutional, community and private sector actors.

At the national level, work will be done with:

- Directorate of Drinking Water, Sanitation, Health and Environment (DAPPSA) of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) as the governing body of the SAHTOSO approach and ECOFAM certification.
- SESAN, responsible for coordinating the Municipal Commissions for Food and Nutritional Security (COMUSAN) and the Departmental Commission for Food and Nutritional Security (CODESAN) in the ECOFAM verification and certification processes.

At the territorial level, we will work with:

- Municipalities that will be central actors through their Municipal Offices of Water and Sanitation (OMAS), Municipal Environmental Management Unit (UGAM), Municipal Directorates for Women (DMM).
- Municipal Development Councils (COMUDE).
- The project will maintain collaborative relationships with community actors such as Community Development Councils (COCODEs), SAHTOSO Committees, Water Committees, health promoters, midwives and community leaders to ensure the cultural relevance and sustainability of the actions.

In the market-based sanitation component, we will work with:

- Local hardware stores, bricklayers, input distributors and savings and credit cooperatives to strengthen the sanitation value chain.
- Finally, actions will be articulated with the agencies of the United Nations System participating in the joint programs PC DRY CORRIDOR, PC DRIS and institutions such as:
- Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN).
- the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to ensure complementarity in the areas of food security, water resources management, climate resilience and inclusion of women and vulnerable groups.

Previous experience in inter-agency coordination and linkage with national policies such as the Great National Crusade for Nutrition and the K'atun 2032 National Development Plan will be key to ensuring the strategic alignment of the project with national and local priorities.

### Donors:

- UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
- HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

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