WASH programming in West Africa is primarily across the Sahel Region, one of the world’s harshest contexts and climates. A prolonged dry season and very short rainy season stress water supply, while political instability, insecurity, and extremist violence exacerbate the number and complexity of humanitarian emergencies. Open defecation is the norm in many rural areas and progress on improved sanitation has been slow.

World Vision’s work across this region has 35 years of history, beginning with the USAID funded Ghana Rural Water Project to eradicate Guinea worm. Soon after, long-term partnerships began with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and other grant recipients including WHO, CDC, and IRC WASH.

Despite likely being the most volatile region in Africa, many countries are moving quickly toward piped-water systems and seeking solutions toward climate-resilient infrastructure. Water quality remains a key focus due to both biological and heavy metal contamination. All West Africa countries are investing in the evaluation of water quality improvement and piloting solutions to decrease contamination, with Ghana focusing on understanding more of this issue region-wide through its water quality lab in Tamale.

Behavior-change programming and sanitation marketing are two significant areas of investment. Strong engagement with leaders of different faiths in the region, particularly Christian and Muslim, support community initiatives around WASH promotion of behavior change.

1. Ghana, Mali, and Niger have developed and are working toward district universal coverage master plans. In Ghana, progress is underway toward universal coverage across the district of Asutifi North, as part of a collaboration with Hilton foundation partners.

2. WASH UP! interventions are being implemented in schools across Ghana, Mali, and Niger to help children learn, practice, and model healthy WASH behaviors. WASH UP! is being adapted for behaviors that lead to the spread of neglected tropical diseases.

3. Sierra Leone will implement a strong strategy for integrated water resource management formed around social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental sustainability, supported by CVA.

4. In Chad’s fragile context, the planned closure of eight World Vision APs and opening of eight new APs provides strategic opportunity for increased WASH focus in the initial years of the new programs.
In Mali, World Vision has worked closely with WHO, CDC, WaterAid, and the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to improve WASH conditions in 40 HCFs across the districts of Kolokani and Koro. Program outcome highlights include: solar-powered mechanized water systems to provide on-site access to safe water in 34 HCFs; behavior-change communication capacity building for healthcare workers; an inclusive and gender-segregated sanitation model for HCFs; and CVA training in local advocacy and WASH standards to hold authorities accountable to WASH in HCF minimum standards.

The project will continue to build on these, while further strengthening the enabling environment and influencing national policies to include WASH in HCF into national strategies for access to water and sanitation. World Vision will continue to emphasize monitoring, evaluation, and learning for proof of concept, replication, and scalability of universal WASH services in HCFs.