



UNC WATER & HEALTH CONFERENCE

Beyond the Build

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We currently manage 470 water points that provide reliable safe water to 141,000 last-mile customers across 5 regions of Ghana.



Rural Last-Mile Villages

Ghanaian communities under 1,000 people



Water Sector

Water authorities and service providers

TRUE COST PROJECT

Imagine a world where access to safe water is solved – what is the long-term, recurring cost of continuing reliable water service across all rural customers in Ghana?



Identify redundant costs under the current siloed service delivery approach and opportunities for efficiencies.



Share results widely.

TRUE COST PROJECT

Imagine a world where access to safe water is solved – what is the long-term, recurring cost of continuing reliable water service across all last-mile customers in Ghana?



Share results widely.

METHODOLOGY

How we built the numbers



Shared 2024 P&L with independent financial analyst



Worked together to categorize costs properly



Partnered with Aquaya's Project W to help quantify total number of last-mile customers using the most up to date data

Final report will be public in Q1 2026 and will include 2025 cost data.

LAST-MILE CUSTOMERS

19,434

LAST-MILE COMMUNITIES

LAST-MILE CUSTOMERS

4 million

PEOPLE

THE FINDING

Annual Cost of Last-Mile Water Service

LOWER LIMIT (GROUNDWATER)

\$11.1M

PER YEAR

\$2.77

PER PERSON / YEAR

UPPER LIMIT (SURFACE WATER)

\$24.5M

PER YEAR

\$5.67

PER PERSON / YEAR

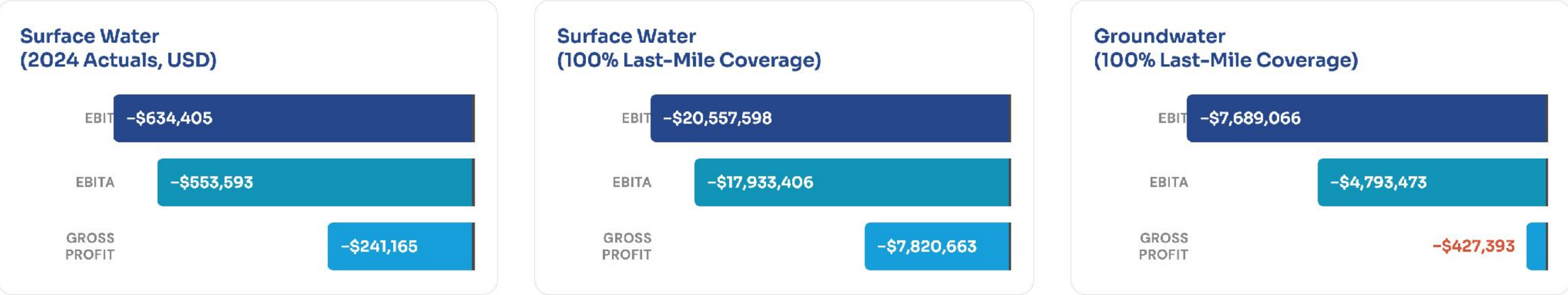
Annual Revenue of Last-Mile Water Service

	Per year	Per person / year
Surface Water	\$80K	\$0.02
Groundwater	\$1.04M	\$0.26

\$10M
PER YEAR

THE PICTURE

Profitability of Last-Mile Water Service



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Ghana could contract service companies for rural water services in last mile communities using \$10 million per year in results-based funding and ensure long-term reliable water access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several opportunities to increase revenue and decrease cost.



Revenue

Increasing payment compliance from 15% to 76% in groundwater villages results in positive EBITA.



RBF

Last-mile subsidies should be delivered via Results Based Funding to ensure performance.



Integration

Isolating last-mile communities under a single service provider is the most expensive approach; integrating last-mile delivery into the broader rural water system makes service more cost-efficient.

THE HIDDEN LINE ITEM

The Cost of Donor Funding

In 2024 Saha spent **\$223K** on fundraising activities to raise **\$6.6M**.

Maintaining a similar cost-to-revenue relationship would require about **\$825K** to raise **\$24.5M** (Upper Cost Limit).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

What this means for the sector

01 Anchored In Actuals

Costs must be realistic and anchored in actuals. Long-term service costs must be understood and built into every new infrastructure plan. Results-Based Funding can only achieve its potential when payment benchmarks reflect these true costs. Scaling RBF without this understanding risks anchoring payments too low and undermining reliable service delivery.

02 Transparent

It is the responsibility of the current service provider to openly share cost of service, actual revenues, and current subsidies.

03 Fundraising Increases Costs

When a portion of costs is supported by philanthropic funding, the associated fundraising expenses are real and should be transparently shared. Clearly communicating these costs demonstrates how allocating resources from government budgets can reduce overall expenses.



Every sip safe, every day, for
everyone.

Backup slides

LINKS TO

Further reading

 [Finance report](#)

 [Aquaya report](#)

 [Endowment Blog Post](#) & [Podcast](#)

Saha's mission is to design, deliver, and demonstrate a last-mile utility-grade water service



Design

Engineer and refine technical and service delivery standards.



Deliver

Operate and maintain reliable, professional water service.



Demonstrate

Codify and share open-source standards, tools, and data.

Every sip safe, every day, for everyone.

Profitability of Last-Mile Water Service

	Annual total	Per person / year
Cost: upper limit (surface water)	\$24.5M	\$5.67
Cost: lower limit (groundwater)	\$11.1M	\$2.77
Revenue: surface water	\$80K	\$0.02
Revenue: groundwater	\$1.04M	\$0.26

BACKUP

Ghana's Rural Water Budget

In Ghana, the government has a goal of providing universal access to water supply for its citizens by 2030, with an estimated annual cost of **US\$1.7B** to achieve this and an allocation of **GHS1.7B (~US\$160M)** for rural water management (2024 – 2027).

US\$1.7B

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS

US\$160M

ALLOCATED FOR RURAL WATER MANAGEMENT, 2024–2027

BACKUP

Ghana's Rural Water Budget



Unclear what the OMM costs are for rural water supply, how much of this financing is for OMM costs, and therefore if this amount is sufficient.



Saha does not currently receive any funding from this budget.

BACKUP

Ghana's Rural Water Budget

55%

GOVERNMENT SHARE, 2024

241M cedis (~US\$19.5M)

Government financing for rural water management in 2024 only made up **241M cedis (55%, ~US\$19.5M)**, requiring communities & donors to cover the gap.