



EXAMPLE DOCUMENT · 2025–2028

Saha Climate Strategy

A framework for integrating climate resilience into Saha's planning, programming, and partnerships.

ADOPTED

January 16, 2026

SCOPE

Northern Ghana

STATUS

Active strategy



This is Saha's own climate strategy, adopted January 16, 2026 and in active use. It is published as an example for partners, district assemblies and practitioners developing their own climate resilience plans.

01

Introduction and Purpose

Climate change poses a growing threat to rural water security in northern Ghana. Unpredictable rainfall, more frequent droughts, and increasingly degraded dugouts are already impacting Saha's ability to ensure year-round safe water access. This strategy outlines Saha's framework for integrating climate resilience into our planning, programming, and partnerships from 2025–2028. This strategy aligns with national climate priorities and strengthens district assembly capacity to meet their medium term development program (MTDP) targets for water security and climate adaptation.

Saha's mission is to design, deliver, and demonstrate a utility-grade service model to ensure exclusive clean water consumption in last-mile communities. Achieving this mission depends on reliable, year-round water sources. As rainfall patterns shift and dugouts dry earlier each year, communities are left without water to treat — preventing exclusive consumption and threatening the uptime that defines Saha's service standard. Saha is also expanding its work to provide professional preventive maintenance services to communities with boreholes. This expansion brings new exposure to climate risks that affect groundwater systems — including declining recharge rates from prolonged dry seasons, contamination from flooding, and mechanical stress on pumps due to falling water tables. These factors make it increasingly urgent to understand and address climate impacts across both surface and groundwater sources.

A dedicated climate strategy enables Saha to protect the integrity of our model and the reliability of our services. It ensures that environmental factors do not erode progress toward our long-term goal of ensuring that 100% of Ghana's last-mile households can rely on safe, consistent, year-round access to clean water.

By proactively addressing climate risks, Saha strengthens its ability to deliver on its vision — every sip safe, every day, for everyone.

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Saha's Climate Context

Saha's model depends on surface and groundwater sources that are highly climate-sensitive. With over one-third of Saha's dugouts drying out for part of the year, communities face seasonal water insecurity and temporary treatment center closures.

Main risks identified by Saha's Climate Team, using resources like Aguaconsult's *Strengthening the Climate-Resilient water and sanitation systems Practical Guide* include:

- Declining dugout reliability due to droughts, erosion, and sedimentation.
- Groundwater vulnerability from declining recharge, prolonged dry periods, and contamination during flooding events.
- Tree loss and poor land management, reducing infiltration and groundwater recharge.
- Limited integration of climate adaptation into annual program design and budgeting.

Saha's work already contributes to climate resilience by expanding safe water access, empowering women entrepreneurs, and reducing reliance on unsafe sources. However, without intentional planning, climate change will continue to disrupt both surface and groundwater systems, making it harder to ensure exclusive consumption and consistent uptime.

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Strategic Objectives

The climate team proposes a phased approach to mainstreaming climate resilience across Saha's operations.

OBJECTIVES

1. Build internal climate literacy across all teams through ongoing training and knowledge sharing.
2. SOP for dugout expansion.
3. Apply a climate lens to Saha's 2026 operational plan — reviewing goals after program planning to identify risks and adaptation opportunities.
4. Pilot low-cost resilience interventions in 10–15 communities, including:
 - Tree planting around dugouts and boreholes using indigenous species.
 - Dugout expansions guided by the Dugout Expansion Rubric, prioritizing sites most vulnerable to drying.
 - Basic flood-proofing of rehabilitated boreholes.
5. Establish cross-departmental climate liaisons (R&D, Service Delivery, Expansions) to coordinate and track activities.
6. Conduct a climate risk assessment of all Saha communities (dugout and borehole) to guide investment priorities.
7. Conduct a climate risk assessment of Saha's customer and operator base with regards to gendered burden and livelihood.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Shared understanding of Saha's climate vulnerabilities.
- Measurable pilots testing tree survival, water retention, and community engagement approaches.
- A refined internal checklist linking Climate Resilient WASH (CR WASH) indicators to Saha's monitoring systems.
- Strategy for further understanding of the relationship between climate change, rural Ghanaian livelihood impacts, and specific gendered and marginalized community risks.

OBJECTIVES

1. Integrate climate planning into Saha’s annual goal-setting process, not as an afterthought.
2. Formalize partnerships by developing MOUs with national and regional actors, including:
 - Ghana Water Resources Commission and CRS Water Fund for watershed protection.
 - Forestry Commission and District Assemblies for coordinated tree planting and buffer restoration.
3. Explore access to climate finance and environmental service payments (e.g., through Water Funds or donor partnerships).
4. Develop a Saha Climate Implementation Framework with clear roles, budgets, and annual targets.
5. Work with DAs to embed climate programs into districts’ MTDPs. Share ready made tools such as the Dugout Expansion Rubric, Tree Planting SOP and Climate Risk Assessment checklist with the DA and train them on usage.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Climate resilience reflected in Saha’s planning, monitoring, and learning systems.
- Alignment with national and sub-national climate-WASH strategies.
- Access to new funding opportunities tied to adaptation and nature-based solutions.

Key Programmatic Focus Areas

Water Source Protection

Apply the dugout rubric to identify priority expansion sites; pilot rainwater harvesting and silt control.

Tree Planting and Ecosystem Restoration

Develop a standard operating procedure for tree planting, focusing on indigenous species and community stewardship.

Groundwater and Borehole Resilience

Assess groundwater recharge risks; test small-scale flood barriers and slab reinforcements.

Community Engagement and Sensitization

Integrate environmental education into Service Delivery visits; promote water conservation and anti-dumping practices.

Data and Learning

Link water sales and rainfall data to assess seasonal variation; refine dugout management decisions.

Policy and Partnership

Liaise with District Assemblies, Water Resources Commission, and CRS to align with watershed restoration programs.

Organizational Culture and Governance

The climate team will evolve from a learning circle into a coordinating body that drives integration of climate thinking across Saha. Key actions include:

- Establishing sub-teams (Service Delivery, R&D, Expansions) with designated climate focal points.
- Creating an idea submission process for staff to propose climate innovations.
- Including a climate update in quarterly team meetings and the annual organizational report.
- Tracking CR WASH checklist indicators annually to measure progress.

By 2028, the goal is for climate resilience to be baked into Saha’s planning process — not a parallel effort but a defining element of sustainable service delivery.

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Measuring Progress

Saha will use the CR WASH checklist as a benchmark, updating it yearly to assess advancement across three dimensions:

Organizational culture

Staff capacity, resource allocation, and leadership engagement.

Program design and implementation

Integration of adaptation measures into expansion and rehabilitation work.

Sphere of influence

Collaboration with external actors, contribution to national policy, and sector learning.

Saha will also develop a simple risk and mitigation matrix to accompany annual planning cycles, allowing teams to clearly identify climate-related threats to program continuity, assess their likelihood and potential impact, and outline practical mitigation actions. This tool will help standardize decision-making across departments and ensure that emerging climate risks are addressed proactively rather than reactively.

KEY INDICATORS, ALIGNED WITH SAHA'S M&E SYSTEM

- % of water sources with climate adaptation measures in place
 - % of new site assessments that include climate vulnerability scoring
 - % of partner communities participating in tree planting or ecosystem protection
 - Number of climate vulnerable people served
 - Number of partnerships contributing to watershed restoration
 - Documented cases of avoided service disruption due to climate interventions
 - Climate-induced downtime
 - Percent of programmatic risks with documented mitigation actions incorporated into annual plans
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Conclusion

Saha is prioritizing climate resilience in its planning, programming, and partnerships to ensure reliable, year-round access to safe water.

This strategy positions Saha to proactively manage climate risks, protect hard-won progress, and ensure that our mission — to design, deliver, and demonstrate a utility-grade service model that ensures exclusive clean water consumption in last-mile communities — remains achievable even under changing environmental conditions. Through deliberate integration, data-driven pilots, and partnerships rooted in local leadership, Saha can continue to deliver reliable, sustainable water access even in the face of uncertainty.