

SAMS Role Deconstruct

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(What the role truly involves and how to assess your fit)

Why This Role Deconstruct

A SAMS Role Deconstruct helps candidates understand the real expectations of a role beyond the formal vacancy announcement. It clarifies the leadership mandate, operating context, and performance expectations so you can assess your fit with greater accuracy.

This is particularly important for senior programme leadership roles where success depends not only on sector expertise, but also on the ability to translate strategy into delivery, strengthen systems, work with government, nurture teams, and demonstrate credible impact at scale.

What This Role Is Really About

This is not simply a senior WASH technical advisory role. Nor is it only a field implementation or programme administration position.

This is a senior organisational leadership role responsible for ensuring that WaterAid India's programme ambition is converted into high-quality, climate-resilient, community-centred WASH delivery across a multi-state portfolio, while strengthening the systems, partnerships, government interface, and learning culture needed for scale.

The successful candidate will need to operate at the intersection of:

- Programme strategy and implementation at scale
- Community-centred WASH delivery and climate-resilient service solutions
- Government technical support, systems strengthening, and public resource leverage
- Quality assurance, monitoring, learning, and programme standards
- Senior team leadership, partnerships, resource mobilisation support, and sector representation

The central challenge is to hold strategy and operations together. The role requires someone who can lead large and geographically dispersed programmes, keep communities and vulnerable households at the centre, support practical water, sanitation, and hygiene solutions, collaborate effectively with government, and ensure that programme work remains evidence-informed, cost-effective, and capable of influencing wider adoption.

The Role's Strategic Priorities

Over the next 12-24 months, the role will likely focus on:

1. Programme Implementation Across a Multi-State Portfolio

Leading programme implementation across all WAI locations, ensuring that programmes are delivered with clarity, discipline, and consistency while remaining responsive to local context. The role will need to strengthen planning, budgeting, expenditure review, field delivery systems, and delivery accountability across diverse geographies.

2. Community-Centred, Climate-Resilient WASH Impact

Ensuring that programmes keep communities at the centre while advancing WAI's focus on safe and assured drinking water, safely managed sanitation, hygiene infrastructure in institutions, and integrated water and sanitation solutions in small towns. Climate resilience of infrastructure and systems will need to remain embedded across programme design and implementation.

3. Quality Assurance, Standards & Learning

Strengthening the quality, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and appropriateness of programme delivery. This will include working closely with the Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning function to track qualitative and quantitative outcomes, apply global programme frameworks and standards, and translate evidence and field learning into programme improvement.

4. Government Engagement & Technical Support for Scale

Advancing WAI's pathway to scale by enabling effective technical support to government at Union, State, and District levels. This will require collaborative action between programme teams and the Policy and

Technical Support function, so that WAI's demonstrations, technical knowledge, and implementation experience can support wider adoption.

5. Leadership, Partnerships & External Influence

Nurturing senior programme leaders and teams, contributing actively to the Senior Management Team, supporting partnerships with a diverse set of institutions, and representing WAI credibly in civil society, donor, and government forums. The role will require both internal leadership maturity and external sector presence.

Your Scope of Responsibility

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and serving as a member of the Senior Management Team, the role includes:

Programme Strategy & Implementation Leadership

Leading the planning, implementation, review, and strengthening of WAI's programme portfolio across its operating locations; aligning programme delivery with organisational strategy, community needs, and the ambition to deliver impact at scale.

Quality Assurance, MEL & Programme Standards

Ensuring programme delivery meets agreed standards of quality, cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and relevance; using monitoring, evaluation, and learning inputs to sharpen programme performance, capture outcomes, and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

Government Engagement & Systems Strengthening

Enabling collaboration with government through technical support, capacity building, and the design and implementation of appropriate WASH solutions for disadvantaged communities and the environment. The role is not only to engage government, but to make WAI's field and technical experience useful for systems-level adoption.

Learning, Innovation & Knowledge-to-Practice

Promoting a culture of innovation, experimentation, reflection, and learning so that WAI continues to remain a frontrunner in the water, sanitation, and hygiene space. This will require institutionalising practices that help teams learn from evidence, field experience, and programme outcomes.

People, Partnerships & Sector Representation

Coaching and mentoring senior staff; promoting collaborative and empowering leadership; supporting the Resource Mobilisation team in building partnerships; and representing WAI in forums that strengthen the organisation's reputation as a sector leader.

What Success Looks Like

Within 12-18 months, success would typically be visible through:

- A coherent, well-led, and delivery-disciplined programme portfolio across WAI locations
- Stronger planning, budgeting, review, and implementation systems that support quality and scale
- Clearer evidence of community-centred and climate-resilient WASH solutions being demonstrated, improved, and positioned for wider adoption
- Effective collaboration between Programme, Policy and Technical Support, MEL, and Resource Mobilisation functions
- Improved use of evidence, field learning, and programme monitoring to strengthen implementation quality
- A more confident and accountable senior programme team, with visible mentoring, delegation, and leadership development
- Strengthened relationships with government, donors, civil society platforms, and sector stakeholders
- Enhanced visibility and credibility of WAI as a serious, field-grounded, learning-oriented WASH organisation

Who Will Thrive in This Role

This role is suited to a senior professional who brings:

- 15+ years of overall experience, including substantial leadership of programmes or operations in the development sector
- 5-10 years of senior management experience and at least five years in a community-level implementation role
- Demonstrated experience of leading programmes or operations that deliver impact at scale and contribute to transformational change

- Strong grounding in WASH, public health, rural or urban development, environmental management, public policy, or closely related social development sectors
- Ability to work effectively with government at Union, State, and District levels, including through technical support, capacity building, and systems strengthening
- Proven ability to build collaborative partnerships and alliances for programme delivery
- Experience of leading, managing, motivating, and developing high-performing teams
- Excellent interpersonal and written communication skills, with credibility to represent the organisation externally
- Experience of supporting income generation, partnership development, and responsible management of programme resources

Profiles combining field implementation credibility, strategic programme leadership, government interface, quality assurance, learning orientation, and collaborative senior management experience are particularly well aligned.

This Role May Not Be Ideal If

This role may not suit you if:

- Your experience is primarily technical or advisory, with limited accountability for large programme implementation
- You have worked mainly in policy, advocacy, or research roles without substantial community-level implementation exposure
- You have not led senior teams, multi-location programmes, or complex operational portfolios
- You are uncomfortable working through government systems or building patient, collaborative relationships with public institutions
- You prefer tightly defined projects over roles requiring systems thinking, ambiguity management, and cross-functional leadership
- You are more comfortable with direct control than with consensual, empowering, and collaborative leadership
- You have limited exposure to monitoring, quality assurance, evidence use, and programme learning as tools for improving implementation
- You are not comfortable representing an organisation in donor, government, civil society, and sector forums

Operating Context

- Organisation: WaterAid India, operating in India through Jal Seva Charitable Foundation
- Location: New Delhi
- Function: National programme leadership
- Reporting: Chief Executive Officer
- Leadership platform: Senior Management Team
- Portfolio context: Rural, urban, and small-town WASH programming across multiple states
- Core agenda: Climate-resilient and sustainable WASH services, institutional strengthening, government technical support, and community-centred implementation
- Compensation: Attractive; aligned with qualifications, experience, and salary history

The role operates in a complex, high-expectation environment where credibility will be built through a combination of strategic clarity, field realism, internal collaboration, external maturity, and delivery discipline.

Before You Apply - A SAMS Reality Check

You are likely a strong fit if you can confidently say:

- I have led large or multi-location programmes and can translate strategy into disciplined implementation.
- I understand community-level implementation and know how to keep vulnerable communities at the centre of programme design and delivery.
- I can work with government constructively and convert technical knowledge into practical systems-level support.
- I can use evidence, monitoring, and learning to improve programme quality rather than treating them as reporting obligations.
- I have managed senior teams and can nurture leadership through coaching, delegation, accountability, and collaboration.

- I can build partnerships and support resource mobilisation without losing focus on programme quality and impact.
- I am comfortable representing an organisation before senior stakeholders and sector platforms.
- I can operate with maturity as part of a Senior Management Team, contributing beyond my own function to wider organisational priorities.

Closing Note

This is a high-impact leadership opportunity for a senior programme professional who is motivated by strengthening systems, enabling scale, and improving the quality of WASH services for vulnerable communities.

The role offers the opportunity to operate at the intersection of field implementation, government technical support, climate-resilient WASH solutions, learning, partnerships, and organisational leadership. It demands maturity, credibility, delivery discipline, and humility - and offers the chance to shape programme quality and sector influence within one of India's most recognised WASH organisations.

Prepared by Strategic Alliance Management Services Pvt. Ltd. (SAMS) as a role-clarity and candidate self-assessment tool.