



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Institute

"Bridging the Knowledge Gap for community based Sustainable Solutions"



Concept Note of WASH Institute

(Adopted concept note based on
the consortium partners meet
held at IRC Delft during 2nd & 3rd October 2007)



WES-Net India



Plan



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Institute

“Bridging the Knowledge Gap for community based Sustainable Solutions”

Background

Provision of basic water supply and sanitation facilities to people, especially living in rural areas and urban slums is still a major concern for Governments, UN and other agencies working for their welfare in the developing countries. Absence of these basic facilities leads to poor health and also affects the livelihood of the poor and vulnerable communities, and especially children are the worst sufferers. Recent studies carried out by UNICEF/WHO indicates that the sanitation MDG target is going to be missed with most of the un-served populations in rural Africa and Asia.

Capacity building initiatives at all levels play a very important role in the provision and management of water and sanitation services. In reality, most of these skills are not gained through formal education, it has been noticed that the professionals acquire these skills & knowledge over the year through their work experience and association in the sector. Also, low priority and poor importance given to WATSAN curriculum in the formal educational institutions to address the issues especially being faced by the low-income communities both at rural and urban areas is a matter of concern in the South Asia region. Also, there is a greater need for promoting social engineering aspects, both at implementation and educational level to address people friendly sustainable solution. Unlike in India and other developing countries in the region, the universities in the west (WEDC, Surrey, Grandfield in the UK, and IHE in The Netherlands) have several tailor made courses focussed on these issues both on short and long term basis. But these courses are unaffordable by many due to huge financial implications.

Issues such as fast depletion of ground water, water quality issues, poor sanitation coverage, poor focus on hygiene, problems in dealing in solid and liquid waste, fast urbanisation, emerging issues due to climate change etc., demand adequate human resources with necessary capacity, some how this aspect is not being given priority. Addressing the capacity gaps assumes significant importance with the growing complexities around the provision and management of water and sanitation facilities in the region. Apart from capacity building initiatives for the people already associated in the sector, grooming younger generation / students is of prime importance towards achieving sustainable water and sanitation solution in the region.

In order to address the above issues, along with WaterAid, Winrock International (India), WEDC, SIWI, IRC and SEI, Plan India is taking a lead role under the framework of “WASH Institute”. It is aimed to organize both non-formal and formal courses on “Water and Environmental Sanitation” through partnership with NGOs/INGOs, Government training institutes and academic institutions. WASH Institute aims to cater to the capacity building needs in India and the neighbouring countries in the region.

WASH Institute

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Institute would be a non profit training and development organization dedicated to provide practical solutions to a wide range of water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental issues in India and the neighbouring countries. Core activities of WASH Institute would be to undertake training programs to groom water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental professionals and functionaries involved in the sector. Special focus would be given to middle level professionals who are directly involved in managing the programmes on ground. Round the year, WASH Institute would run various formal and non-formal training/academic courses both on short and long-term basis.

The initiative, apart from developing and offering campus based courses, would have tie-ups with national and international agencies in the region to groom middle level professionals and students. Appropriate action research, on field study/experiments, knowledge sharing and advocacy initiatives will be undertaken to promote importance of capacity building and influencing other sector players and institutions to replicate these widely.

Vision

A world in which all the communities have access to safe, protected and sustainable drinking water and sanitation services, with improved hygiene practices.

Mission

WASH Institute's prime focus is to facilitate development of skilled professionals in water and sanitation sector with a community perspective to address the growing need of trained human resources in the sector. The mission statement includes:

- 1) Bridge the knowledge gap between the community and service providers through education and training to assist the stakeholders in planning, implementation, operation and management of water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental programmes on a sustainable basis.
- 2) Promote appropriate and low cost solutions in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion based on the action research and field level studies carried out by the Institute and its collaborative partners.
- 3) Advocate effective policies and strategies to address the capacity building needs around the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion, with a special focus on poor and vulnerable communities living in rural and urban areas, for wider replication.

Proposed Activities of the WASH Institute

Capacity building would be the primary focus of the WASH Institute initiative to effectively address the issues in the sector across the region. The following activities would be taken-up under the initiative;

- **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Both short and long term courses with a focus on water supply and harvesting, sanitation, hygiene, integrated water resource management, climate change adaptation and environmental aspects would be conducted at the Institute. The Institute would organise both in-campus and off-campus courses. The institute will have tie-up with other training / academic institutes and agencies involved in conducting capacity building initiatives across the region through off-campus mode.

Focus on the middle level professionals both from Government and NGO sector will be given prime importance. The courses offered by the WASH Institute will also be focussing on the needs of professionals and students who are not be able to participate in the courses offered by premier institutions such as WEDC or any other universities in abroad due to financial and other constraints. The formal courses would be designed in such a way that the trained people are employed by the Government, NGOs/ INGOs and private sector so that there is continuous demand for the courses offered by the WASH Institute and its partners.

- **Action Research & Studies:** Action research and field level studies would help the Institute continuously update its course curriculum and also it would help the institute to focus both formal and non-formal courses on the current and emerging issues on the ground. Action research and field level studies / experiments will be conducted through collaborative partnerships with the organisations working at the grass roots for developing cost effective low-cost solutions on the water and sanitation services. Student research projects / thesis would also be focussing on these aspects to provide adequate focus and importance.
- **Knowledge Sharing & Advocacy:** Knowledge sharing and advocacy activities would be taken up as one of the important tools to promote capacity building initiatives across the region including producing appropriate publications, both in print and electronic form, for information sharing. Advocacy initiatives of the Institute would especially focuses on capacity building aspects, to influence other training and academic institutions across the region to incorporate water, sanitation and hygiene module in their regular curriculum. Developing appropriate training modules on various aspects and sharing these with other institutions along with orientation to the faculty for handling these modules would help in wider replication.

Action research, field level studies / experiments, knowledge sharing and advocacy activities of the WASH Institute will be centred on the focal area of “Capacity Building”.

Developing Linkages

The Institute will establish linkages with National level bodies, International agencies and NGOs involved in the sector to effectively undertake capacity building initiatives across the region. Existing associations and linkages of the consortium partners of WASH Institute would help the Institute to gain wider reach in the region. Various on going programmes of the consortium members would provide an apt platform to initiate the activities effectively. Also, wherever necessary, at strategic and needy locations, new partners would be identified to host the initiatives for creating wide spread impacts. In India, possibilities of using the facilities and services of the

existing training / academic institutions will be explored to conduct WASH Institute modules at various locations of the country.

WASH Institute Consortium Partners

The following partners have come together to form the WASH Institute Consortium:

- Water and Engineering Development Centre (WEDC), Loughborough University, UK
- International Resource Centre (IRC), Delft, The Netherlands
- Stockholm International Water Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
- Stockholm Environmental Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
- WaterAid, London, UK
- Winrock International (India), New Delhi, India
- Plan India, New Delhi, India
- Water and Environmental Sanitation Network (WES-Net India)

In addition to the above, a few more organisations / institutions have also expressed their interest to join the consortium.

Formalising the Initiative

The WASH Institute will be an independent, registered, non profit voluntary service organisation. Activities of the WASH institute will be managed by Governing Body and an Advisory Committee as per the norms governed by the Government of India Society / Trust registration act. The management structure (Governing Body) of the Institute would include representation from Indian consortium members, leading sector specialists, representatives from the WES-Net India and the private sector players. Apart from the management committee, an advisory board which includes all the international partners such as SIWI, SEI, IRC, WEDC and other key stakeholders of sector would guide the process. Wherever possible, involvement of the Government in the initiative would be given priority to seek its active involvement in the whole process. Plan India has agreed to explore all the necessary legal formalities in setting-up operational, management and advisory committee of WASH Institute.

Consortium Partners meet at IRC Delft

A meeting of the consortium partners was held during 2nd and 3rd October, 2007 at IRC, Delft to discuss the roles & responsibility of the consortium partners, developing immediate action plan and modalities to develop a comprehensive proposal for the initiative (please refer Delft meeting minutes for more details). Some of the key roles and responsibilities of the consortium partners listed are;

- Play an important role in the initiative through partnership and collaboration.
- Develop linkages with various initiatives for cross learning and effective sharing of ideas and experiences.
- Participate in mobilising resources for up-scaling the proposed initiatives.
- Participate in the capacity building and allied activities, and also transfer skills to local staff for scaling up of these activities.

- Assist in designing and developing course modules, and also in the certification process wherever necessary.

At the stakeholders meet, it was agreed to undertake the following three important actions for a period 4 months (October 07 to January 08).

- **Short term capacity building programs** - As a pre-cursor to the initiative, till the comprehensive proposal of WASH Institute is developed and funded by donors, it was agreed to explore possibilities of undertaking short term capacity building courses. IRC and SEI have agreed to explore the possibilities of finding support for short term courses and help in developing linkages with existing initiatives. Plan India has agreed to explore the possible venues and facilities for the short term courses once some support is obtained to undertake this activity.
- **Market Scan** – Demand assessment for various courses, past experiences of capacity building initiatives in the sector and exploring the possibility of introducing short and longer term courses through existing training and academic institution will be assessed through market scan. UNESCO and Plan India have agreed to help in conducting a national level market scan exercise. In addition to the national level study, data will also be collected through UN-Solution Exchange (e-discussion) and WES-Net. Data from other neighbouring countries will also be gathered through Plan's Regional office in Bangkok and WaterAid Country offices.
- **Comprehensive WASH Institute Proposal Development** – Based on the inputs from all the consortium members including their anticipated areas of involvement in the initiatives, outcomes from the market scan for specific areas of interventions and assessment on the institutional mechanisms needed to conduct both formal and non-formal courses, a comprehensive project proposal will be developed. It is expected that the proposal will be ready by end of January 2008 for submitting to the donor agencies for funding. Plan India will play a lead role in developing the comprehensive proposal with necessary inputs from all the consortium members.

Mid term progress review: In order to track the progress of the tasks listed under the Delft action plan, a teleconference will be conducted during first fortnight of December on a mutually agreed date by the consortium members.

Dated:23rd October 2007.