

## **ADRAS research theme: *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene***

Total funding available: Up to AUD 5.5 million over 3 years

Improving public health by increasing access to safe water and sanitation is a key development objective of the Australian aid program. Access to safe water and basic sanitation combined with good hygiene behaviours underpins Australia's ability to deliver public health outcomes and significant economic benefits for developing countries.

While progress has been made, if current trends continue 605 million people will still lack access to water and 2.4 billion people will still lack access to improved sanitation in 2015. Continued improvements are dependent on addressing gaps in the global knowledge base on effective approaches (particularly for sanitation) and how to take them to scale across diverse cultural, geographic and economic contexts.

The WASH theme has been developed in accordance with the three pillars of AusAID's WASH Thematic Strategy, *Saving Lives: Improving Public Health by Increasing Access to Safe Water and Sanitation*:

1. Increased access to safe water and basic sanitation: facilitate increased access to safe water and basic sanitation that results in the provision of universally accessible facilities;
2. Improved hygiene behaviour: support the development of increased capacity to ensure hygiene promotion services bring about sustainable behaviour change; and
3. Creating sustainable services: support policies and strategies to keep services operating through effective governance and partnerships with multilateral agencies, civil society and business.

All proposals will be assessed against the extent to which the topic aligns with one or more of the pillars under the WASH Thematic Strategy. More detail on the Strategy can be found at:

[http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/1268\\_5938\\_1179\\_1966\\_4324.aspx](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/1268_5938_1179_1966_4324.aspx)

Please see the AusAID Water, Sanitation and Hygiene webpage for further information:

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/watersanitation/Pages/default.aspx>

## 1. Sectoral knowledge gaps

Up to \$3.5 million will be provided for research to address key sectoral knowledge gaps

### Eligibility criteria

Applications for funding for up to three years will be considered. Applicants are eligible to receive between AUD 200,000 and AUD 400,000 in funding per year.

Applicants must address one of the sub-themes below. Applicants must clearly articulate the relevance of their proposal to the selected theme.

Research should have an application to AusAID's focus regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and cross-country analysis is encouraged.

#### **Sub-theme: Community management and the transition to professionalised management**

Further research is needed into community management models to determine the range of options and mechanisms for government, the private sector, local committees and user groups in delivering services and managing assets over time.

*Some examples of issues within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:*

- Phases that characterise an effective transition from community management to a sustainable, professional delivery model and contexts in which this transition is most achievable.
- Options and mechanisms for effective government (including different levels of government) and private sector roles in the ongoing operation and maintenance of services.
- Community participation and leadership support in decision-making that enhance sustainability and quality of WASH outcomes.

#### **Sub-theme: Rural and urban sanitation**

Recent innovations in generating demand for improved sanitation and models for supplying that demand require further investigation to determine their effectiveness in delivering long-term improvements across different contexts. A trend towards urbanisation also requires services to be managed in fast growing and at times unpredictable environments.

*Some examples of issues within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:*

- Contextual factors that limit or improve the effectiveness of sanitation marketing approaches in rural settings.
- What are the most effective and economic technological and management solutions for managing wastewater/waste products in fast growing and unpredictable urban environments.

### **Sub-theme: Hygiene promotion and health**

There is a lack of information about the sustainability of hygiene behaviour, how to monitor the impacts on health and the comparative cost-effectiveness of different hygiene behaviour interventions.

*Some examples of issues within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:*

- Effective approaches to measuring changes in diarrhoeal rates due to WASH interventions, given the many confounding factors (eg seasons) and required monitoring resources.
- Cost-effectiveness analysis of different approaches to hygiene promotion in relation to their outcomes.

### **Sub-theme: Climate change, water supply and adaptation**

Increasing sea levels and less frequent but higher intensity storms are potential consequences of climate change that will adversely affect water supply. There is a need for investigation into the potential impacts of climate change on communities living on flood plains and low lying atolls and advice on the how communities can mitigate the impacts to ensure the continued supply of safe water.

*Some examples of issues within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:*

- How are poor communities managing their own water systems coping in the face of climate change impacts.
- Where climate change is expected to have an impact on water quality and quantity, how can water management and sanitation systems manage and reduce vulnerability.

### **Sub-theme: Water Quality**

Poor water quality is becoming a global issue as human populations grow and industrial and agricultural activities expand. Water quality is an important component for any service that provides access to drinking-water.

*Some examples of issues within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:*

- The effectiveness of interventions to reduce or remove heavy metals or other pollutants in groundwater and the measurement and reporting of outcomes.
- What are the most common methods and techniques currently used by governments to monitor and test water quality and how might these be improved.

## 2. Civil society organisations

Up to \$2 million is available for research focused specifically on the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the WASH sector

### Eligibility criteria

Applications for funding for up to three years will be considered. Applicants are eligible to receive between AUD 300,000 and AUD 500,000 in funding per year.

Applicants must specifically address the work of CSOs in the WASH sector. Applicants must clearly articulate the relevance of their proposal to one or more of the pillars identified in the WASH Thematic Strategy.

Proposals that involve partnerships between research institutions and CSOs will be viewed favourably.

### Sub-theme: Civil society organisations

CSOs are an important WASH sector actor with particular strengths in capacity building, incorporating gender into their programming, trialling innovation and improving outcomes for the poor and vulnerable.

AusAID has recently issued a call for proposals for a new four-year Civil Society WASH Fund (CS WASH Fund) from 2012-13 to 2015-16 [a detailed design document and Guidelines for the Fund can be found on the Fund's website:

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/watersanitation/Pages/csowash.aspx>.

Proposals should be related to the role of CSOs in supporting service delivery and policy development in WASH and may consider rural, small town, peri-urban and urban contexts. The research will be expected to inform and influence the approach and work of WASH CSOs within the Fund implementation period and beyond.

Researchers submitting proposals under this sub-theme MUST be prepared to share their research findings with the CS WASH Fund including publishing on the CS WASH Fund website and participating in online communication and engagement activities.

It is recommended that researchers interested in applying for a grant under this sub-theme should become familiar with two key documents:

1. The AusAID Civil Society Engagement Framework  
<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/civil-society-engagement-framework.aspx>, which notes the valuable role of CSOs in supporting development; and
2. The evaluation of the first Civil Society WASH Fund, which ran from May 2010 to March 2012. The evaluation identified a number of issues of relevance to researchers and is available here <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/watersanitation/Pages/waterfund.aspx>

Note: Researchers are also advised to look at the Water and Sanitation sub-theme under the Africa theme.