

ANNEX D—KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING COMPONENT

BACKGROUND

With 800 million people without access to safe water and 2.5 billion without a hygienic latrine,¹ there is still a lack of evidence-based knowledge in the WASH sector about what policy and implementation approaches work, particularly at scale.² To help address the need for more evidence AusAID has supported the generation and sharing of knowledge in the WASH sector through a number of mechanisms:

1. AusAID is an important donor and partner in the World Bank Water Sanitation Program (WSP) to create and share evidence-based knowledge and best practise about what works at scale to support poor people in obtaining affordable, safe and sustainable access to water and sanitation services.
2. In 2008, AusAID commissioned the International Water Centre (IWC) and the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) to conduct research on the role of NGOs in the delivery of improved water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in the Asia Pacific, particularly with regards to capacity development. The study identified a number of existing Training Networks, Resource Centre Networks and Learning Alliances that facilitate capacity development and learning in the WASH sector, all with close involvement and leadership of CSOs.³
3. AusAID has funded two conferences that addressed key sectoral issues. In 2008, the conference was entitled “Meeting the Sanitation and Water Challenge in South East Asia” and in 2011 focussed on sustainability issues “Towards sustainability in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene”.
4. AusAID has funded three WASH focussed Australian Development Research Awards Scheme (ADRAS), a systematic review and has further supported the development of analytical tools to monitor the status of the WASH sector in a given country.
5. The WSI Civil Society WASH Fund included a \$150,000 Learning Fund to facilitate innovation, coordination and learning between the CS WASH Fund grantees, in addition to their own activities targeted at the enabling outcome of generating evidence-based knowledge.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

The Monitoring and Review Panel in their “Snapshot of common strengths and areas for improvement” highlighted the promising innovations that are being trialled by the CSO partners. These innovations were also shared through the three learning events and subsequent publication of seven themed learning documents. Two of the CSO’s (SNV and Oxfam) specifically designed activities focused on cross-activity learning and development of the evidence base for WASH approaches. They utilised a combination of electronic discussion groups and face-to-face meetings to generate significant learning for their staff and partners across a number of countries. Weaknesses that were identified in the original

¹ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply and Sanitation, 2010, Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2010 Update, Geneva. P8

² Dr. Andy Cotton, WEDC Webinar – Sanitation, October 7th 2011

³ ISF and IWC, NGO partnerships and Capacity Development in the WASH Sector, Part 3: Capacity Development and State/Local Government and Utility Partnerships, October 2008

ISF/IWC research such as low levels of networking and sharing, and lack of systematic documentation of impact-related evidence have been highlighted again by the MRP.⁴

The WSI Civil Society WASH Learning Fund Completion Report⁵ brings together a number of recommendations from participating CSOs, the WASH Reference Group and the MRP to strengthen future learning projects. Key recommendations included:

- Review other successful learning initiatives and design a structured learning process across the entire duration of the Fund.
- Greater use of online platforms to increase participation and dissemination
- Involve a broader mix of participants in learning opportunities, including CSO, government and private sector partners
- Increase budget to implement a longer and more structured learning process.
- Disseminate learning to a broader audience using a variety of mediums.

These recommendations have been accepted by the design team and have informed the design and resourcing of this component. The design of this component has also been influenced by the WASH Research Agenda⁶ that was prepared by the WASH Reference Group and submitted to AusAID in October 2011. The Group identified priority WASH sector knowledge gaps for which increased evidence will both improve the effectiveness of Australia's investments in the sector, as well as address issues that have the potential to undermine effective work in the sector by Australia and its development partners.

KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING ACROSS THE FUND

Generation and sharing of evidence-based knowledge and learning will be facilitated by the Fund through three mechanisms:

1. CSOs will be expected to innovate and create and share evidence-based knowledge (Outcome 4) through their core proposals to the CS WASH Fund
2. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Panel (MERP) will support the ongoing learning and application of evidence-based knowledge across the Fund. Together with the CSOs, they will identify key enquiry areas and develop learning papers to support the learning and continuous improvement processes
3. The Knowledge and Learning component will complement and value-add to the individual initiatives by supporting strategic research, innovation and evaluation and the sharing of knowledge and learning across various CSO initiatives. This will include:
 - Fund two larger research projects through the ADRA grants process.
 - Establish an Innovation and Impact grants mechanism to support smaller studies of innovation and impact.
 - Greater use of e-discussion and webinars to provide more opportunities for sharing learning and receive input from sector experts.
 - At least two learning events per region. There may be also additional opportunities for leverage off other global or regional CSO or WASH meetings.

⁴ CS WASH Fund Monitoring & Review Panel, Snapshot of common strengths and areas for improvement based on monitoring visits", September 2011.

⁵ Water Aid Australia, Completion Report: Civil Society WASH Learning Fund, September 2011.

⁶ WASH Reference Group, WASH Research Agenda, October 2011.

DESCRIPTION AND APPROACH

Expected Outcomes

The knowledge and learning component aims to identify new and innovative ways to improve sustainability of WASH programs for enhanced longer-term impact by improving the evidence base of effective WASH approaches. Expected outcomes include:

- improved capacity of CSOs to implement effective and sustainable WASH approaches through involvement in feedback loops between knowledge and learning component activities, MERP reports and CSOs;
- strengthened relationships and learning networks between Australian, international and partner country CSOs and research organisations; and
- improved WASH sector knowledge base to inform WASH policy and implementation approaches.

Activity Description

There will be two parts to the Knowledge and Learning component: the first will be the generation of evidence-based knowledge both within the fund as well as the sector generally, and the second will be the creation of a community of practise for sharing the learning and knowledge. Whilst the primary focus of the second part will be fund participants and their partners, relevant results will be made available to the whole sector.

1. Generation of Evidence-based knowledge

The Fund will generate evidence-based knowledge through two mechanisms:

Australian Development Research Awards Scheme (ADRAS): Linkage with WASH thematic component of the 2012 Funding Round

A total of \$2 million of CS WASH funds will be quarantined for research that will address the 'big picture' WASH sector questions that require longer research timelines. This research will be specifically related to the civil society role in WASH implementation and will inform and influence CSO WASH approaches both within the fund implementation period and beyond. These research grants will be a maximum of \$400,000 per year for up to three years and managed as a thematic component through the ADRAS 2012 Funding Round Call for Proposals. Australian and International research organizations and institutions will be eligible to apply. Two grants will be awarded if there are sufficient proposals of suitable quality.

To ensure that this 'big-picture' research contributes to the evidence-base to inform CSO practise, grantees for the WASH Sector research funds will be required to:

- Provide a one page outline of the research project to be posted on the CS WASH Fund website,
- Produce an annual 1-2 page report discussing emerging findings for publication on the website.

- As required, present emerging findings for discussion with CSOs through relevant CS WASH Fund webinars.
- Produce a final research report that can be disseminated through the Fund website.
- Produce recommendations on how research should inform policy.

The timeframe for the implementation of the ADRAS WASH Sector Research Grants is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Timeframe for ADRAS 2012 Funding Round

Call for Proposals	Determined by ADRAS process
Proposal deadline	Determined by ADRAS process
Research projects begin	January 2013
All research projects completed	June 2016

Further details on the ADRAS 2012 Funding Round can be found at the ADRAS website listed on the AusAID Annual Plan 2012/13 for Competitive Grant Programs at:

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/business/Pages/grants-annualplan.aspx>

CSO WASH Innovation and Impact Grants

An additional funding allocation of \$2 million will support an estimated 15 - 20 projects to test and document innovative approaches to WASH policy and implementation as well as impact measurement that will contribute to the ongoing development of WASH sector policy and approaches. Proposals should be submitted at least three months prior to the intended project start date. The Knowledge and Learning Fund Manager will manage the selection process and co-opt suitably qualified researchers and/or practitioners to assess proposals.

CSOs are encouraged to include the innovation and pilot of new models and approaches in their activity funding proposals and annual work plans. These Innovation and Impact Grants will focus on supporting the CSOs to obtain the additional technical expertise required to turn the innovation and pilot into high quality evidence-based knowledge. For example, CSOs who have innovated during the previous fund could apply to this fund to study and document the outcomes and impact of the innovation, so that it can be shared and replicated more broadly. Ideas for the individual projects can come from the CSOs themselves, the MERP, AusAID or other sectoral actors.

Specific guidelines and criteria will be developed during the CS WASH Fund Inception phase but are expected to include the following:

- Only CSOs who have been awarded an agreement to receive funds from the overall WASH fund will be eligible to apply. An addendum to CSO agreements will be issued for an Innovations and Impact Grant.
- Funds will be directed towards activities which make a key contribution to WASH sector knowledge that has direct application to the development of policy and implementation approaches in the target countries/regions.
- CSOs are encouraged to present collaborative ventures involving two or more of the CS WASH Fund partners and/or other stakeholders
- CSOs will be required to partner with a research institution, either national or international, to produce outputs that are of a quality that can be shared through WASH sector networks and conferences and/or peer reviewed journals.
- CSOs will be required to demonstrate how the project will develop local research capacity in the WASH sector

- CSOs will be required to develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy in order to maximise the influence and uptake of the innovation into broader policy and practise.
- Presentation of the results of the innovation/research to a broader sectoral audience at the biannual Australian WASH conference. Presentation in other international forums such as the WEDC International Conference or Africasan is also encouraged, but will be funded by the CSOs themselves.
- Submissions demonstrate value for money and fall within the fund budget guidelines.
- Information about grants issued and a basic outline of the project will be available on the CS WASH Fund website

2. Sharing Knowledge and Learning

The creation of a community of practise for sharing knowledge and learning will be facilitated through an increased focus on electronic communication mediums as well as face-to-face workshops.

Electronic media and fora

While all CSO's will be encouraged and supported to share knowledge at a national and regional level through existing mechanisms, the CS WASH Fund Knowledge and Learning Component will encourage sharing between CSO and partner management and implementers by:

- Developing and maintaining an interactive website that will share information about innovative approaches being tested, publish key learning outputs, facilitate blog and discussion forums on key issues, and provide up-to-date information about relevant WASH sector resources and events.
- Maintaining a presence on the social media sites most commonly accessed by CSO and partner management and staff.
- Ensuring that key information from existing learning networks and resource centres are shared with the CS WASH Fund grantees.
- Running regular webinars (2-4 times per year) around key WASH issues, particularly those that are identified through the M&E processes, and informing grantees of webinar opportunities facilitated through other institutions (eg: WEDC).

WASH Learning Workshops

There will be two CS WASH Fund learning events in each of the target regions during the four-year period of the fund's operation. Participating CSOs and their key local counterparts are encouraged to attend and where possible these events will be linked to broader WASH sector conferences in the regions or other AusAID CSO learning events (AACES, ANCP). The first of these learning events will be held early in the fund implementation period so that the relational basis for the establishment of a community of practise is established.

Table 2: Proposed Timeline for Knowledge Sharing and Learning

Develop website	September-December 2012
Webinars	October 2012 – June 2015 (2-4 per year)
E-Discussion groups	From February 2013
Regional Learning Events 1	April 2013

In addition to these events organised through the Fund, CSOs will be encouraged to support staff and partner learning through participation in appropriate national and international workshops and conferences.

Knowledge and Learning Component Targets and Indicative Outcomes

A strengthened knowledge and learning component of the CS WASH Fund will directly contribute to the AusAID WASH pillar of action “*Supporting sustainable service delivery*”. Indirectly, it will contribute to all pillars by supporting knowledge sharing and its application into WASH policy and implementation approaches.

Table 3: Indicative outcomes for Knowledge and Learning Component

Creating Sustainable Services: Improved WASH Evidence and Knowledge Base
<i>Contribute to an improved evidence base for WASH</i>
CS WASH Fund Program Outcomes
Improved WASH evidence and knowledge base
Indicative expected outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country level WASH evidence base is enhanced through 15 – 20 innovation pilot projects - WASH Sector Knowledge base enhanced through two multiyear WASH research projects - Lessons on what works, what doesn't, costs and effective approaches are shared through the Fund's <i>Knowledge and Learning Component</i> (in which staff from all funded activities participate) and communicated to AusAID and the wider WASH community of practice to inform future design - Increased capacity of Australian CSOs to conduct effective WASH activities and assess progress. - Improved evidence base related to the effectiveness of WASH activities through program wide analysis of outcomes as measured in robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks - Strengthened relationships and learning networks between Australian, international and partner country CSOs and research organisations

3. Knowledge and Learning Component Implementation Arrangements

Management Arrangements

The CS WASH Fund Manager (a Managing Contractor expected to be contracted through open tender by AusAID and in place by November 2012) will include a Knowledge and Learning Manager (KALM) who will be responsible for the management of knowledge generation and learning activities. Within the first three months, the KALM will review other successful learning initiatives and design a structured learning process across the entire duration of the Fund. This will form part of an overall strategy and plan for the implementation of knowledge and learning component, scheduling major learning events over the four years of the program, and a detailed work plan for the first year. The KALM will maintain close communication with the Fund Manager (another position provided by the Managing Contractor), MERP, and all of the CSOs and support the MERP in facilitating CSO learning and activity improvements through the life of the approved activities, from the Fund's evaluative processes and products. The KALM will also facilitate linkages between the ADRAS WASH research projects and the participating CSOs and directly manage the Innovation and Impact Fund. The KALM will coordinate the regional learning events and oversee active e-discussion groups, webinars and regular updating of the Fund website. The KALM will also manage any contracts associated with specialist input for the component (website development and hosting,

webinar platforms, event management, specialist facilitators) and will be responsible for reporting to AusAID on the outcomes of the component.

The KALM will have relevant experience and expertise in facilitating knowledge generation and learning for major development programs. The qualifications and experience of the KALM will be one of the key selection criteria when evaluating bids for the Fund Manager contract. The full Scope of Services for the KALM is provided in Annex E.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Performance information for the Knowledge and Learning Component will be aggregated through its contribution to CS Fund Outcome 4 – Improved WASH evidence and knowledge base. Through the Fund Manager, the KALM will be responsible for preparing six –monthly Progress Reports to AusAID.