



Sanitation and hygiene

Understanding the systemic shifts necessary for sustained demand, provision and use of sanitation and hygiene services

**Concept note for the All systems go! WASH systems symposium
12-14 March 2019 | The Hague, The Netherlands**

Systems thinking on sanitation and hygiene in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) needs a fundamental rethink.

Cutting across sectors and regions, water and sanitation are instrumental to the implementation of integrated development solutions. The aspirational SDG target 6.2 on safely managed sanitation covers the entire sanitation chain from user interface to treatment and safe reuse, as well as handwashing with water and soap.

Together with target 6.3 on safely treated wastewater, a coherent approach to sanitation services at national and subnational levels is required. In urban, as well as in rural areas, sanitation service delivery systems need to tackle a broad range of issues, such as institutional arrangements, financing, regulation and accountability, and the right mix of technologies.

Experience in urban contexts in low- and middle-income countries shows that achieving citywide services for everyone is extremely complex, given

resource-poor urban service providers, weak institutional contexts and the difficulty of providing affordable services at scale.

Furthermore, work in rural settings has been limited to the construction of new toilets and, thereby, concentrating only on the user interface and containment elements of the service chain. However, due to increasing awareness and resources, households are more frequently choosing containment solutions that require additional services, i.e. emptying, transport and the treatment of human waste.

In this thematic section, we will be exploring some fresh thinking on systems approaches for both urban and rural settings.

Please join us for this debate!

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Safe and sustainable water

Systemic approaches to increasing safety and sustainability of drinking water service delivery

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At a global level, progress towards safe and sustainable drinking water, including in low-resource settings, is impressive. Many countries of Latin America and East Asia have transformed their drinking water services over the last 50 years through the development of effective regulatory frameworks, strong leadership and productive community engagement. These advances, however, have not occurred consistently across the developing world. Much of Africa and South Asia continues to struggle with failing urban water systems, broken handpumps in rural areas, and endemic waterborne disease. This conference stream will explore the drivers of service improvements and the requirements for instituting similar change in lagging regions.

For example, in response to the poor sustainability of rural water supply efforts, various models are emerging to address critical operational and maintenance challenges. A key component of most of these maintenance models is the recognition that revenues generated through user fees are not always sufficient to support operation and maintenance. As a result, there is increasing interest in public-private partnerships and subsidised financing to promote rural water supply functionality.

In addition, the forces of economic development and urbanisation across the developing world are

promoting demand for piped water infrastructure, even in areas that have traditionally relied on handpumps, and wells. There is also increasing evidence for the public health benefits of piped drinking water that is treated and protected from contamination. Realising aspirations for inclusive piped drinking water, however, will require significant innovations that address the technical, financial, and management requirements for constructing and maintaining small reticulated distribution networks.

Finally, water safety management has traditionally emphasized water quality monitoring to identify and address contamination events that may compromise public health. Establishing comprehensive monitoring in low-resource settings, however, has proven challenging due to the significant requirements for meeting recurring costs, and the need for efficient data management systems. In response to these constraints, Water Safety Planning has emerged as a holistic, pro-active approach for identifying and mitigating the risks to a water supply system that may impact water security and safety. With effective Water Safety Plans, the focus of monitoring shifts from a "front-line" measure for identifying contamination towards more targeted verification of management practices designed to reduce contamination.

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Financing WASH

Applying a systems approach to financing WASH

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Finance is a critical building block of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems approach. The finance building block deals with identifying the costs of WASH service delivery, the sources of funding, the roles of different actors in providing finance, effective mechanisms for making finance available and the channels for getting the money to where it is needed.

The ability to accurately project all costs over the entire service life-cycle and to match projected costs with different sources of funding calls for considerable specialist knowledge from several stakeholders and appropriate tools. In many cases, especially in rural areas, small towns and informal settlements in larger towns, current levels of funding are largely inadequate and the financial instruments presently available are extremely limited. Strengthening the finance building block, therefore, means both improving existing financing mechanisms and increasing the overall flows into the sector through national and international advocacy efforts, showcasing what works and providing inspiration for tackling the existing challenges.

The finance theme will consist of eight sessions, which will bring to the podium national and district level cases around some of the most interesting innovations and tools that are being used globally.

The different sessions will be discussing complementary topics such as:

- Mobilising domestic resources at national level: the enabling environment, what is possible and what is not? What are the roles of different stakeholders in this process? What are the minimum conditions to make this work?
- National level costing and financing: why do so few countries have costed financial strategies for their Sustainable Development Goal targets? What are the bottlenecks? What type of support is needed? What could be the role of development banks in the systems strengthening approach?
- Results based financing: incentives for increased efficiency in the system.
- Influencing financial flows across the system and using budget tracking as an accountability tool.
- District level costing and financing: life-cycle costing as a tool for strategic planning and advocacy; financing WASH for the last mile in fragile contexts; how to fund long-term maintenance of different service delivery models?

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Fragile states

Understanding risks and opportunities for systems strengthening in a rapidly changing environment

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The Sustainable Development Goals 6.1 and 6.2 aspire to ensure that the world receives basic and safe access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. In order to meet the goals, addressing the theme of sustainability in fragile states is indispensable. By 2030, half of the world's poor are expected to live in fragile conditions rising from less than 20% today. Currently, more than 40% of the world's population lives in water-scarce areas with roughly 1/4 of global GDP exposed to water scarcity.

The question of how to tackle sustainable services and water resource use in fragile states is capturing an increasing amount of attention from all WASH sector stakeholders. While the key building blocks for WASH services have been clearly identified, a wide range of fragile contexts challenge the relevancy and adaptability of such models.

The ability to create systems for WASH services requires flexibility and the capacity to put current approaches under honest scrutiny. The overarching questions that will be addressed are the following:

- What principles and learning from fragile states can inform and adapt the building block conceptual framework?
- Where should investments be made to strengthen the systems approach in fragile contexts - prioritising investments and efforts?

Contact the thematic lead:

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The different sessions will highlight a variety of contexts and how they affect the way conceptual frameworks for WASH systems are applied. The following topics will be addressed:

An opening session will focus on defining what a fragile state means and what the risks and benefits are in applying a conceptual framework for systems strengthening.

Addressing the question – how to manage the ambition of systems strengthening with the reality of fragility – what are the tools and expertise needed to achieve systems strengthening?

Fostering systems change in fragile states: economic and market-based approaches. How to ensure financial viability in a fragile context with examples from Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Strengthening monitoring and information systems in fragile contexts, experiences and perspectives from Ethiopia and the Central African Republic.

Mobilising different economic approaches for developing sustainable services in communities using life-cycle costing methodologies and developing messaging techniques to increase user willingness to pay for WASH services in fragile contexts.



Measuring and learning

Measuring and learning about the WASH system and its strengths

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As the development community, and the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in particular, explores systems-based approaches to increase development effectiveness, it is valuable to specifically examine the models and tools for measuring and monitoring (M&M) systemic change and whether these are supporting or constraining efforts to expand systems approaches.

A systems approach, by definition, is implemented through engagement and collaboration of actors, assumes organic and often non-linear progress, and often predicates on the development of a composite understanding of how each actor contributes to sector knowledge and success. As such, the key metrics become less about attribution to a sector result and more about contribution. Measuring and monitoring systems change requires unconventional frameworks and new skills and tools.

As the WASH sector expands its understanding of how to measure and monitor systems changes, it becomes clear that M&M approaches provide both opportunities and constraints for deeper adoption of

systems-based approaches. For instance, analysis by WaterAid suggests that the difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of systems-approaches may deter donors from fully embracing the approach- which in turn limits the participation of an important development actor. On the other hand, the work of IRC, WASHNote, WpDX, Akvo and WaterAid at country level reveals lessons about how the establishment of national sector monitoring platforms built on shared data can model and motivate an understanding of systems-approaches.

In the course of three days, the Measuring and Monitoring Theme will move from the theoretical understanding of what it means to measure systems change to looking at the practicalities of how this can work at a country level. We will hear from country practitioners and thought leaders in a range of sessions including games, panels, and presentations.

On Day 2, the Theme will host a Marketplace where participants can learn about a wide range of tools and approaches being tested in the sector.

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