

UNICEF-IRC Partnership on Knowledge Management and Sector Learning for  
West and Central Africa

## **KMSL Ghana Plan 2017-2021**

September 2016

## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1.	Evolution of KMSL in Ghana.....	3
1.2	UNICEF-IRC partnership on KMSL for West and Central Africa.....	4
1.3	Overview of this KMSL country plan .....	5
<b>2.0</b>	<b>PROPOSED GHANA KMSL PLAN.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE, INDICATORS AND DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Objectives.....	8
3.2	Indicators.....	8
3.3	Description of KMSL activities .....	8
3.4	Work plan .....	10
3.5	Budget .....	13
<b>4.0</b>	<b>POTENTIAL RISK AND MITIGATION MEASURES.....</b>	<b>14</b>
5.0	Management and coordination.....	15
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>		<b>16</b>
Annex 1	Budget.....	16
Annex 2	Brief description of the sector learning initiative .....	16
Annex 3	Overview: key sector platforms and the operational learning models.....	18

# 1. Introduction

Ghana's vision for the water and sanitation sector is "sustainable basic water and sanitation service for all by 2025." The performance of Ghana's water sector indicates that 87% of the population used improved drinking water in 2012- 93% in urban areas and 81% in rural areas (WHO/UNICEF 2014). Despite the gains made towards achieving the target for water, significant challenges remain in ensuring that newly provided water infrastructure deliver sustainable services continue well into the future. Some of the key lessons on sustainability learnt from recent global pilots such as the WASHCost and Triple-S projects show that at any time, a substantial proportion of water supply infrastructure is either not-functioning or functioning sub-optimally. The impact of poor sanitation, with coverage at just 15%<sup>1</sup>, continues to take a heavy toll on peoples' wellbeing.

Ensuring continuous water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to all populations is an important advance, without which, improved health outcomes for the investments made will not be achieved. Because of the number of activities and actors involved, and the web of interdependent relationships and incentives that drive them, water and sanitation service delivery is inherently complex. The role of knowledge management and sector learning (KMSL) in facilitating and influencing decision-makers at all levels to increase WASH prioritisation and ensure continuous and equitable service delivery is critical. However, the WASH sector in Ghana is only vibrant in experience sharing, but lacks a planned follow-up guiding model for influencing policy and practice. The relevance of KMSL Country Plan that seeks to inform follow-ups on the sector learning cycles by the different WASH stakeholders to coordinate and disseminate project information for uptake and decision making cannot be overemphasized.

## 1.1. Evolution of KMSL in Ghana

The complexity facing the WASH sector cannot be addressed by organizations in isolation. They require joint reflection and learning across organizational boundaries and advocacy for these lessons to be taken up in policy making and practice.

A scan on knowledge management in the Ghana WASH sector in 2004 showed that at the time, the WASH Sector in Ghana was not knowledge driven and there was generally a lack of a learning culture. Investment in documentation, research and information management was low. In order to address this, a number of organizations formed a task force to establish a Resource Centre Network that could address these issues.

This task force consisted of a number of resource centres, which were identified as the key ones to form a Resource Centre Network. These included TREND Group, WaterAid, Water Research Institute and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. In addition to these resource centres, the task force also consisted of key sector institutions like Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS), the Water Directorate of the Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing and World Vision.

After a period of intensive advocacy on the need for better knowledge management in the WASH sector, undertaken by the Knowledge Management Task Force, the Resource Centre Network (RCN) actually started taking shape with the establishment of the RCN secretariat and the appointment of a national Knowledge Management coordinator in mid-2008. Since then, the Resource Centre Network, coordinated and led by the RCN Secretariat, has been undertaking a

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<sup>1</sup> Progress on sanitation and drinking-water - 2014 update - World Health Organization and UNICEF 2014

variety of activities, including newsletters; factsheets; website; sector calendar; digital library; National Level Learning Alliance Platform meetings; and setup of regional and district platforms, to stimulate and facilitate knowledge management and sector learning in the WASH sector in Ghana.

An independent learning study commissioned by IRC in 2014 to establish the significance of the Learning Alliance Approach in influencing learning and adaptive capacity in Ghana's rural water sector affirmed that the Ghana WASH sector has become vibrant in experience sharing, documentation and dissemination, but recommended institutionalising a guiding model for a more systematic process of building up and deploying knowledge for policy, programming, and practice.

## **1.2 UNICEF-IRC partnership on KMSL for West and Central Africa**

The UNICEF-IRC partnership on Knowledge Management and Sector Learning for West and Central Africa (WCAR), which seeks to ensure solutions that are informed by evidence for achieving sustainable WASH services, has the objective of contributing to the UNICEF Global WASH KM Strategy; and to strengthen sector learning in the WCAR region including Ghana. The process has so far undertaken the mapping of demand and need for knowledge management and sector learning in the programme countries; the expression of interest to take up KMSL at country level; and the development of country KMSL plans. The key challenges that the 2014 Ghana's sector learning study<sup>2</sup> identified, which formed the basis of the Ghana KMSL expression of interest, are still valid today. These challenges are: (1) how district learning can be up-scaled and linked to national sector level; (2) how the learning lessons can more effectively influence sector policies and programming; and (3) how the initiative and sector learning more broadly can become financially sustainable. The UNICEF-IRC KMSL partnership is providing support for the Ghana learning initiative to develop a plan to address the above challenges, among others.

Ghana Sector Learning team submitted the KMSL Expression of Interest (EoI) for support in developing KMSL work plan with the aim to address the challenges mentioned above. The key issues highlighted in the EoI included the following: - that the WASH sector is quite active in sharing knowledge but less organised in other components of the learning cycle; need to institutionalise a learning framework to improve sector learning; that the starting point will be the existing and ongoing KM platforms; the need for a plan to make a business case for sector learning and pitch for funding; and that the Sanitation Knowledge Management Initiative (SKMI) project and IRC country programme may provide contributions. This KMSL plan is the result of a consultative process of assessing the needs and interests in Ghana for strengthening sector learning and knowledge management in the WASH sector for improving overall performance in the sector. Based on the learning study and partner experiences, this KMSL plan articulates activities for the priorities that are set out by a core team of the Ghana sector learning initiative.

This KMSL plan is the outcome of several activities involving the RCN Steering Committee made up of key sector stakeholders. In summary the process involved a sequence of activities as summarised below:

- Initial consultations and participation in webinars;
- Development and submission of the KMSL Expression of Interest;
- Development of the UNICEF-IRC KMSL Leaflet;
- SKMI meeting to present the UNICEF-IRC KMSL initiative;

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<sup>2</sup> 2014, Ghana Sector Learning Study, IRC, Accra

- RCN Steering committee meeting to present and setup the KMSL plan drafting team;
- Work plan meeting to agree on roles and responsibilities;
- Preparation of draft KMSL country plan.

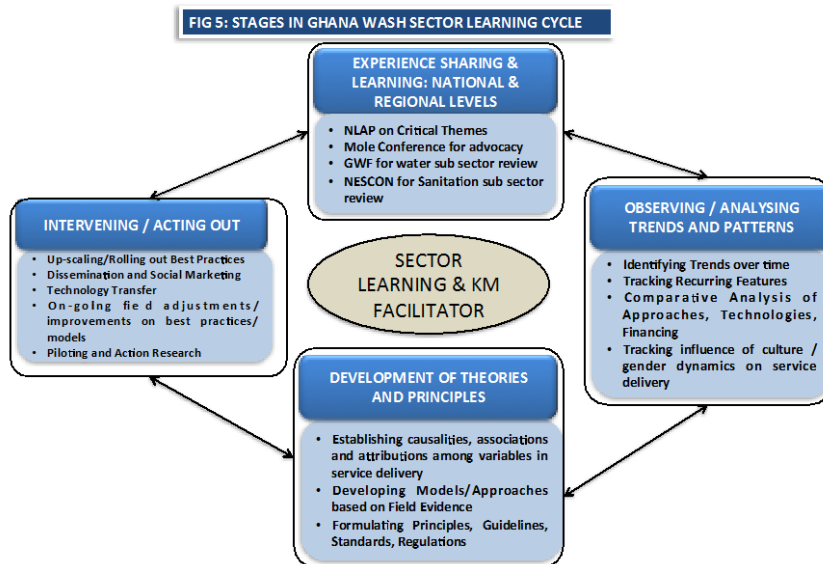
### **1.3 Overview of this KMSL country plan**

This KMSL plan details are provided as follows:

- Section 1 provides an introduction of the Ghana WASH sector, the background to KMSL in Ghana and UNICEF-IRC partnership KMSL initiative briefly described;
- Section 2 provides a summary of the proposed Ghana KMSL intervention;
- Section 3 presents the objective, indicators, description of activities and the KMSL workplan; Also provides a budget estimate and proposals for coverage of the financial requirements (Attached)
- Section 4 provides Potential Risk and Mitigation Measures, and
- Section 5 outlines proposals for coordination and management

## 2.0 Proposed Ghana KMSL Plan

The overarching outcome of Ghana’s KMSL Plan is a wash sector where learning goes beyond experience sharing to a more systematic and continuous process of building up and deploying informed and evidence-based knowledge to better influence policy, programming and practice at all levels.



Source: IRC Ghana, 2014

The above schematic edited version of David Kolb’s learning cycle (IRC, 2014) shows that Ghana WASH sector is very active in the first step (“Experience sharing”) of the learning cycle, but the second which entails analysing in ways that enable the determination of trends (“Observing/Analysing”), the third which is applied research (“Theorises”) and the fourth which is acting out at scale (“Intervening”) does not take place as deliberately and as consistently as the first. This plan proposes to close the learning loop by fully operationalising the above learning cycle through a range of planned activities.

The Ghana learning initiative’s primary mechanism for contributing to knowledge development and sector change is the Learning Alliance Approach. This brings different stakeholders together in a series of multi-stakeholder platforms at different institutional levels with the ultimate aim of creating innovative ideas around practical approaches to solve the challenges and improve the sector’s performance.

To advance the above purpose, sector institutions have over the last eight years provided support to the sector learning initiative, RCN. IRC Ghana currently hosts the RCN secretariat on behalf of the WASH sector in Ghana, whilst the RCN Steering Committee is anchored at the Water Directorate of the Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing (WD-MWRWH). The sector learning initiative has been supported through IRC core (DGIS) and projects funding. This funding mechanism only allowed for 50% of RCN secretariat staff time to dedicate to sector learning activities, and the remaining percentage dedicated to the contributing project activities.

Other sector institutional partners (within and outside the network) contribute financially to the convening of the learning platforms. As a result, the WASH sector is now vibrant in experience

sharing with great potential to improve learning and adaptive capacity (IRC, 2014). The demand for learning and sharing has increased substantially over the years. These positive results reflect the need to further strengthen of the learning initiative to enable it meet the current sector learning demand of going beyond experience sharing.

Funding of \$50,000 per annum will be required over a five year period to support the cost of 2 full time staff to manage the operations of the sector learning initiative's (RCN) secretariat and coordinate learning activities to meet the demands of the sector. This support will enable RCN and partners to advance their objective of being a hub for sector learning in the country, leveraging partnerships for knowledge transfer and scaling innovations for collective solutions and impact.

## 3.0 Objective, indicators and description of activities

### 3.1 Objectives

The overall objective of Ghana KMSL Plan is to strengthen the Ghana sector learning initiative to enable it effectively deliver the full learning cycle for improved performance in WASH service delivery. UNICEF-IRC partnership will work with RCN and Partners to:

**Objective 1:** Enhance sector experience sharing and learning through continuous use of the learning platforms at the national and regional levels, as the main driver for facilitating dialogue and leveraging partnerships to scale up innovations for sector performance improvements.

**Objective 2:** Improve sector knowledge management and evidence based decision making through development of knowledge products and decision support tools.

**Objective 3:** Provide strategic inputs in process documentation, tracking of key decision points and commitments across the WASH sector.

### 3.2 Indicators

The achievement of the above objectives can be measured using the following indicators:

- The Resource Centre Network and partners able to track learning trends and patterns (follow-ups), and develop decision support tools to inform adaptations of policy and practice;
- Number and types of innovations/ideas shared and number of sector stakeholders applying the ideas/innovations in WASH service delivery;
- Increase usage of sector website, managed by RCN secretariat, measured by the use of web statistics;
- Partnerships and collaboration forged by sector stakeholders as a result of facilitating of sector learning processes.

### 3.3 Description of KMSL activities

Main activities to be carried out to achieve the objectives include the following:

**Objective 1:** Enhance sector experience sharing and learning through continuous use of the learning platforms at the national and regional levels, as the main driver for facilitating dialogue and leveraging partnerships to scale up innovations for sector performance improvements.

- Facilitate learning alliance meetings with defined follow-up mechanisms at the national level;
- Facilitate bi-annual learning alliance meetings in 5 regions, extending to all 10 regions of Ghana and at least 20 districts by end of plan period;
- Provide organisational and defined follow-up support to sector learning events such as the NGO annual Mole conference, Ghana water forum and the CLTS annual stock taking forum, among others.

**Objective 2:** Improve sector knowledge management and evidence based decision making through development of knowledge products and decision support tools.



- Develop knowledge products to inform the sector - annual sector digest on sector trends and developments, sector calendar, reflection papers;
- Host and maintain sector website and library.

**Objective 3:** Provide strategic inputs in process documentation, tracking of key decision points and commitments across the WASH sector.

- Collate, review and track learning trends & patterns, and support the development of decision support tools to inform adaptation of policy and practice;
- Work closely with selected research and analytics teams by identifying critical areas of learning interest and innovations;
- Develop strategies to facilitate capacity enhancement and ensuring coaching for uptake and documentation of lessons.

### 3.4 Work plan

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Timeframe	Responsibility
<b>1. Enhance sector experience sharing and learning through the learning platforms at the national and regional levels, as the main driver for facilitating dialogue and leveraging partnerships to scale up innovations for improved sector performance</b>	Facilitate monthly learning alliance meetings at the national level.	45 (9/ year) WASH Reflections from the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP) engagements	January– November/ 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	RCN and Partners including Sector Ministries, UNICEF, IRC, CONIWAS, etc.
	Facilitate bi-annual learning alliance meetings in at least 5 regions.	50 (10/year) learning papers from the Regional Learning Platform meetings	June/- November/ 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Regional CWSA/ partners, RCN Partners
	Provide support to sector learning events - NGO annual conference (Mole Conference)	5 Mole Conference Reports/ Communique	August/ September 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	CONIWAS, RCN Partners, UNICEF, IRC
	Provide support to sector learning events - Ghana Water Forum (GWF).	5 GWF Report/ Communique	October 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing (MWRWH), RCN Partners, UNICEF, IRC

	Provide support to sector learning events - the CLTS annual stock taking conference (STF).	5 STF Conference Reports/ Communique	July/August 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), UNICEF, RCN Partners
<b>2. Improve sector knowledge management and evidence based decision making through development of knowledge products and decision support tools.</b>	Develop knowledge products to inform the sector- annual sector digest on sector trends and developments, sector calendar, reflection papers.	5 Sector Digest;  5 Up-to-date Sector Directory;  Sector Calendar of Events.	November 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021   February, May, August, November/ 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	RCN and partners, IRC Ghana   RCN and Partners
	Maintain and host sector website and digital library.	Updated Sector Website	Jan - December/ 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	RCN and Partners, IRC
	<b>3. Provide strategic inputs in process documentation, tracking of key decision points and</b>	Collate, review and track learning trends & patterns, and support the development of decision support tools to inform adaptation of policy and practice.	Learning/ communique monitoring framework /report; Articles, Factsheets	October, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

<b>commitments across the WASH sector.</b>	Work closely with selected research and analytics teams by identifying critical areas of learning interest and innovations.	Research/Communique team meeting reports	February/June, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	RCN and Partners, IRC, CONIWAS, Water Directorate-MWRWH; MLGRD
	Develop strategies to facilitate capacity enhancement and ensuring coaching for uptake and documentation of lessons.	RCN Core Group/Reflection meeting reports	March, July, October, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	RCN and Partners, CONIWAS, Water Directorate-MWRWH; MLGRD

### **3.5 Budget**

The detailed budget for plan is attached in annex 2

## 4.0 Potential risk and mitigation measures

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Probability of occurrence</b>	<b>Likely impact</b>	<b>Mitigation measures by the learning initiative secretariat</b>
Weak commitment and interest by key partners	Very low	Medium	Manage divergent views and interest across different partners, organisations through sustained engagements.
Weak institutional member commitment to assigned roles and responsibilities	Low	Medium	Develop internal communication plan across the network segments; and create awareness within the core group using effective lobbying to drive interest and buy-in.
Weak financial commitment from core member institutions and partners	Medium	Medium	Present RCN business delivery model and create awareness within the member institutions using effective lobbying to drive interest and buy-in.

## **5.0 Management and coordination**

UNICEF and IRC in collaboration with the RCN steering committee will provide oversight responsibility to RCN secretariat, which is managed by the Knowledge Management Coordinator and an Assistant.

RCN Ghana will be responsible for overall KMSL Plan management and coordination of the plan and representation towards financiers (current and potential) of the plan. RCN Secretariat will be responsible for progress reporting (financial and technical) on bi-annual basis.

The KMSL Plan implementation will be aligned with the RCN Management and coordination arrangements. Bi-annual work plans and reports will be validated by the RCN steering committee before submission to all members and financiers.

# Annexes

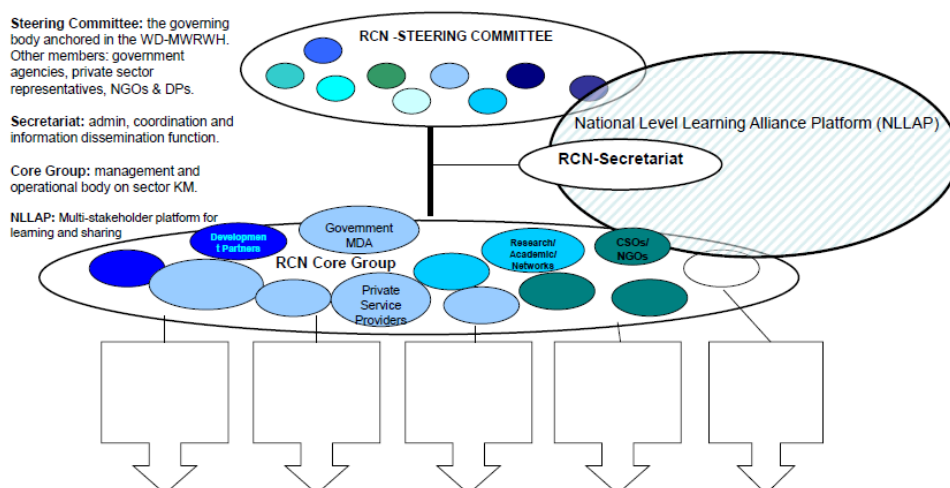
## Annex 1 Budget

### Annex 2 Brief description of the sector learning initiative

The Resource Centre Network (RCN) is an institutional partnership that seeks to promote learning within the WASH sector in Ghana. The overall objective is to improve and sustain WASH services through the facilitation of information exchange and sharing by all stakeholders. The vision is a knowledge-driven WASH sector with the ability to jointly reflect and learn, in which information is easily accessible and knowledge is widely shared, which contributes to the provision of improved sustainable pro-poor WASH services in Ghana. The mission of RCN is to contribute to meet this vision.

RCN is made up of a secretariat, 15-member steering committee and 20-member core group.

#### Structure of the RCN



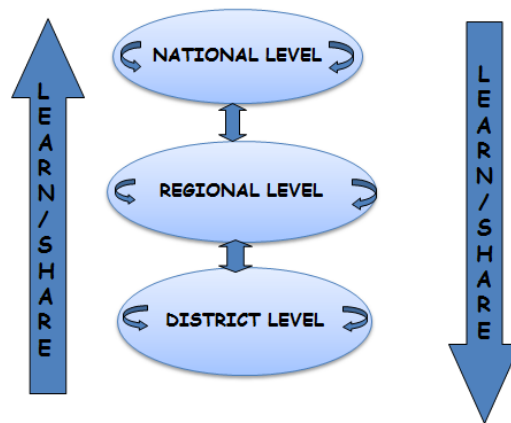
RCN has a longstanding experience working closely with the sector's stakeholders (since 2004), leading the promotion of high impact knowledge sharing and learning through a wide range of knowledge management activities with the overall aim of improving performance and sustainability of WASH service delivery in Ghana.

The RCN produces a wide range of products and services that stimulate and facilitate sector learning and knowledge management. The details of the product and services outlined in the schematic diagram below can be found on the sector website.



## Facilitating sector learning processes

- NLLAP Series
- WASH Reflections
- E-library ([www.washghana.net/library](http://www.washghana.net/library))
- Website ([www.washghana.net](http://www.washghana.net))
- Ghana WASH News
- Sector Calendar
- Factsheets
- Sector learning support
- Advisory/info point



### Annex 3 Overview: key sector platforms and the operational learning models

Sub-Sector	Existing platforms	Level of learning (national/ regional/ district)	Type of learning (experience sharing, research)	Dissemination of learning	Follow-up actions from lessons	Sustainability (finance mechanisms, sector buy-in, longevity)	Priority (high, medium, low) for funding	Existing funding
<b>WASH in Schools</b>	WinS TWG (note that other groups, such as MHM and others related to WinS would meet under this group)	National	Action orientated	When it meets, this group reports to the 'Safe and Health Schools group' which in turn reports to the SHEP Steering Committee	Actions reported to SHEP Steering Committee	Sector buy-in from limited partners, been operational since 20XX; low cost	High (for other knowledge management initiatives)	Nil
<b>Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)</b>	National CLTS stocktaking forum (4 years running) – Focuses on CLTS implementation + basic sanitation in the urban context	National drawing participants from all levels across the country	Experience sharing (implementation/ research works/ and emerging issues).	Emails/Newsletters/Online publications	No structured follow-ups	Dedicated officer in charge/ Pay to participate / part of the performance assessment of the Director-EHSD/ Chief Director - Ministry	High (for other knowledge management initiatives)	MLGRD/ Participants

<b>Environmental Sanitation</b>	National Environmental Sanitation Conference (NESCON – run for two consecutive times and on hold)	National level (drawing participants from all levels)	Sub-sector Review/ Experience sharing	E-mails/ Vibrant website (then!)	No structured follow-ups	The inability to organize NESCON for the past three years is an indication of its sustainability challenges	No priority is given to it for now	Was heavily donor funded
<b>WATER-subsector</b>	Ghana Water Forum (GWF)	National (Participants drawn from across the country)	Experience sharing and research	Emails/ Online publication	No structured follow-ups	Mostly donor supported	High, but ownership, funding and logistical constraints	Heavily donor funded
<b>General WASH Thematic Issues (National)</b>	NLLAP	National - Participants mainly drawn from Accra	Experience sharing and review/validation of research findings/ National Strategy Documents	Emails/ Online publication /Exhibitions	No structured follow-ups	Mostly self-sponsored by sharing partners	High, but frequency mainly based on demand	Sharing institutions/ Projects

<b>General WASH General Thematic Issues (Regional)</b>	RLLAP	Regional - Participants mainly drawn from the capital	Experience sharing and review/validation of research findings, etc.	Emails/ Online publication	No structured follow-ups	Mostly self- sponsored by sharing partners	High, but frequency mainly based on demand	Sharing institutions/ Projects
<b>CSO-led WASH Issues</b>	Mole Conference	National - drawing participants from all levels across the country	Experience sharing /CSO sector review (implementation/ research works/ and emerging issues)	Emails/Newsletters/Online publications	No structured follow-ups	Dedicated secretariat (CONIWAS) in charge/ participant self-sponsored	High (for WASH CSOs/ other sector institutions / initiatives)	CONIWAS/Donor/ Participants