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2009 marked a year of transformation for IRC. Having completed the move from Delft to The Hague and a change in leadership, we embarked on the preparatory phase of building a new organisation – an undertaking that has required considerable commitment and effort from both the staff and the Supervisory Board of IRC. By rising to this challenge, we have proven that we are an organisation not only able to cope confidently with change but more importantly, one that is able to remain focused on its commitments to helping some of the world’s neediest people.

While there is still much work to be done on both accounts, I am confident that under the leadership of Nico Terra, our Interim Director, we are now in a stronger position to continue to build IRC’s organisational structure and deliver high-quality, high-impact work within the WASH sector.

We are now more than a year into the implementation of our two major externally funded projects – WASHCost and Triple-S – and it is clear that the support received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation remains crucial to promoting the benefits of sustainable water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services across the sector. It is not just in terms of meeting our ongoing objectives, but also in terms of addressing the Dutch political context in which we operate.

During the past year, we have seen considerable pressure being placed on Dutch development aid budgets while parallel discussions on aid efficacy and the shift away from government subsidy and towards private sector involvement have taken place. I believe IRC’s links with a broad range of partners and donors reflect this new reality as they one presumes approaches (research, organisational structure) to addressing this new emphasis.

WASH issues clearly remain high on the development agenda. The water sector, long identified as a pillar of Dutch development cooperation, has IRC at the heart of the discussions. This is a privileged position and one that we intend to maintain through our innovation, within as well as reference to the sector.

Overall, the Supervisory Board is pleased with the progress made during 2009 and recognizes the ever greater contributions made by IRCs employees in WASH sector.

On behalf of the Supervisory Board, I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to IRC’s partners and donors for their continued confidence in the organisation. In addition, I would especially like to extend our thanks and congratulations to the employees and leadership of IRC on the way in which they have taken up new challenges, embraced new responsibilities and maintained an ongoing commitment to the change process. The Board will continue to support the organisation, its developments and endeavours in the sector with equal commitment and vigour.

Lodewijk de Waal – Chairman IRC Supervisory Board
Message from the Director

For more than 40 years, IRC has been at the forefront of the water sector, offering innovative ideas and approaches to facilitate sustainable, low-cost access to quality water supplies in developing countries. In 2009, we continued our work in these areas while at the same time meeting the challenges brought about by the more recent shifts in the development aid landscape. As a result, 2009 was a year full of challenges in which strong growth and internal change processes featured prominently.

In 2009, we also revised our strategy and monitoring protocol to better guide and inform our vision for the future. As a result, there is now a demand from a wide range of stakeholders for the alignment of research, programme and projects based on long-established, emergent IRC themes and ideas. A demand which we have addressed through our expertise, partnerships and (to some extent), the increase in our staff base.

It is vital that IRC capitalises on progress made with the ongoing of projects and initiatives both nationally and across the water sector. We recognize that it is no longer strategic to operate on a project-by-project basis. Rather, we should and will make a concerted effort towards encouraging longer-term planning and partnerships under the umbrella of our country and thematic programmes.

Going forward, we will continue with our innovative programmes and with expanding the space for multi-disciplinary learning and multi-stakeholder collaboration. This is essential given our relationships within the sector and with our ‘local’ partners in the countries we work in. The challenge for IRC now is in maintaining the opportunities presented and continuously reinforcing the organisation’s ideas and approaches to development so that our contributions remain relevant to the sector.

I am proud to be part of this organisation as it continues to make valuable contributions to the water sector. On behalf of IRC, I would like to thank the Dutch Government, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with all our partners and donors around the world for their ongoing commitment as we strive towards achieving sustainable WASH services for all.

Nico Terra – Interim Director

IRC Annual Report 2009
Today, competency alone is not enough to identify sustainable solutions to challenges in the water and sanitation sector. Innovation, creativity, learning and collaborative work are all essential to achieving impact in the sector. IRC’s Thematic Programme serves as a springboard giving impetus to innovative work in the sector. It is at the centre of the organisation’s development and consolidation of innovative approaches and knowledge sharing in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and integrated water resource management (IWRM).

It is grounded in a policy of flexibility, which facilitates the organisation’s responsiveness to emerging trends, opportunities, gaps and needs in the water and sanitation sector. The programme aims to mobilise interest and critical thinking on key thematic areas within the sector and to build collaborative initiatives that improve methodologies and approaches for achieving sustainable services.

IRC has been successful in amplifying certain themes in the sector and transforming these into major projects, such as the Finance theme that resulted in the WASHCost project which operates across four countries, and the Scaling Up theme that has resulted in the Sustainable Services at Scale project (Triple-S). Two additional thematic areas – Aid Effectiveness and Impact Assessment have since been brought into the programme in response to the demand for expertise in this field. Sanitation and Hygiene was given increased focus in response to the Year of Sanitation in 2008.

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As hygiene and sanitation activities continued to intensify in the sector, IRC embarked on a process of streamlining its interventions in this field. Based on an assessment of sector activities, three focus areas were identified: urban sanitation; total sanitation and sanitation marketing (TSSM) with a focus on rural sanitation; and schools sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE).

Guided by these three ‘sub-thematic’ pillars and in collaboration with its partners, IRC is working towards converting the organisation’s achievements in hygiene and sanitation into tangible outcomes at scale during 2010.

Enhanced monitoring of the various thematic programmes has brought greater articulation of the vision and innovation-cycle to deliver improved overall programme management.

Hygiene and Sanitation

IRC has consistently provided sector leadership in promoting improvements in hygiene and sanitation. In 2009, IRC’s expertise was sought for a research study on improvements sanitation in Luu (DDR), the development of a ‘WASH’ school manual in South Asia and other school hygiene and sanitation related activities in Delhi and globally. Participants’ hygiene and sanitation transformations (PHAST) evaluations in Kenya, and participation in expert meetings and roundtable discussions. Analysis and trends in this thematic area has refreshed IRC’s research programmes and poverty reduction activities.

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Impact Assessment of WASH Sector Governance

While the intention of development policies, activities, projects and programs is to yield substantial social benefits and alleviate suffering for poorer populations, this often does not reflect in practice. IRC has been involved in supporting the development of Impact Assessment tools, frameworks and methods for the WASH sector.

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- The impact assessment thematic overview paper (TOP 23 - Evaluating and Improving Impact Assessment of WASH Sector Governance) written by Régis Garandeau and IRC was published in August 2011.
- The forthcoming collection will include articles from IRC and its partners was produced for the academic journal – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy Research (WSPR).
- Climbing the Water Ladder – Multiple Use Services MUS and IWRM into its publication, The Impact Assessment of WASH Sector Governance.

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Thematic Programme

Action Research and Learning Alliances

Action Research and the Learning Alliances (LA) approach facilitate the empowerment of communities in policy/decision making and multi-disciplinary learning—both of which are core to the activities of IRC. The success of these approaches led IRC to publish lessons learnt in the application of LAs as part of its WASH4Change, KAOSIVE and WRETCH projects. As a result, IRC held a workshop in April to discuss the theoretical framework behind the approach and examine the various phases, tools and services capable of enhancing the positive outcomes of LAs.

At the Fifth World Water Forum, a session dedicated to discussion on the LA approach attracted some 150 participants and highlighted experiences from various projects using the LA approach and other multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs). The session provided a strong emphasis on: the importance of MSP as a methodological approach for research; the need to invest in capacity building for the facilitators of MSPs; and the desire for increased community representation in such platforms.

The thematic programme team also established links with Wageningen University (WUR) by joining the Change Alliance network. IRC’s engagement in the alliance creates the space for organisational partnership with excellence and increased understanding of social justice, and fair economic development and environmental protection which are at the core of the alliance’s work.

Innovative Communication

In collaboration with the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and AKVO, WaterCube.tv—a low-cost video technology allowing people to create, host, and share free video content—was introduced to the sector during Stockholm World Water Week 2009. Providing opportunities for participants to share their platforms with a broader audience, WaterCube.tv has in turn inspired IRC and Stockholm and is planned to be used again next year and other fora.

Use of mobile flip videos has also been promoted both within IRC and its country partners to document experiences and realities in the field. This is part of IRC’s commitment to exploring and testing low-cost communication tools and media that facilitate communication and exchanges across geographically dispersed action.

“We should not forget that in everything we are doing, the real objective is to help the poor to have more and better access to water and sanitation.”

Arjan Naafs – WASHCOST Country Coordinator, Mozambique

IRC also experimented with the use of internet-based technologies such as the Wiki and other cost-effective media for sharing information and facilitating proactive participation among IRC partners. Collaborative multimedia online applications as well as internet-based life-skilling and training has been achieved via the Wiki, with pages now available for most of IRC’s programmes and projects.
hygiene and sanitation activities contribute to total sanitation and sanitation markets, with a focus on rural sanitation; and
IRC attaches great importance to achieving the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and ongoing provision of sustainable services. In supporting these targets and sustainable water and sanitation services, IRC has adopted a strategy to work in various regions that focuses on a range of developing countries. The strategy is operationalised through Regional Programmes that cover South Asia, Latin America, West, East and Southern Africa.

The programmes inform and are informed by both IRC’s strategic objectives and developing country (regional, national, district) priorities, needs and realities. It is at this level that activity – research, innovation, knowledge and information sharing, learning and capacity support – is consolidated to influence national agenda-setting and sustainable approaches towards improving local WASH governance.

Within its focus countries (Ghana and Burkina Faso in West Africa; Uganda and Ethiopia in East Africa; Mozambique and South Africa in Southern Africa; Honduras in Latin America; and Nepal in South Asia), IRC has synergised activities and projects into coherent programmes to ensure that impact is greater than the sum of the individual components. The volume of projects in the focus countries has led IRC to place emphasis on the coordination, alignment and overall management of the programmes. This is best exemplified in Ghana by the opening of the WASH House in which a number of resources are now shared.

2009 saw substantial progress across all regional activities particularly in Ghana, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Bolivia, and Mozambique where WASHCost and Triple-S initiatives are being implemented. IRC’s visibility in the region has been greatly elevated through its work; it has played an active role in influencing national and regional agendas. It has contributed to the development of a number of technical standards and guidelines; and remains the leading international voice in public health and sanitation.

The success of the region’s programmes, expansion of collaborative activities with national and international partners such as WaterAid, SNV and WSP, and the posting of IRC staff on long term overseas assignments have contributed to an increase in the number and duration of activities in the region – factors significant in anchoring work in the region.

East Africa Regional Program (EARP)

The objective of the East Africa Regional Programme (EARP) is to support action-research and multi-stakeholder learning processes focusing specifically on decentralised, local water governance. 2009 proved a successful year in the region as key learnings from work on DGIS funded activities were applied to improve leveraging of new projects and joint IRC initiatives with our partners. EARP’s focus was on promoting WASH sector learning at different levels. Together with our partners NETWAS and the Netherlands development organisation SNV, IRC achieved an important objective in securing WASH learning on national agendas and catalysing interest for learning in selected districts and sub-counties.

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Patrick Moriarty – Senior Programme Officer, Knowledge Development and Advocacy
Regional Programmes

IRC is greatly encouraged by a growing interest among regional stakeholders in tackling sanitation and development. The coming year will see efforts continue to identify, develop and promote new regional regulatory, peer learning strategies and mainstreaming knowledge management. Best practice taken from our activities in all the regional countries will continue to influence and improve capacity throughout the sector from development programmes and government agencies alike.

In 2009, IRC and its partners established the learning alliance for water and sanitation (SAWA), a network comprising 80 organisations in the WASH sector and a key platform for information sharing and coordination. SAWA has been particularly active in supporting the development of a regional water sanitation network comprising 80 organisations in the WASH sector and a key platform for information sharing and coordination. SAWA has been particularly active in supporting the development of a regional water sanitation network comprising 80 organisations in the WASH sector and a key platform for information sharing and coordination.

The Latin America Regional Programme (LARP) is designed to address challenges in the region that are linked to sector governance at the decentralised level. At the national level, efforts are concentrated on mainstreaming new approaches for local governance while ensuring greater sustainability and equity in WASH and IWRM service delivery through improved knowledge management as well as sector learning at all levels.

Although the region appears to be doing well in terms of meeting the MDGs for water supply and sanitation, water and sanitation service-coverage across countries as well as in urban and rural areas remains limited. Challenges also exist in achieving WASH governance while ensuring greater sustainability and equity in WASH and IWRM service delivery through improved knowledge management as well as sector learning at all levels.

IRCs mandate to continue its work in the region and also provides the organisation with the opportunity to create lasting impact on the region’s WASH sector. In 2009 was a crucial year. We have seen that our work with RASHON has been well received and that helps us to step up our support for the sector at large. Erma Uytewaal – Senior Head, Resource Centre Development

The Power of Partnership

Despite the turmoil, IRCs partners in the country were able to continue their efforts and support the organisation’s network strategy. The thematic group on information from the South African Masibambane (Let’s Work Together) SWAp programme and lessons shared from various countries including presentations of AIDCO E7 seminars on water SWAps and CAPNET case studies. These lessons were shared at the Africa Water Week 2009 and are being consolidated for a Southern Africa SWAps in Practice Learning Lounge to be held in 2010. The programme also played a major role in setting priorities for Water for All – Global Framework for Action in terms of supporting the SEEAAC, engaging with key stakeholders in all sectors, and assisting with the capacity process to come South Africa’s proactive participation in the initiative. This work has strengthened IRCs relations with key water sector stakeholders, and in particular the country process to ratify South Africa’s practice participation in the initiative. This work has strengthened IRCs relations with key water sector stakeholders, and in particular the country’s participatory approach to the Water for All initiative. IRC’s efforts in the Southern Africa region have largely focused on supporting decentralised levels and capacities in the various institutions involved in the provision of water services (WSS). The integration of the MUS approach in the World Bank-funded project implemented by the Fondo Hondureño de Inversión Social (FHIS) is another example of IRCs-encouraged innovation to generate and enable the use of local knowledge.

Southern Africa Regional Programme (SAfRP)

IRC’s efforts in the Southern Africa region have largely focused on supporting decentralised levels and capacities in the various institutions involved in the provision of water services (WSS). The integration of the multiple-use of water services (MUS) approach within the region. The Southern Africa Regional Programme (SAfRP) comprises two elements – one focused on enhancing regional knowledge networking to facilitate and support organisations and groups to effectively address core WASH issues, and the other addressing knowledge development, ownership, documentation and sharing nationally as South Africa before branching out to other regional countries.

SAfRP has given special focus to SWAps in the water sector focusing on 10 years of experience from the South African Masibambane (Let’s Work Together) SWAp programme and lessons learned from various countries including presentations of AIDCO E7 seminars on water SWAps and CAPNET case studies. These lessons were shared at the Africa Water Week 2009 and are being consolidated for a Southern Africa SWAps in Practice Learning Lounge to be held in 2010. The programme also played a major role in setting priorities for Water for All – Global Framework for Action in terms of supporting the SEEAAC, engaging with key stakeholders in all sectors, and assisting with the capacity process to ratify South Africa’s practice participation in the initiative. This work has strengthened IRCs relations with key water sector stakeholders, and in particular the country process to ratify South Africa’s participatory approach to the Water for All initiative. IRC’s efforts in the Southern Africa region have largely focused on supporting decentralised levels and capacities in the various institutions involved in the provision of water services (WSS).

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Regional Programmes

2009 saw the public launch of the Letter of Intent between the SAfRP and the Mozambican government in an event that was attended by Ministers, senior officials and other representatives from the water sector in Mozambique. This paved the way for a holistic approach to supporting the Mozambican water sector where activities can be consolidated under a programme strengthening sustainable water and sanitation services.

A major contribution was also made to Africa Water Week held in Johannesburg in November 2009. SAfRP was involved in: supporting the Africa Regional Preparatory Workshop for the Global Framework for Action Initiative, which resulted in South Africa playing a leading role in supporting the initiative; providing inputs to a high level panel on lesson sharing in Africa and Asia; and the sharing of lessons on the sector wide approach.

A South African Development Community-wide learning and sharing workshop was also conducted on “partnerships for sanitation for the urban poor” – hosted by the Regulator (CRA) with support from the WSSCC and WSP Mozambique; this lesson sharing initiative strengthened IRC’s partnerships in Mozambique and amongst key water sector actors.

2010 will be a year to implement many of the strategies and plans proposed to increase presence in the region. For this, two major events are planned – a water and sanitation lesson sharing seminar between Mozambique and South Africa; and a Southern Africa Regional SWAp seminar for which a draft book on the Water SWAp in South Africa will be produced. Further consolidation of the Mozambique activities will take place with greater focus on institutional arrangements and decentralisation.

South Asia Regional Programme (SARP)

Further strengthening of strategic partnerships with large-scale implementation partners including: Bangladesh Sanitation Sector Development Program (SSDP), BRAC, the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission, SWM and S4W’s previous work to be a major achievement in 2009. Given the relatively small scale of the programme, these growing relationships are designed to enable the team to have impact at scale while at the same time continuing to innovate, share and document best practice on a broader level.

In tandem with the three pre-defined regional strategic objectives (impact at scale through strategic partnerships; innovation through small-scale action research; and capacity building of local partners through learning and sharing activities), the programme has as its aim to build thematic areas of water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Although impact in these areas has so far been achieved by linking up with the implementation programmes noted above, the SARP has made progress in its core aim by encouraging collaborative working practices among many NGOs operating in the region. This two-pronged approach has led to closer ties with existing partners, the development of several externally-funded programmes and impact on the ground.

In 2009, IRC was invited to participate in two major initiatives – a large-scale urban water and sanitation programme being implemented in 330 cities across Indonesia, and a joint programme with the Dutch NGO, SMART, to support the implementation of a sanitation and hygiene programme in Indonesia.
Regional Programmes

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Joep Verhagen – Senior Programme Officer, Resource Centre Development

Further progress was also made in the region with the WASHcost and Triple-S project. Initial results from research are already beginning to emerge on the life cycle costs (LCC) of providing WASH services to the rural poor in Andhra Pradesh (India) via WASHCost. And, with aspirations to embed Triple-S in South Asia, additional scoping studies on sustainable rural water services at scale more extensive in India and Nepal with the support of SNV, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), have been initiated in Nepal. Initial results from research are already beginning to emerge on the life cycle costs (LCC) of providing WASH services to the rural poor in Andhra Pradesh (India) via WASHCost. And, with aspirations to embed Triple-S in South Asia, additional scoping studies on sustainable rural water services at scale more extensive in India and Nepal with the support of SNV, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), have been initiated in Nepal (via WASHCost) and Triple-S (via IRC). The work that we conduct.

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Further progress was also made in the region with the WASHcost and Triple-S project. Initial results from research are already beginning to emerge on the life cycle costs (LCC) of providing WASH services to the rural poor in Andhra Pradesh (India) via WASHCost. And, with aspirations to embed Triple-S in South Asia, additional scoping studies on sustainable rural water services at scale more extensive in India and Nepal with the support of SNV, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), have been initiated in Nepal (via WASHCost) and Triple-S (via IRC). The work that we conduct.
RIPPLE – Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learnings in Ethiopia

RipPLE is a five-year (2006 to 2011) research programme that aims to advance evidence-based learning on water supply and sanitation financing, delivery and sustainability as well as improve equity in access for the poor across Ethiopia and the Nile region. Working with local and international partners, this programme fills an important niche – promoting documentation of sector activities and encouraging learning from local to regional and national levels.

In 2009, IRC contributions to the project included new publications on the sustainability of rural water supply systems and action research on the monitoring of access of water supply systems. Support was also provided in further developing learning and practice alliances that connect the project to local stakeholders using communication best practices, innovative monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of RipPLE activities. A process was also initiated for assessing the feasibility and options for RipPLE to sustain itself as a long-term WASH resource centre that provides vital research, capacity building and communication activities to develop a learning WASH sector in Ethiopia.

Triple-S – Sustainable Services at Scale

Sustainable Services at Scale or, Triple-S, is a six-year multi-country learning initiative that aims to support a paradigm shift in the planning and design of development assistance in the rural water sector. A key outcome for this six-year project is for the concept of a Service Delivery Approach (SDA) to be endorsed as a central developmental strategy in the water sector by national and international stakeholders.

In 2009, an outcomes based management approach was developed to enable Triple-S and the teams in Uganda and Ghana to respond to sector demand and opportunities. The scale of the initiative also necessitated exploration of the communications and media required to support the advocacy and ‘marketing’ work required.

### Around a billion people – one in eight of the world’s population – have no access to safe water

T红线水率为人口的1/8，即全球约有8亿人没有安全的饮用水。
At international level, Triple-S has actively reached out to WASH sector agencies, donor organisations and private charitable and multilateral institutions – interactions that have created opportunities to engage on its agenda for change globally, and have created momentum for the team to explore possibilities for expanding the initiative in new countries.

“IRC’s proposed way forward – shifting from project-to-services – is something that many people accept. It is important that we work in partnership to start applying solutions and move closer to the sustainability ideal.

Tom Schouten  – Director Triple-S

With the planned expansion into two further countries and growing global interest in sustainability and harmonisation, concerted efforts in the advocacy and communication will be made to better position the SDA for rural water as a priority.

IRC also extends its SWITCH-related work to support improved governance mechanisms in some cities. With the establishment of IRCs Across WASH House, the importance of engagement in supporting urban planning processes on the city scale continues to develop in Alexandria, Egypt. IRC is also involved in a project that addresses the challenges of social inclusion in the context of the lack of access to water and sanitation in urban and peri-urban areas.

As the project nears its conclusion in 2010, IRC is focusing on completing its work on social inclusion, LAs and strategic planning themes. IRC will also support dissemination activities such as the conferences being organised with UN-Water and other partners as part of preparations for the urban focused world water day in 2011.

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Various communications and advocacy materials were developed from WASHCost’s research work in 2009 leading to higher visibility of its analytical concepts and methodological approach in national and international WASH policy arenas. As a result, an increasing number of discussions on the costs of capital maintenance and rehabilitation are now taking place in the sector with concern growing around issues of slippage (lack of sustainability after coverage is achieved). 2009 also saw the launch of the WASHCost website through which country outcomes and research reports are steadily being made available.

The international community’s support and subscriptions to the life-cycle cost approach was expressed most explicitly during the Stockholm World Water Week in 2009. In a seminar on water economics, key international and national sector actors including UNICEF, the Government of Uganda and PLAN International publicly acknowledged the significance of the LCCA and their commitment to its implementation. In a keynote message, Clarissa Brocklehurst, UNICEF’s Chief of Water, Environment and Sanitation, noted the organization’s intention to begin investigating the full LCCs of water and sanitation in supporting and justifying investments to the sector.

2010 will be characterised by large scale data collection, analysis and continued emphasis on putting in place the foundations to support embedding, and stimulating the replication of the WASHCost approach by other countries and partners. Initial answers to the question on the costs of providing a sustainable service will be shared at the IRC Symposium in November 2010.

“This is not just about collecting costs, but about making this information useful for government and for other organisations working in the sector.”

Catarina Fonseca – WASHCost Project Director

The Mozambique Perspective

In Metanato Community, District of Zavala, Province of Inhambane, southern Mozambique, the experience of communities in managing water supply infrastructure is characterised by a mixture of feelings. On the one hand, the sense of infrastructure ownership, expressed through people’s direct participation in managing their water pumps; and on the other, concern about the long-term sustainability of this infrastructure given the inherent high costs and the fact that in the long term, locally collected revenues may not cover the monthly maintenance costs of allocated water pumps. In Metanato, water pumps break down on average five times a month and repair costs can exceed US$ 40 per breakdown, resulting in payment being drawn from local contributions. Unfortunately, in Mozambique, more than one third of water pumps are out of action due to factors including lack of proper maintenance or replacement of spare parts.

Egidio Vaz Raposo – WASHCost Mozambique
IRC’s Global Information and Learning Services (GILS) programme helps people involved in putting WASH knowledge into practice. From printed to electronic materials and radio to seminar-based media, IRC disseminates information throughout the WASH sector so that practitioners have access to and remain abreast of the latest resources, policies and innovations that enable them to do their jobs more effectively.

IRC printed materials, electronic newsletters, portals, learning and online library services are tailored to suit the knowledge and information needs of the wider sector audience. Indeed, many of IRC’s publications and applications products are available free of charge or via a USB stick, making materials more accessible than ever. The USB contains all electronically available IRC publications in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese, as well as a multi-language thesaurus to reduce the time spent searching materials.

The programme’s emphasis during 2009 has primarily been on improving product quality. In order to strengthen its role in promoting global learning, IRC undertook a review of its client and audience activities and as a result embarked on a process of modernising the GILS portfolio. Highlights of this process include: the launch of the WASHCost website in May 2009; introduction of the automatic RSS newsfeed for the Source News Service; and the implementation of a semantic internet search engine. The ongoing success of IRC’s Question and Answer (Q&A) service has also prompted the development of a sector-wide Q&A platform incorporating 15 international NGOs.

With external demands for IRC communication and knowledge management support steadily increasing, the organisation has made substantial advances by positioning itself to better support, design and deliver the best possible information products and services for the sector.

Websites

The IRC website is the gateway to information and from the WASH sector. In 2009, the site recorded its highest ever recorded number of visitors generating more than 1.4 million page views. As part of the website technology support provided to external organisations and projects, IRC ran the number of active websites hosted via its www.watsan.net portal structure increase to 23. To improve analysis of website traffic and better cater to the demands and growth of visitor activity, the decision was also taken to install analytical software on the site.

Towards the end of 2009, IRC conducted a survey amongst its website users to gain insight into the type of information sought; ease of search; and usefulness of the information found. Of the 364 responses received from around the world, almost 70% of all respondents rated the IRC site ‘above average’ with respect to usefulness and ease of use. Sanitation technologies and approaches proved to be one of the most popular themes and indeed reasons for 18% of all respondents visiting the site, with water scarcity, pollution and resource management ranking slightly behind at 13%.

A number of user suggestions for improving the site were received ranging from general, such as visual enhancements, to the more specific including the provision of practical, ‘how-to’ information for practitioners.
Global Information and Learning Services (GILS)

Thematic Overview Papers (TOP)

IRC offers a range of Thematic Overview Papers (TOPs) as an online resource to development practitioners. As one of the most accessed organisations, IRC has become an important channel for communicating across the WASH sector. The papers are available for download and contain enough immediate information to provide good grounding in key topics and often incorporate references to contemporary experience, expert opinions and emerging trends. The TOPs also point readers to sources of more detailed coverage including local and global resource centres.

“Our TOPs are some of the most valuable pieces of knowledge sharing. It is to these papers that I turn when embarking on a piece of work.”

Alana Potter – IRC Senior Programme Officer

In 2009, IRC published its 23rd peer reviewed TOP, Evaluating & Improving the WASH Sector and provides reference to additional literature, websites and other resources. This TOP discusses the evaluations currently in use and the transparency with which their resources are spent on interventions to improve lives. The TOP encourages agencies within the WASH Sector. With increased focus on development agencies’ results, growing demand for quantitative measures and more specifically impact evaluation, agencies have begun to seek more objective, independent assessments to demonstrate the demand for rigorous evaluations of their resources and the effectiveness of their interventions to improve the lives of those they serve. To improve the mountain of data available to practitioners, IRC produced a tool kit to set up sanitation clubs, to youth volunteers applying methodologies to multiple use systems (MUS) to carry out community-based projects. A rich source of first-hand experience, expert opinion and emerging trends. The TOPs also point readers to sources of more detailed coverage including local and global resource centres.

Publications

IRC published a total of five peer-reviewed papers and sanitation publications in 2009. These materials are available for free of charge and continue to be a popular source of information generating in excess of 52,000 downloads during 2009 alone. To reduce stock management and inventory costs, IRC implemented a print on demand service policy. A full list of IRC publications produced during 2009 can be found elsewhere in this report.

With Spanish and English publications dominating the list of most frequently accessed items on the IRC website, the book ‘Climbing the Water Ladder’ published in September 2009 proved to be the most popular piece, registering over a thousand accesses. The book, ‘Sanitation and the Better World’, published in September 2009 attracted interest in key topics, registering over a thousand downloads by the end of the year. Other publications such as the TOP entitled Knowledge Management in the Water Sector have been incorporated into toolkits developed by the American Water Works Association Research Foundation and the Mountain Quest Institute.

Looking ahead, the organisation intends to expand the range and format of its publications, to set up sanitation clubs, to youth volunteers applying methodologies to multiple use systems (MUS) to carry out community-based projects. A rich source of first-hand experience, expert opinion and emerging trends. The TOPs also point readers to sources of more detailed coverage including local and global resource centres.

“[Source Bulletin] is really a great publication for the Source Bulletin reader, Bangladesh”

Selin Ahmet Khan – Source Bulletin reader, Bangladesh

Source

Source is used by policy makers, practitioners and information specialists throughout the WASH sector to access almost of water and sanitation issues. Source bulletin – Special Features

Published in English, French and Spanish, the Source Water and Sanitation News is produced in collaboration with IRC partners on the ground and dispatched to a subscriber base of more than 23,000 readers. The Source bulletin – Special Features is produced in collaboration with IRC partners on the ground and dispatched to a subscriber base of more than 23,000 readers. The Source bulletin – Special Features is produced in collaboration with IRC partners on the ground and dispatched to a subscriber base of more than 23,000 readers. The Source bulletin – Special Features is produced in collaboration with IRC partners on the ground and dispatched to a subscriber base of more than 23,000 readers.
Global Information and Learning Services (GILS)

Q & A Service

In August 2009, together with WaterAid, IRC convened a meeting in London in which major sector organisations were invited to explore the potential for coordinating and aligning the collection of Q & A services. Through its 19 participating organisations including WaterAid, Practical Action and UNESCO, the shared service aims to provide professional-quality advice and knowledge sharing while extending activity beyond the sector-related work of the participating agencies. Having received in excess of 1,300 questions in 2009, the Q&A service is an opportunity for IRC to raise the profile of and encourage greater use of the platform itself. Indeed, user satisfaction surveys conducted in 2009 revealed a high user satisfaction rate and confirmed the usefulness of the platform.

WASH News Blogs

Underlining the growing importance of having access on demand to up-to-the-minute communications, IRC’s WASH News blogs received more than a quarter of a million page views during 2009.

From a starting position of 14 news blogs in 2008, IRC now has almost 3,500 subscribers. Its eleven regional and thematic WASH news feeds are available on both IRC and partner web sites with access to the Transparency blog also available on the Water Integrity Network website. Users can subscribe to the blogs via email and RSS feeds, and many of the feeds are now also available via the thematic and regional sections of the IRC website.

Digital Library

Access to WASH-related publications is essential for the development of good practice and sharing of learning at IRC. Often hosted at the sector level, the WASH materials collection of data and literature has now been fully converted to a digital library, incorporating Google indexing to provide improved, direct access to a wide variety of WASH sector documents. A survey conducted during 2007-2008 indicated a satisfaction rate of 88.5% among Digital Library users. Although the library contains English, French and Spanish language documents, it is currently only being updated with new English language publications. As IRC seeks new alliances with WASH organisations, it is anticipated that an increasing number of new French and Spanish publications will be made available in the coming years.

The Road Ahead

The Global Information and Learning Services (GILS) programme is central to profiling IRC as a professional, international knowledge centre in the WASH sector. The increasing demand for IRC’s information and communication services is indicative of the global interest in WASH issues.

In acknowledging this development, IRC is committed to a continuous improvement process to stimulate and extend its communications services, products and approaches. This will not only deliver the high level of support and advocacy required by those operating in the field, but also seek to improve information sharing and learning throughout the sector. In so doing, the programme is contributing actively to achieving the WASH sector’s targets identified within the Millennium Development Goals.
of IRC project spending, Africa remained the largest recipient of IRC funding in 2009 with more than €3.6 million spent.
IRC Staff and Services

Following the organization’s move from Delft to The Hague in late 2008 and as part of the organizational change process in 2009, IRC invested significantly in strengthening its service infrastructure, in terms of its hardware, software and most importantly the backbone of its operations – its employees.

With its global expansion of interests, partnerships and projects and objective to build local capacity, learning, innovation and information sharing, IRC has worked diligently towards bringing on board the best specialists, becoming a more international organization and creating an environment flexible enough to meet the needs of those working locally and at distance.

The past three years, have seen a shift within IRC towards working on major projects, such as SWITCH, BRASScost and Triple-S, a factor that has resulted in growing emphasis being placed on project management within the organization and changes to the contracting policy in 2009. To encourage organizational flexibility and respond to the limited time frames of major projects, changes were instituted in 2009 making it possible to recruit employees for the duration of a specific project.

IRC’s employee base expanded from 52 to 56 during 2009 primarily in reflection of the demand for the new skill sets required by the two large scale projects, WASHCost and Triple-S. A total of seven professionals were recruited in 2009 (three employees left the organization), bringing the number of Dutch to non-Dutch employees to 38 and 18 respectively.

Although staff development and training were curtailed in 2009 to allow for implementation of the organizational change process, some staff members were offered training based on individual needs and requirements for projects. An internal training centre was also introduced to facilitate development of English writing skills and will be extended into 2010.

The organisation has also come to realize a growing organisational need to facilitate employees working at home, at distance (home office) and remotely in the field. With two members of staff (together with their families) currently on long term assignment in Uganda and Ghana, the organisation is acutely aware of the benefits (and necessity) in providing staff with the equipment and flexibility to work globally. Locally, revisions were made to IRC’s commuting cost policy for The Netherlands that were made possible as a result of the daily travel.

The results of the hard work and investment in all of the areas mentioned above are expected to yield positive results in 2010 once full implementation of the change process has taken effect.

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The results of the hard work and investment in all of the areas mentioned above are expected to yield positive results in 2010 once full implementation of the change process has taken effect.
2009 was a successful year for IRC, combining strong growth with an internal change process and a change of management. Further diversification of the organisation’s funding base also lead to an increase in income derived from private donors.

With efforts ongoing to diversify the funding base, IRC’s budget grew considerably during 2009 marking a 20% increase on the 2008 figure and changing the organisation’s total income to €7.2 million. Despite the impact of the organisational change process and its corresponding costs, the balance for 2009 would end positive with a profit of €7,024 – a result that will be added to the organisation’s reserves.

NB: Statistics quoted in the accompanying diagrams for the section on IRC Staff and Services exclude figures for temporary staff contracted during 2009.

**Income**

The total IRC budget for 2009 was €7.2 million, an increase of €1.2 million (20%) compared to 2008. IRC’s income increased primarily due to the start-up of the Triple-S project, which has a total value of approximately USD$22 million and is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Along with USD$14.5 million for the WASHCost project, plus a further USD$7 million specifically for financing IRC’s organisational change process and maintaining and reinforcing the organisation’s innovative strength, the grants from the Gates Foundation accounted for 47% of IRC’s total budget in 2009.

In 2008, core funding from the Dutch Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) accounted for 43% of the total annual IRC budget. External project-based funding rose significantly in 2009 and accounted for 68% of the overall IRC budget compared to 57% in 2008. Changes in income distribution were also made due to expenditures incurred through partner-related activities generated as a result of IRC’s increased focus on the Southern region.

IRC’s major clients for external activities in 2009 were DGIS, the British government’s Department for International Development (DFID) – particularly for the RiPPLE programmes – the European Union (EU) for the SWITCH and EU Water initiatives, and UNICEF.
Expenditure

Personnel costs for 2009 were higher than in 2008, mainly due to the increase in IRC employees from 52 in 2008 to 56 by the end of 2009. This was a direct result of hiring staff with the necessary skills for IRC’s big projects, WASHCost and Triple-S.

In terms of IRC project spending, Africa remained the largest recipient of IRC funding in 2009 with more than €3.6 million spent on activities across the continent. This was closely matched by expenditure on global projects, which amounted to approximately €3.2 million. The remaining funds were directed towards South Asia and Latin America. Breaking this down to country level, Ghana received the largest proportion of IRC funds in 2009, at €713,000.

IRC is involved in a wide range of activities at international, national, regional and local levels with some activities clustered according to themes such as Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Impact Assessment. In 2009, the majority of IRC thematic area expenditures (26%) went to information services and sector learning. This was closely followed by funding directed towards institutional support (18%) and improved local governance (13%).

Remuneration and Compensation

The IRC Director received a salary of €103,039 in 2009. The Chair of the Supervisory Board received total remuneration of €4,000. Members of the Supervisory Board received remuneration of €1,600 each.

IRCs annual accounts for 2009 were audited by Price Waterhouse Coopers.
IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre is an independent think-tank and knowledge centre for the international development sector focusing on water supply, sanitation, hygiene behavior (WASH) and local/ integrated water resource management (LWRM/IWRM). IRC staff facilitates a gamut of innovative research and learning support services with the aim of generating and sharing WASH related knowledge and information and making them more accessible to, and better used by people operating on the ground and throughout the sector.

Headquartered in The Hague, The Netherlands and with a staff of 56 professionals working around the world, IRC teams up with an international network of partners active in the public, private and non-governmental (NGO) WASH development arena to facilitate the achievement of sustainable WASH services in rural and peri-urban areas in development countries and to ensure that there are equally accessible to those most in need.

Mission
IRC facilitates the sharing, promotion and use of knowledge so that governments, professionals and organisations can better support poor men, women and children in developing countries to obtain the water and sanitation services they will use and maintain.

IRC staff facilitates a gamut of innovative research and learning support services with the aim of generating and sharing WASH related knowledge and information.

Global network of partners
IRC operates with a global network of like-minded partners intervening on local, national and international levels and across a range of governmental, NGO, public and private sector entities. In addition to working with development banks, charities and UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN-Water and the World Health Organisation, IRC also partners with a host of regional organisations. These include Le Centre Régional pour l’Eau Potable et l’Assainissement à faible coû (CREPA) in West Africa; BRAC in Bangladesh; and the National Directorate of Water (DNA) in the Mozambique government. IRC also enjoys a productive working relationship with the Dutch government and is recognised for its innovative capacity as well as its ability to deliver tangible progress on the ground.
IRC became an autonomous foundation in October 2006, when the statutory link with the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) that had been in place since 1979 came to an end. Following the latest concepts of good governance for non-profit organisations, a Supervisory Board was established as the highest governing body.

The Board provides as supervisory role, supporting the full operational and policy responsibility that resides with IRC’s Director. 2009 saw a strengthening of links between the Supervisory Board and the organisation, underlining the need for Board members to gain a clear vision about what is happening at the grassroots level. To this end, Board members will, from time to time, visit IRC projects and activities to experience firsthand the results of work that is being carried out in the field by the organisation and its partners.

In 2009, no changes were made to the Statutes of the Foundation, nor in the Board of Directors, by-laws or the Supervisory Board by-laws.

The Supervisory Board met six times in 2009. Mr. Hans van Dord joined the Board in May 2009 filling the post left vacant through the resignation of Jos van Winkelen, CEO of Vitens. Details on the additional functions of all Board members can be found on the IRC website at: www.irc.nl.

Lodewijk de Wet – Chairman

Posts held:
• Director, Humanitas Vereniging
• Member of the Supervisory Board, ERG Group
• Chairman of Supervisory Board, MVO
• Member of Advisory Board, ALLER (Dutch Netherlands Training Council)
• Member of the Supervisory Board, DFID-NY

Ger Arden – Secretary, Treasurer

Posts held:
• Advisor of the Board, Venes NV
• Member of Dutch committee, International Water Association

Dick van Heusen – Board Member

Posts held:
• Permanent Advisor, Robbert Bolderdijk to Huisman, Banglafield and Co, Utrecht

Regien van der Sijp – Board Member

Posts held:
• Director, SMK (Stichting Milieukeur)
• Chairperson, Project Advisory Committee, OxfamNovib
• Member of Supervisory Board, Stichting Eerste Stuivendals Fonds
• Member, 95279 Leaders for Nature

Hans van End – Board Member

Posts held:
• Advisor, Human Rights Watch (Geneva)
• Vice chairman Kamer der Nederlandse Handelsunie
• Director Corporate Development, MAFEID (until 2008)

Design prepared with photographs provided from IRC staff, photographers from around the world and Flickr images tagged with ‘water’ and ‘sanitation’.

IRC Supervisory Board

Colophon

Statistics

Facts and figures quoted from the following sources have been used on certain pages of this report:


Published August 2010 by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

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