

# Working group on Climate Change adaptation and WASH Draft

## Background

It is increasingly becoming clear that the WASH (Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene), and indeed the wider water sector, may expect a range of impacts as a result of climate change. A number of organizations have started analyzing these possible impacts and discussing the need for specific adaptation measures. In February 2009, a group of practitioners from different organizations came together in The Hague (the Netherlands) to exchange experiences and positions in the debate on the impact of climate change on the water sector, and WASH in particular. In addition, the participants explored whether there would be an added value in establishing a thematic working group which would jointly undertake activities in this field (see [www.irc.nl/page/48192](http://www.irc.nl/page/48192) for the report of this meeting). This meeting saw convergence among participants in the understanding of how climate change would impact on WASH services delivery, particularly to the poorest and most vulnerable groups, as well as on required strategies for adaptation within the sector.

During this meeting, as well as after subsequent sessions at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the participants saw the added value in establishing themselves as a working group, as it would allow for obtaining synergy in the development of insights into the impacts of climate change on WASH services delivery, and possible adaptation measures, as well as having more impact in advocacy activities. This note aims to lay out the proposed objective and activities of the working group. It also aims to provide some guidelines for membership.

## Objective and focus

The objective of the Working Group is to promote and support effective climate change adaptation approaches and measures in the WASH sector. It aims to do so by providing a platform for knowledge development and sharing, and joint advocacy activities.

In this, the Working Group's focus is on the impact of climate change on the water management needs to service poor and vulnerable people. The Working Group aims to explore climate change adaptation measures that serve to reduce the vulnerability of these communities in relation to access to WASH services and in their broader water management activities. It works from the premise that adaptation efforts should:

- Be undertaken within the sector, and not be established as a separate effort, and;
- Contribute to the strengthening of governance and capacity within the WASH sector, especially at critical levels of decision making, to enable the sector to adequately respond to the impacts of climate change.

The Working Group aims to develop a better understanding of what these activities may entail, and how these can be planned for and carried out.

## Main groups of activities

With the above mentioned focus in mind, the Working Group works towards its objective through the following groups of activities.

- Acting as platform for knowledge sharing in order to improve understanding regarding climate change adaptation strategies in the WASH sector
- Developing of advocacy messages and undertaking advocacy activities to communicate effective adaptation approaches within both the WASH and climate change adaptation sectors
- Providing information and knowledge services on climate change adaptation in the WASH sector, both at the practical and at the strategic level

## **Membership**

The group aims to be an informal, voluntary and open community of practice, guided by a simple set of membership rules.

- *Group membership:* Membership is open and free to any organisation that subscribes to the Working Group's objective, focus and activities. In order to become a member, you can email the Secretary. In addition to regular members, we particularly would welcome new core partners<sup>1</sup>, who pledge their own resources to help to organize meetings and other collaborative activities of the working group. Current core partners will decide on inviting or accepting new core partners.
- *Decision-making:* Core partners will strive to take all decisions by consensus, relying upon a majority vote when consensus does not exist. Where possible, major decisions will be taken at group meetings, with a quorum of core partners present. Between meetings, necessary decision making will occur by email or phone conferences between the core partners. Minutes for all meeting will be taken by the secretary, circulated and published on the website.
- *Secretary:* The core partners select a group secretary, based on interest expressed by core partners to hold this function. The secretary will be responsible for chairing group meetings and ensuring that group procedures are followed as well as taking initiatives to represent the group and stimulate group activities. The secretary will also take a lead role in managing communications with the core members and ensuring documentation of meetings and activities. The secretary<sup>2</sup> will hold office for at least a year, in order to achieve efficiency in the fulfillment of this role.
- *Boundary between group and member interests:* The Group has a networking and learning role and does not seek to engage itself directly in project implementation; that is a responsibility of members themselves. Rather, core partners are encouraged to share the climate change related activities they are engaged in, and promote the group and its activities. In all communications and activities of the Working Group, it will be ensured that the identity of the members (logo, etc) is equally visible as the image of the Group as a whole.

## **Funding**

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<sup>1</sup> Current core partners are: Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC), the International Water Association (IWA), IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP)/WASH Secretariat, Tearfund, UNICEF, WaterAid and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), who hosts the working group.

<sup>2</sup> Currently, the secretary function is held by Stef Smits (IRC) for this start-up phase.

Members are expected to cover their own time and costs to attend meetings and co-fund meeting facilities. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) in its function of hosting the working group, makes available some core funds for the operation of the working group. While (core) members are expected to cover their own time and costs to attend meetings and co-fund meeting facilities, the funds of WSSCC can be used to facilitate the participation of members who have limited funds, and for specified working group activities and secretarial functions. Also, other members are expected to try to allocate dedicated funds towards this working group in their annual/long-term planning and communications with donors.

As the group does not seek to establish itself as legal entity, it cannot handle large amounts of funding. The small amounts of funding for certain secretariat activities or other mentioned costs, will be managed through the accounts of one of the individual members, and in joint agreement. That member will provide accountability over how those funds were spent.

### **Join the group**

We would welcome any other organizations who subscribe to the objective, focus and activities to join this initiative. You can join by contacting the interim secretary (see contact details below).

For more information about the working group, check <http://www.irc.nl/page/48191>, or contact the interim secretary at:

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