

Facts about IRC

IRC facilitates the creation, sharing, and use of knowledge so that sector staff and organisations can better support poor men, women and children in developing countries to obtain water and sanitation services they will use and can sustain. It does this by improving the information and knowledge base of the sector and by strengthening sector resource centres in the South.

As a gateway to quality information, IRC maintains a documentation unit and a web site with a weekly news service, and produces publications in print and electronically in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. It also offers training and experience-based learning activities, advisory and evaluation services, applied research and learning projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America; and conducts advocacy activities for the sector as a whole. Topics include school sanitation and hygiene education, community management, gender and equity, institutional development, and integrated water resources management.

IRC staff work as facilitators in helping people make their own decisions; are equal partners with sector professionals from the South; stimulate dialogue among all parties to create trust and promote change; and create a learning environment to develop better alternatives.

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IRC Advisory Services

- *Interested in assessing and strengthening your response to water, sanitation and hygiene needs?*
- *Need new concepts and methods that truly work?*
- *Seeking independent advice?*
- *Would like to learn together with the organisations you support?*

Is your programme all it could be?

You invest time, money and effort in your water supply, sanitation and hygiene programme/project. But are you sure that it really meets the needs of its users?

- Does it reach its full potential?
- Would you value an independent opinion?

IRC and partners can help!

We can help. IRC provides advisory services to local sector organisations and external support agencies including NGOs. Short-term missions can deliver technical support and critical help for agencies in developing, formulating, appraising and evaluating interventions. IRC also provides longer-term project support and back-up. This can be integrated with training of trainers and workshops.

Learning together - the IRC approach

Whenever possible, advisory missions are carried out together with local partners on a *participatory basis*. This helps to develop local capacity, generate new knowledge and identify areas for training and research. It also enables IRC staff to learn together with all those involved in the programme/project in order to improve sector performance.

IRC staff, together with partners, can cover a wide range of specialisations and are in *regular contact with the field*. More than 20 IRC staff members have the expertise to develop knowledge sharing and institutional development in response to your needs.

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Recent examples

- Multi- and bilateral donors, UN agencies and international development banks have all bought into IRC expertise. They use IRC advisory and training services to enhance the effective use of new knowledge and concepts or to assess water supply and sanitation programmes they support in developing countries. Recent advisory assignments include:
- **evaluation of UNICEF-supported water and sanitation programmes** in India, including various missions and desk advice, together with local partners
 - advice on a **knowledge management strategy** for the World Bank Water Anchor, 2004
 - support to **formulate a new Finnish Water Policy** for 2004, including a literature review, electronic conference and a multi-stakeholder workshop organised in the Netherlands
 - support for a **national learning workshop on scaling up**, organised by PLAN Ethiopia to discuss and plan strategies for scaling up

The benefits of involving IRC

Involving IRC and partners in your programmes and projects brings you real, noticeable improvements, including:

- access to global information and experience
- improved use of knowledge
- use of participatory methods
- independent advice
- new learning opportunities for all parties
- practical advice and realistic recommendations

Many programmes worldwide have benefited because IRC can demonstrate:

- a broad range of expertise and experience
- independence from commercial and other special interests
- strong partnership links with institutes in Africa, Asia and Latin America

IRC can help you to ensure that your programmes and projects achieve optimal impact from available resources.