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WASH
coalition building guidelines

An introductory guide for National Coordinators and coalition members

WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL

WASH WATER SANITATION HYGIENE

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Given their participation in the workshop, most of the examples in this guide come from Ethiopia, Madagascar and Nepal. However, examples from other countries were added after receiving inputs from WSSCC National Coordinators during the WSSCC planning meeting in Geneva in May 2008.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the guidelines 3
Preamble 3
Purpose 3
Structure of the guide 4
Checklist 4

1. The dynamics of coalition building 5
1.1 The onset: birth of the coalition 5
1.2 Defining the purpose of the coalition 6
1.3 Getting started 7
1.4 Maintaining momentum 8

2. Governance 10
2.1 Key ideas 10
2.2 Locating the coalition 11
2.3 Managing membership 13
2.4 Management and decision-making 15
2.5 Internal and external accountability 16
2.6 Resources 17
2.7 Branding 17
2.8 Conflict resolution 18
2.9 Measuring success 19
2.10 Exit 20

3 Frequently asked questions 21
3.1 Which coalitions are allowed to call themselves "WASH Coalitions"? 21
3.2 Are WASH Coalition members always WSSCC members? 21
3.3 How is the National Coordinator appointed and what is their role? 21
3.4 What rules govern the use of the WASH logo? 22
3.5 What support is available from WSSCC? 22
3.6 How should the coalition be financed? 23
3.7 Can the coalition work with non-conventional members? 23
3.8 How should the coalition deal with decentralisation? 24

BOXES

Box 1 Core values of WASH Coalitions 5
Box 2 Bangladesh: situational analysis to form a coalition 6
Box 3 Ethiopia: an example of a WASH Coalition 7
Box 4 Renewal in Ethiopia 8
Box 5 Madagascar AGMs 9
Box 6 Madagascar: Diorano-WASH charter 10

Box 7 Diorano-WASH organigram 11
Box 8 Institutional solutions: linking purpose and form 12
Box 9 Regional and district committees 13
Box 10 Working with government as a member of the WASH Coalition in Nepal 13
Box 11 Challenges to government participation: pragmatic responses . 14
Box 12 Representation in the WASH Coalition 14
Box 13 Madagascar: Diorano-WASH National Coordinator election 16
Box 14 Bangladesh: managing funds 17
Box 15 Madagascar: safe space reviews 19

FIGURES

Figure 1 Dynamic purposes of WASH Coalitions 6
Figure 2 Cyclical nature of WASH Coalitions: schematic representation of a typical process 8
Figure 3 Dimensions of accountability 16

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is an international membership organisation that has worked, since 1990, to achieve sustainable water supply and sanitation for all people, through enhancing collaboration among sector agencies and professionals.

As part of its activities within two of its programme areas – Networking & Knowledge Management, and Advocacy & Communications – WSSCC encourages the development of national water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Coalitions. The role of WASH Coalitions ranges from information sharing to the advocacy of specific policy changes, but they universally address a felt need for improved systematic communication, collaboration and joint action among the sector players in a certain country. As a vehicle for awareness raising and advocacy, most national WASH Coalitions have developed national WASH Campaigns. A special role is given to the National Coordinators, who are expected to maintain the links with the WSSCC Secretariat, exercise quality control and practise a degree of coordination and facilitation of the coalition.

However, coalitions, like partnerships, are complicated organisms and some of the existing WASH Coalitions have had only limited impact and varying degrees of success. This is partly due to the complexity of building a successful coalition that responds to the specific needs of the country in which it is created, and partly due to the undefined or open mandate of the WASH Coalitions, resulting in a lack of clarity about what they are intended to do.

PURPOSE

This guide provides a practical introduction to the concepts, ideas and literature surrounding the formation of active and effective WASH Coalitions, networks and partnerships. It seeks to support National WASH Coordinators to work within the complexity of coalition building noted above, to support the creation of a clearer mandate for each coalition, and to recognise and respond to the changing context in which each coalition finds itself. Towards these ends, this document provides a series of checks that National Coordinators and coalition members should consider in the formation, maintenance and growth of their WASH Coalitions.

The literature on building complex multiparty relationships is wide. The available resources provide a rich source of detail on the most effective strategies for forming, formalising, maintaining and monitoring such relationships. This document does not provide significant new material but rather provides a brief overview of the issues and directs the reader to a range of relevant additional resources.

The target reader is the National Coordinator and WASH Coalition members. The document is brief and focused and can be read in an hour. Sections have been designed so that they can be used as the basis for discussions at WASH meetings on various aspects of the coalition with the understanding that focusing on the coalition itself is as important in the long term as focusing on the issues the coalition seeks to address.

Throughout the paper, the authors wish to stress that coalitions are varied and dynamic; it is not possible to cover all aspects of WASH Coalition building in every country where coalitions exist. The reader is invited to use the materials as an aide-memoire – to stimulate discussion amongst coalition members and to take as a basis for further more detailed analysis at the local level.

STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The guide has three main parts:

1. The dynamics of coalition building, which describes the process of setting up and maintaining a coalition;
2. Governance, which considers the governance and management issues that need to be taken into account;
3. Frequently asked questions about WASH Coalitions.

CHECKLIST

The ensuing chapters of this guide will lead the reader through the issues of coalition building, will raise aspects for consideration on each of these issues and will discuss some tools and tips. While it is noted that coalition building is complicated and does not always follow a step-by-step process, the authors felt it useful to start with an overview of the "checks" that need to be dealt with most commonly in the process of establishing or strengthening a WASH Coalition.

While the checks are numbered for easy reference, the numbers do not necessarily correspond to a chronological timeline, as a coalition will probably move up and down between checks during its lifespan. Each check that is listed here is addressed in more detail in the main parts of the guide (see "Structure of the guide" above), so the same checks may be dealt with several times under different themes. The relevant checks will be listed at the start of each section, for easy reference.

Check 1:	**P. 5**	Identify founder members of the coalition
Check 2:	**P. 6**	Define the purpose of the coalition
Check 3:	**P. 7-13**	Identify potential members
Check 4:	**P. 10**	Develop a governance structure
Check 5:	**P. 7-11**	Determine who will host and coordinate the coalition
Check 6:	**P. 11**	Determine the shape and form of the coalition
Check 7:	**P. 11**	Determine the legal status of the coalition
Check 8:	**P. 13**	Note the position of members vis-à-vis their organisations
Check 9:	**P. 15**	Determine who does what: the management structure
Check 10:	**P. 16**	Ensure a system of accountability
Check 11:	**P. 17**	Identify resources for the coalition
Check 12:	**P. 17**	Decide on the branding of the coalition
Check 13:	**P. 18**	Prepare to deal with conflicts
Check 14:	**P. 19**	Monitor the progress, impact and quality of the coalition
Check 15:	**P. 6-8-13**	Periodically review the purpose and the need for renewal and adjustment
Check 16:	**P. 20**	Plan for the end

1. THE DYNAMICS OF COALITION BUILDING

1.1 THE ONSET: BIRTH OF THE COALITION

Check 1: Identify founder members of the coalition

WASH Coalitions generally form when a small group of people, one or some of them WSSCC members or partners, come together and decide there is a need for improved collaboration or concerted action in the water and sanitation sector in their country. This small group of people can be called the **founder members** of the coalition. Generally, at least some of these founder members occupy a sufficiently strategic position in the sector to be able to convince and bring on board other founder members. For example, this could be a senior position in one of the country's leading nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations or relevant government departments. Sometimes it is government who takes the lead in forming the coalition.

Triggers for the decision to set up a WASH Coalition – as opposed to another type of coalition – can be wide ranging, and may include external factors such as the experience of WASH Coalitions in surrounding countries, or the suggestion of the WSSCC Secretariat or a WSSCC member to explore the development of a national WASH Coalition. Box 1 discusses the core values of WASH Coalitions.

However, even when external factors influence the decision to establish a WASH Coalition, the actual decision to establish a coalition should be triggered by its intended purpose and perceived added value to the sector.

Box 1 Core values of WASH Coalitions

WSSCC encourages the establishment of national WASH Coalitions as part of its efforts to enhance collaboration in the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors, in order to achieve its mission of achieving sustainable water supply and sanitation for all people.

The term WASH not only refers to the words water, sanitation and hygiene, but also to the WSSCC WASH Campaign: a high-profile global advocacy campaign aimed at raising public and political awareness of the need for safe water supply and adequate sanitation and hygiene services.

At the centre of all WSSCC activities, including the WASH Campaign and the WASH Coalitions, lies Vision 21, a process and document that set out an ambitious plan to achieve global water supply and sanitation coverage by 2025. The essence of Vision 21 can be summarised in four points:

Building on people's energy and creativity at all levels
Requiring empowerment and building the capacity of people in households and communities to take action, and applying technologies that respond to actual needs.

Holistic approach
Acknowledging hygiene, sanitation and water as a human right, and relating it to human development, the elimination of poverty, environmental sustainability and the integrated management of water resources.

Committed and compassionate leadership and good governance
Changing long-accustomed roles, leading to new responsibilities of authorities and institutions to

support households and communities in the management of their hygiene, sanitation and water, and to be accountable to users as clients.

Synergy among all partners
Encouraging shared commitment among users, politicians and professionals, requiring professionals within the water and sanitation sector to combine technical expertise with an ability to work with users and politicians and with the sectors of health, education, environment, community development and food.

While WASH Coalitions can have various purposes and forms, all national WASH Coalitions are expected to recognise these points as lying at the heart of their core values.

1.2 DEFINING THE PURPOSE OF THE COALITION

Check 2: Define the purpose of the coalition

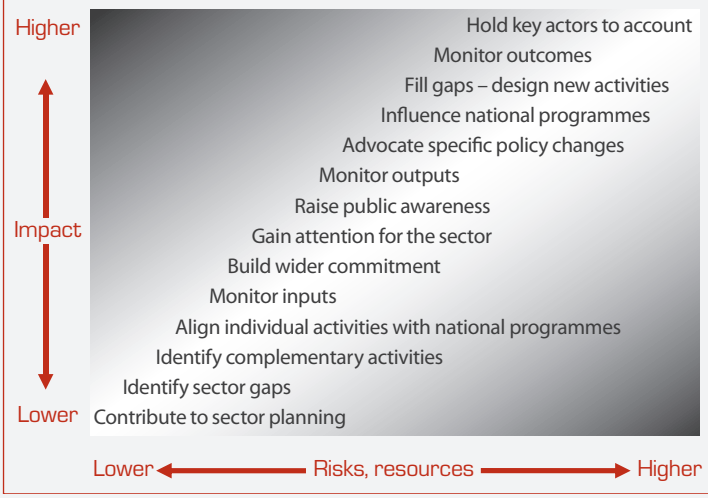
Check 15: Periodically review the purpose and the need for renewal and adjustment

WASH Coalitions may be formed for a variety of purposes. Whatever the purpose, it should be expected to develop and change over time – depending on both internal factors (the internal dynamics of the coalition and its ability to draw in key players) and external factors (the status of the sector). An assessment of sector needs can be a good starting point for the definition of a coalition's purpose (see Box 2).

Box 2 Bangladesh: situational analysis to form a coalition

In Bangladesh a small group of WSSCC members active in the water sector decided to carry out an analysis of the sector and its needs in order to determine the best way in which they could support sector development. The situational analysis resulted in a position paper, which was presented to other sector actors at the Local Consultative Group, a coordination mechanism hosted by government. The analysis proposed the formation of a WASH Coalition and this was endorsed by the sector as a whole, giving the Coalition some initial legitimacy and providing momentum during the establishment phase.

Figure 1 - Dynamic purposes of WASH Coalitions



The purpose may be straightforward or more ambitious. An example of the former might be building a coalition for the purpose of information exchange, to fill knowledge gaps and to facilitate participation in sector planning. These activities are relatively low risk; participation in such a forum carries neither high resource requirements nor imposes high levels of responsibility on the part of individuals to the work of the coalition.[1]

1. Relevant papers can be found on such more network types of arrangements at www.iisd.org/networks/. Of particular interest is Creech, H. *Form follows Function: Management and Governance of Knowledge Networks*, IISD, 2001 (available at www.iisd.org/publications/).

Box 3 Ethiopia: an example of a WASH Coalition

The WASH Ethiopia Movement is a part of the global WASH Campaign. Established in June 2004, it is a coalition of representatives from governmental, nongovernmental and faith-based organisations, United Nations agencies, the media and the private sector. Its aim is to promote improved behavioural and social change on water, sanitation and hygiene practices and gain the political and social commitment required to make a real difference. The coalition serves as a coordinating body for information sharing, dissemination of new ideas and lessons learning for the sector. It also acts as a coordinating body between the sector at national level and international events and activities, channelling information from international meetings to inform national activities. The coalition has strong support from relevant ministries in the government; it is a truly nationwide movement and focuses on a single theme each year.

At a more ambitious level, a coalition may be formed with the purpose of carrying out joint advocacy on controversial or challenging topics, influencing national programmes and investments, filling implementation gaps or acting as a watchdog for the sector (see for example Box 3). In this case the responsibilities of members of the coalition towards each other will be significantly higher, with correspondingly higher resource requirements and risks. In coalitions that tackle such challenges tensions may often be high and more attention is needed to the maintenance and management of the coalition. Figure 1 shows the range of purposes, with increasing risks and resource inputs associated with higher levels of impact.

Since neither the internal dynamics of a coalition nor the status of the WASH sector is likely to remain static, most coalitions will move up and down the range of purposes over time. It is crucial, whatever the situation, to maintain collective agreement within the coalition as to its purpose, so as to ensure that mutual expectations of resources and responsibilities can be clearly stated.

1.3 GETTING STARTED

Check 3: Identify potential members

Check 5: Determine who will host and coordinate the coalition

WASH Tip:

In the early stages, membership may be small and confined to members who are already in agreement on the need for the coalition to form. Efforts to broaden membership can then be made from a firm starting point.

In many countries, a key person in these early stages of a coalition is the National Coordinator. It can be that the National Coordinator has already been appointed by WSSCC to spearhead the attempts to form a coalition; or it can be that the early members of the coalition appoint, from within their group, one particular focal point who will act as National Coordinator and may be appointed as such by WSSCC. The focal point or National Coordinator is important, because that person is expected to be the main catalyst of the coalition, to call together the early members for meetings and to invite possible new members.

WASH Tip:

Some key actors, notably those with convening power to attract others to the table, may be of significant benefit to the coalition and early efforts to attract them are justified.

In the early stages of a WASH Coalition membership is likely to be small and limited and efforts will focus on attracting new key members. It is sometimes an advantage to start with a small group of committed members, rather than inviting many members who have limited knowledge of the purpose of the coalition and who are therefore not yet fully committed. If the coalition is successful, participation and membership will become attractive to new members whose commitment will then be higher. Some key actors, notably those with **convening power** to attract others to the

table, may be of significant benefit to the coalition and early efforts to attract them are justified. Strategies to form a new coalition and bring members on board will depend on several factors, notably:

- whether coordinating bodies already exist and whether the WASH Coalition would be formed alongside these, or replace them;
- whether government is to be represented or not, which in turn may be determined by the sector situation and the purpose of the coalition.

1.4 MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

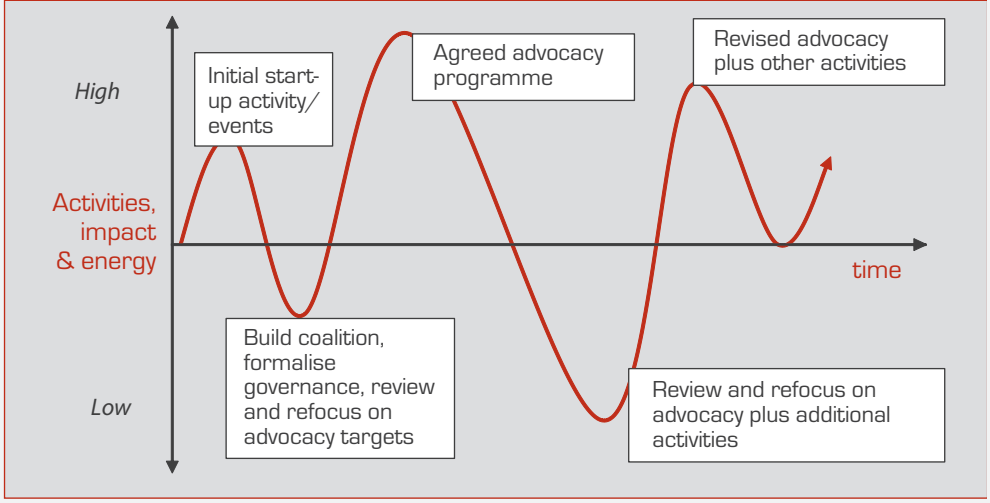
Check 15: Periodically review the purpose and the need for renewal and adjustment

WASH Tip:

To prevent the coalition from collapsing during periods of lower energy periodic renewal/ adjustment of the purpose will almost certainly be needed.

One of the challenges that National Coordinators and coalition members are likely to face is that processes of change can result in periods of tension or even conflict within the group. Some coalitions describe this as a cyclical process – a sort of wave pattern of energy and enthusiasm where cycles of clearly defined activity and joint action are interspersed with periods of relative inactivity and lower cohesion within the group (see Figure 2). Periods of lower energy may be caused by wider problems in the sector, changes in government, loss of a funding source, staff turnover in partner organisations or simply fatigue. To prevent the coalition collapsing due to these periods of lower energy, periodic renewal and adjustment of the coalition will almost certainly be needed (see Box 4 and Box 5).

Figure 2 - Cyclical nature of WASH Coalitions: schematic representation of a typical process



Box 4 Renewal in Ethiopia

The WASH Movement in Ethiopia was extremely active for several years from 2002 onwards. Members of the coalition identified a single advocacy focus in each year of its existence and collectively worked to disseminate key messages around that focus (examples include: "Your Health Is in Your Hands" in 2004/5, "Use Latrine for Your Health and Dignity" for 2005/6 and "Keep Water Safe" for 2006/7). Over time, however, the momentum declined somewhat, and as government began to roll out a new programme that built on the coalition's key messages, its role needed to be revisited. A key step was the organisation of a **revitalisation workshop** for the coalition. This workshop, held in September 2007, resulted in a reaffirmation of members' commitment, acceptance of a five-year strategy and some changes in current practices, such as the introduction of sector debate sessions in the coalition meetings and an adaptation of the meeting schedule.

Box 5 Madagascar AGMs

The WASH Movement in Madagascar holds an annual general meeting (AGM) each year where all participating actors are welcome to contribute to a debate on the progress, activities and arrangements of the coalition. Efforts are made to ensure that active participants from district level have an opportunity to contribute to the AGM either by direct participation or by holding preparatory meetings at the district level, from where delegates may transmit messages to the overall AGM process. These messages, after being debated in working groups and validated in the plenary, are translated into recommendations, specifying, for example, a new action or a new direction for the coalition. In the AGM held in February 2008, the Diorano-WASH regional committees recommended that they be represented at the Diorano-WASH National Steering Committee in order to make their voices heard at the higher levels of the coalition.

The fact that the AGM is held regularly gives members confidence in the process and reduces potential tensions within the coalition, as it provides a forum where concerns and new ideas can be regularly aired.

The "voices from the regions" session enables the coalition to raise or identify bottlenecks or other factors discouraging the progress of the coalition, which is the first step to revitalising the coalition when energy is low.

2. GOVERNANCE

2.1 KEY IDEAS

Check 4: Develop a governance structure

WASH Tip:

Discussion and agreement on key aspects of governance early on in the life of the coalition may help to avoid disputes and disappointments later.

Governance refers to the way in which the coalition is organised, how it makes decisions and manages its affairs, how it relates to the outside world and how accountability is maintained.

The governance arrangements for coalitions are likely to vary significantly and evolve over time as the purpose of the coalition changes. Governance arrangements do not need to be complex and some coalition members may not feel that there is a need to debate them. However, some discussion and agreement on key aspects of governance early on in the life of the coalition may help to avoid disputes and disappointments later. Importantly, the coalition needs to provide space for **regular reviews** of all aspects of the coalition to enable it to adapt and change as needed (see Box 6 for an example of such a review exercise).

For example, some coalitions may find it useful to prepare **simple documentation** that describes the various aspects of governance (Box 7). Coalition partners will need to have a clear understanding of the degree to which agreements set out in documents carry legal obligations and, if they do, whether these match the resources and interests of the participating organisations.[2] The process of preparing this type of simple documentation

Box 6 Madagascar: Diorano-WASH charter

Diorano-WASH (Madagascar, see Box 5) formulated a charter in 2006 to respond to a request from one of its regional committees. This regional committee needed some type of status to be validated by government in order to make contracts with donors and local government at local level. As Diorano-WASH remained a non-formal platform at the national level, this request could not be satisfied unless Diorano-WASH changed its jurisdictional status. The charter was the appropriate solution to enable Diorano-WASH regional committees to have rules of conduct and to have access to funds at the local level, while maintaining the status of a non-formal coalition that is recognised by government. The government approved the charter by decree in January 2008.

The Diorano-WASH charter aims to govern Diorano-WASH activities at all levels (communities, schools, public health centres, communes, regional and national). The charter determines the common commitments and principles of its members. It defines the scope of the Diorano-WASH initiative at all levels, and describes management structures, modalities, commitments and the rights of each member of Diorano-WASH.

The charter, which is signed by each member of Diorano-WASH, is a harmonisation and coordination tool for the coalition.

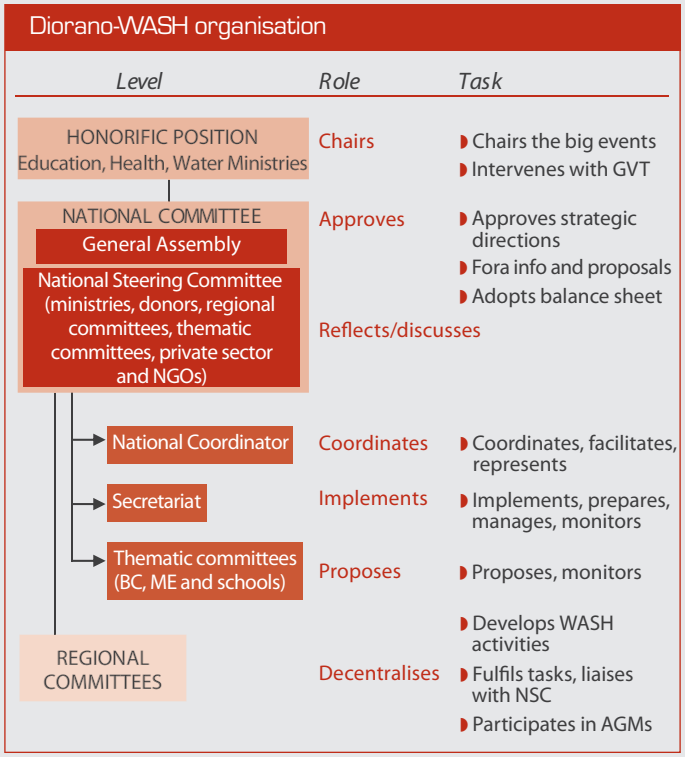
2. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see the relevant sections on formalising partnerships in: Evans B, McMahon J, Caplan K. *The Partnership Paperchase: structuring partnership agreements in water and sanitation in low-income communities*. London, Building Partnerships for Development, 2004 (available at www.bpdws.org).

may help coalition members to iron out any differences and establish the mechanisms for operating the coalition. In some cases the process may be more useful than the document itself.

Box 7 Diorano-WASH organigram

The Diorano-WASH Coalition formed a governance structure at the earliest stage of its development (2002). The main objective of its first members was to have a practical and realistic organisation able to manage and develop activities and achieve the Diorano-WASH vision. The purpose is to set up a space for all members to express views and get involved. This management structure encourages contributions from members and stimulates innovation.

Each level of the Diorano-WASH organisational hierarchy (see below) has clear and comprehensive terms of reference.



2.2 LOCATING THE COALITION

Check 5: Determine who will host and coordinate the coalition

Check 6: Determine the shape and form of the coalition

Check 7: Determine the legal status of the coalition

Aspects for consideration

WASH Tip:

There is not always a need for a new organisation/ WASH Coalition. Sometimes existing institutions can serve the purpose and could lead a National WASH Campaign.

Few WASH Coalitions form in an institutional vacuum. The decision about what form the coalition will take and who will host it is likely to be informed by its purpose (see section 1.2) but will also be dependent on several other factors, including:

- the institutional landscape of the sector;
- the existence of other coordinating bodies within or alongside the sector;
- the degree of government ownership of or participation in the coalition;
- available resources;
- potential membership.

In some cases there may be no reason to set up a separate WASH Coalition as one of the existing coordinating bodies could take up the role of the coalition and carry out some of the planned coalition activities (for example national WASH campaigning).

Hosting

The optimum approach to hosting will be determined in large part by the purpose for which the coalition is formed, the membership and local conditions. A popular option for hosting the coalition is to make use of the organisation of the National Coordinator. This has the advantage in the early stages of keeping a close linkage between the National Coordinator and the coalition as it begins to form.

Other options for locating the coalition include:

- hosting by government department;
- hosting by a lead support agency (NGO or donor), possibly revolving with the chair;
- establishment of a new entity, though this may have other legal ramifications.

Legal status

WASH Tip:

Because legalisation may have high transaction costs a good principle is to legalise or formalise only those things that cannot function effectively otherwise.

A key issue for consideration is whether the coalition itself needs to have legal status (which is likely if it is to handle funds in its own right, for example) or whether it relies on the legal status of the host, or if it is sufficient that individual members have appropriate legal status. The time and effort needed (usually referred to as the transactions costs) of formalising the coalition should be carefully considered. By formalising, the coalition is likely to lose some of its dynamism and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The costs of running a legal entity may also be prohibitive when considered alongside its purpose. This analysis would need to be carried out in each individual case and different countries are likely to come up with different solutions (see Box 8). Especially in the early stages of a coalition, it may be best not to seek formalisation and separate legal status.

Box 8 Institutional solutions: linking purpose and form

In **Nepal** the WASH Coalition exists alongside several existing coordination bodies, most of which are led by specific donors and hosted within certain ministries. In Nepal, therefore, the WASH Coalition specifically concentrates on creating a coordinating mechanism for other donors and civil society actors. While government is a participant, it is not the lead.

In **Madagascar**, by contrast, the WASH Coalition is the sector coordinating body and is strongly endorsed by government. Most sector programmes are debated and discussed by the coalition, which thereby provides collective leadership to the sector in support of the government's programme.

Decentralisation

A further consideration is the decentralisation of aspects of the WASH Coalition to appropriate levels of local government. The need for such decentralisation will be determined by the purpose of the coalition, the institutional landscape of the sector and wider issues of decentralisation in local government. Again there is no single best answer, and each coalition will have to consider this issue in the light of its own situation.

Decentralisation has been well addressed in several WASH Coalitions that have established structures that reach down to the appropriate local government level to ensure that the coordination function of the coalition is effective at the point of implementation (see Box 9).

Box 9 Regional and district committees

Ethiopia
Ethiopia is a highly decentralised country with nine autonomous regions and two administrative councils, each with a large population numbering in the millions. To be effective in Ethiopia, therefore, the WASH Movement has to have a presence at a regional level. This is achieved through establishing regional WASH Coalitions, with a structure that mirrors the arrangements at the national level. In each region where it works the Movement follows a similar model, with a wide panel of participating agencies, a steering committee and subcommittees as required. The coordination responsibilities are shouldered by the regional health bureaus in most cases. The regional Movement has a responsibility to make the promotion effective at the grass-roots level.

Madagascar
The two strategy visions of Diorano-WASH (June 2003 and 2008) and its charter planned the setting up of Diorano-WASH decentralised committees at all levels (fokontany, commune, region, and national) to ensure the scaling up of the national campaign. Diorano-WASH is decentralised in 11 out of 22 regions, and by early 2008 there were over twenty Diorano-WASH communal committees and roughly one hundred WASH-friendly schools.

A Diorano-WASH decentralised committee is made up of water, sanitation and hygiene actors and their partners in different areas. Each Diorano-WASH committee, according to the charter, is free to choose the management structure and organisational modalities that are most appropriate in the local context. The lead (coordinator or secretariat position) varies from place to place. All the Diorano-WASH decentralised committees have their own internal rules.

However, each decentralised committee has to align its goal, objectives and activities with the Diorano-WASH national strategy, and these should be governed by the Diorano-WASH charter.

Each Diorano-WASH decentralised committee has a mission to develop and carry out Diorano-WASH activities in its boundary zone, to report to the government and to represent its territory at the Diorano-WASH AGM.

2.3 MANAGING MEMBERSHIP

Check 3: Identify potential members

Check 8: Note the position of members vis-à-vis their organisations

Check 15: Periodically review the purpose and the need for renewal and adjustment

Aspects for consideration

The challenge for any coalition is to define membership in a way that is as **inclusive** as possible for all those who can contribute to the aims of the coalition. In general, WASH

Box 10 Working with government as a member of the WASH Coalition in Nepal

Working together with the government member has been a challenging experience for Nepal's WASH Coalition. The concerted effort of the Coalition contributed to a government department –the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage, whose representative was also part of the coalition– endorsing a pioneer programme to achieve total sanitation in Chitwan district by 2009 through a school-led total sanitation programme. This initiative has allowed Coalition members and non-members, including NGOs (national and international), United Nations bodies and the government, to work hand in hand to achieve the objectives and outputs set forth by the programme. This experience indicates that government recognition and involvement can significantly boost a coalition's sanitation promotion, implementation and awareness activities.

On the other hand, a government member may find it difficult to support activities that aim to garner political commitment and influence policy changes within government. For example, when the WASH Coalition aimed to send an appeal to the Minister of Finance and the vice-chair of the National Planning Commission for an increased and separate budget line for sanitation, the government member was unable to participate in the process.

Coalitions aim to be inclusive and **broad** and to send the message that participation is open to all. Particular consideration needs to be given to the possibility of government working within the coalition, and the impact that might have (see for example Boxes 10 and 11).

Box 11 Challenges to government participation: pragmatic responses

While government participation in WASH Coalitions can be important, it is also potentially challenging. Tensions may arise as government representatives attempt to balance their position as sector leaders and primary implementers and their need to work collaboratively with the wider community within the sector. Government is not monolithic and the participation of mid-level technical staff may have a different effect on the coalition compared with the participation of senior policy-makers and politicians.

In **Cambodia**, for example, a technical meeting is convened on a regular basis with mid-level government officials and agency and civil society staff, while every three months a policy guidance meeting is attended by more senior government decision-makers.

In **Myanmar** the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Health initially established regular meetings that were attended by civil society and donors but not officially by the government. When UNICEF attempted to formalise the group the government declared it to be illegal and it subsequently collapsed. The WASH Coalition now functions much more informally but is nonetheless highly effective due to the leadership of the National Coordinator, who is himself a government official.

In **Nigeria** a number of ministries are members of the WASH Coalition, but it was notable that, in the run up to the International Year of Sanitation (2008), some ministries were not represented, as individuals had not been able to obtain permission from their ministries to attend the meetings.

Clarity is needed as to whether participants in the coalition act as individuals or as representatives of their institutions. In the latter case, the literature is extensive on the question of how the individual at the table relates *inwards* to the coalition and *outwards* to the institution.[3] Other coalition members need to be constantly aware of how the dynamics within each "member" institution may impact on the ability of the individual at the table to act and to speak on behalf of the organisation. Sometimes this issue needs to be specifically addressed in the governance structures of the coalition (see Box 12). The issue of membership (individual versus organisational) is complex and should be debated carefully. If organisations are the members they need to be fully subscribed, and their boards or directors need to be fully aware of what they are signing up to.

Box 12 Representation in the WASH Coalition

One of the conditions of membership of the WASH Ethiopia Movement is that the directors and decision-makers of organisations represented in the coalition should maintain active participation in the coalition. Each member organisation is requested to appoint a liaison person as its delegate to the WASH Movement and to make clear what mandate for decision-making this delegate would have.

In **India** the WASH Forum specifically invites people to participate in their individual capacities, thus avoiding the bureaucratic burdens of official institutional engagement. By contrast with the WASH Forum, the Water and Environmental Sanitation Network (WES-Net), an organisational network in India, has experienced problems because individuals have not taken ownership of the process.

In **Madagascar**, the high level of trust that exists between members of the WASH Coalition has enabled it to cope with the tensions between organisational and personal participation and to accommodate the conflicts of interest faced by government participants.

3. See, for example: Newborne P, Caplan K. *Creating space for innovation: understanding enablers for multi-sector partnerships in the water and sanitation sector*. London, Building Partnerships for Development, 2006 (available at www.bpdws.org).

Tools

Low-risk, quick-win benefits in the early stages can encourage organisations and individuals to join and support the coalition. Such benefits might include:

WASH Tip:

To be effective WASH Coalitions should aim to be inclusive and broad – participation should be open to all.

- easy access to official information
- opportunities for resource pooling
- publicity opportunities
- access to high-level decision-makers.

Periodic membership reviews can be built into the regular business of the coalition to provide all members with the opportunity to review their own and others' membership. This can be coupled with a periodic **review of the purpose of the coalition,** as membership is likely to change (officially or unofficially) as the purpose and context of the coalition changes. Having clear processes laid down for *leaving* the coalition may encourage members to join in the first place.

Where the coalition has an *influencing* agenda, **tiered membership** may be useful – a core membership can focus on the preparation and delivery of key messages or activities, while the wider membership is invited to participate in events at which key messages are debated and delivered and can be asked to help disseminate these messages.

2.4 MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

Check 9: Determine who does what: the management structure

Aspects for consideration

Two broad aspects of management have to be considered:

- the day-to-day tasks of organising meetings, developing and agreeing on agendas, and otherwise servicing the coalition;
- the more substantive leadership issues, including defining and delivering agreed tasks, monitoring the performance of the coalition, overseeing change and resolving conflicts.

Coalitions are commonly stronger in one of these areas than the other, but both are important. Since the work of the coalition may be additional to the ordinary responsibilities of the individual members, it is important to ensure that responsibilities for management tasks are both clearly defined and properly resourced and that all contributions are acknowledged. It is important to build up mutual commitment to coalition leadership and other management processes. Sharing or revolving roles may help to build up ownership but this has to be weighed against the advantages of building up long-term commitment and an institutional memory. Different strategies may be needed at different times in the life of the coalition.

Tools

Various tools can be used to build up the necessary commitments to leadership and management. These include:

- revolving chairs;
- appointment or election amongst members to identify the National WASH Coalition Coordinator (Box 13);
- clear acknowledgement of all contributions, monetary and non-monetary, to the proper functioning of the coalition;

- appointment of jointly funded support staff or a secretariat to support the work of the coalition;
- use of a jointly funded office or similar to house the secretariat of the coalition;
- working jointly with other similar coordinating bodies (such as the Global Water Partnership) to share the costs of coordination.

Box 13 Madagascar: Diorano-WASH National Coordinator election

The Diorano-WASH National Coordinator is elected democratically during the AGM for a two-year term, as stipulated in the Diorano-WASH charter. The name of the elected person is then passed to WSSCC for its approval. The Diorano-WASH National Coordinator represents both the coalition and WSSCC at national level.

2.5 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Check 10: Ensure a system of accountability

Aspects for consideration

Figure 3 - Dimensions of accountability

	Being held to account (compliance)	Giving an account (transparency)	Taking account (responsiveness)
Within the coalition	Members keep detailed records and are willing for other members to scrutinise relevant information	Members report on their financial, staff and other resource deployment to each other Members report on their individual actions to the coalition	Members respond to changing circumstances within the coalition and adjust their roles and responsibilities
Outside the coalition	The coalition keeps consolidated information on the financial, staff and other resources used and outcomes	The coalition provides consolidated reports periodically to donors and stakeholders External audit for earmarked funds	The coalition has mechanisms that enable it to adjust to external changes

Accountability issues affect coalitions both internally and externally. Figure 3 describes some of the dimensions of accountability that coalitions may need to consider. These include compliance with regulations related to reporting on inputs (finances, staff and other resources) and outcomes; transparency of operation during such processes; and responsiveness to changing circumstances.

Within a coalition, the key issue related to accountability is the degree to which:

- individual members are willing, able and expected to report to each other on individual actions and contributions;
- the coalition as a whole is willing and able to report its consolidated actions and contributions to the outside world.

This is not a trivial question. Every organisation at the table will have numerous reporting responsibilities that are external to the coalition, and detailed reporting might also entail revealing confidential information (such as pay scales, for example). The challenge for coalition members is to establish, for each dimension of accountability described in Figure 3, a minimum set of reporting responsibilities that are functional, add value and do not entail unnecessary internal costs (though potentially quite different in terms of levels of resource commitments, literature on partnership accountability might be helpful).[4]

4. See for example Caplan, K. *Partnership Accountability: Unpacking the Concept.* London: Building Partnerships for Development, June 2005 (available at www.bpdws.org) and *The PGA Framework: promoting best practice in the management of partnerships for sustainable development* produced by AccountAbility and available at www.pgaframework.org/index.asp.

Tools

Accountability depends on **good reporting** and the maintenance of **open communication** between different actors who may hold differing stakes in the coalition. Communicating both between coalition members and to the outside world will significantly improve accountability and reduce misunderstandings. The process of designing any memoranda of understanding or other paperwork associated with the coalition may help to stimulate useful discussion and consensus around accountability.

2.6 RESOURCES

Check 11: Identify resources for the coalition

Aspects for consideration

WASH Tip:

Resources of all kinds must be accounted for and valued to avoid misunderstandings. This includes money but also convening power, logistical support, technical expertise and time.

WASH Coalitions have a wide range of resources, including people, skills, contacts, experience and funding. Contributions to the work of the coalition are made in various forms and **appropriate and rigorous accounting** of all contributions is important. Coalitions are encouraged to conduct resource mapping exercises that link institutions and individuals to activities aimed at specific issues. Such maps should carefully incorporate contributions of all kinds, including convening power, logistical support, technical expertise and funding.

Early in the life of the coalition it is advisable to have a frank and open discussion about the potential for members' organisations to make financial contributions to the coalition. The activities of the coalition will only be implemented if appropriate levels of financing are available; the negotiation of financial contributions and activities should be carried out in tandem.

There are various options for managing financial contributions. These can be handled in a new dedicated bank account with joint signatories, or can be handled on behalf of the coalition by one of the members (see Box 14).

Box 14 Bangladesh: managing funds

In **Bangladesh** individual members raise funds for activities they have agreed to carry out but there is no central fund. There is however a WSSCC bank account, managed by the NGO of the National Coordinator, into which WSSCC funds are remitted from Geneva for specific projects.

2.7 BRANDING

Check 12: Decide on the branding of the coalition

Aspects for consideration

A challenge for organisations and individuals working in a coalition is to distinguish **which activities should be identified with the coalition and which with the individual member organisations**. While there are no hard and fast rules about how the work of the coalition should be "branded" and identified, having a clear policy may help to avoid any misunderstandings later. The need for and nature of branding will be determined

WASH Tip:

While there are no hard and fast rules about how the work of the coalition should be "branded" and identified, having a clear policy may help to avoid any misunderstanding later.

in large part by the purpose of the coalition. The need for a collective brand may become greater as the aims of a coalition become more ambitious (Figure 1). Once a brand is established, mechanisms may be needed to safeguard the brand. For example, the coalition will clearly wish to establish some general policies on the use of the selected name, logo and other identifying elements of the brand.

Sometimes a low profile can be more effective and this might dictate that the branding of the coalition be similarly low profile. Some coalitions have limited visibility but operate very effectively in the background.

The WSSCC Secretariat encourages the WASH Coalitions to make use of the WASH brand and logo that have been developed by WSSCC. This brand and logo are now widely recognised as representing the WASH Campaign, and WASH Coalitions may benefit from being linked to this global campaign. However, in some cases, WASH Coalitions may prefer to develop a separate logo to emphasise the national identity of the coalition.

2.8 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Check 13: Prepare to deal with conflicts

Aspects for consideration

Conflicts or disputes in coalitions may arise due to **serious disagreements** (over, for example, the purpose and activities of the group or in relation to control of resources); but are equally likely, if not more likely, to arise due to misunderstandings and **lack of clarity**.

WASH Tip:

Coalitions will benefit from a culture of regular review that creates space for discussion and helps to minimise the build-up of tension. A good arbitration process can be agreed up front before conflicts arise – hopefully it will never be needed!

One potential cause of stress in a coalition is the **conflicting demands placed on the individuals** who sit round the table by the coalition on the one hand and the individual's parent organisation on the other hand. This can be a particular problem when the interests of the coalition are not well aligned with the interests of the organisation, or where the individual's position within the organisation is weak for some reason. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that the roles of individuals working in the coalition, and their relationship to their parent organisations (including the degree of *institutional ownership* of the work of the coalition by that parent body), are well understood. Mutual respect for the constraints under which individuals may be working is essential. Where necessary, the coalition should be prepared to invite a wider participation in key meetings and events from the participating parent bodies.

Tools

The two most effective tools to deal with conflict are **regular opportunities to review the work and functioning of the coalition** and the **formalising or recording of key agreements**. The review and recording of the work of the coalition does not need to be elaborate, but needs to be done in sufficient detail to ensure there is clarity about what has been agreed.

Notwithstanding the above, some coalitions may consider defining a process of **arbitration** or conflict resolution – for example, members could identify a respected local

figure or local organisation who would be willing to assist the coalition in cases of conflict through mediation or by taking the chair on a temporary basis.

2.9 MEASURING SUCCESS

Check 14: Monitor the progress, impact and quality of the coalition

Aspects for consideration

There are two aspects of the coalition that are important to measure; the **outputs** and the **internal quality of the relationships**. In both cases success (or failure) has to be assessed against the dynamics of a changing external environment. Measuring and celebrating success, and recognising and learning from failure, are important both to assist with shifts in direction and future planning, and as a means of acknowledging, and enhancing, the contributions made to the work of the coalition.

Monitoring exercises may go on **continuously** or take place on a **one-off** basis. The optimum approach will depend on what aspects of the coalition are under consideration and on the availability of resources. Good monitoring, particularly of intangible activities such as advocacy, can be challenging and expensive. It is critical that monitoring is appropriately funded. The development at an early stage of **good indicators for both outputs and internal processes** may help enormously in ensuring that any monitoring exercise is credible and meaningful.[5]

Tools

As mentioned in the previous subsection, monitoring is probably most usefully embedded in a regular process of review, so that the outcomes of monitoring feed directly into strategic or detailed planning of activities. This regular process will also ensure that monitoring is carried out – otherwise it may be too easily deferred. Several WASH Coalitions have developed interesting approaches to measuring success, including the constitution of safe space reviews (see Box 15) and the use of a third party or subgroup to carry out measurement exercises.

Box 15 Madagascar: safe space reviews

One aspect of the Madagascar Diorano-WASH Coalition that merits consideration is the constitution of "safe space reviews", which provide an opportunity for coalition members to discuss either activities they are carrying out themselves or activities being carried out jointly by some members of the coalition. The safe space means that advice and ideas can be contributed by all the participants in a constructive atmosphere, with no pressure to over-report on performance and outcomes. As well as contributing to the quality of the work being undertaken, the reviews can also contribute to team building between coalition members and a sense of shared responsibility.

The Diorano-WASH participatory approach also includes a "voices from the regions" session that allows members from regions and communes to freely express their points of view and concerns, using anonymous VIPP (visualisation in participatory programmes) cards where necessary.

5. For further guidance on ways to assess processes as opposed to outputs, please see *Assessing partnership performance: understanding the drivers for success*, available on the Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation website (www.bpdwaterandsanitation.org/web/w/www_154_en.aspx).

2.10 EXIT

Check 16: Plan for the end

Aspects for consideration

WASH Tip:

Procedures and indeed a "culture of exit" are more likely to be successful if they are embedded in the coalition from the start.

Clearly the work of a WASH Coalition may be continuously changing and adapting, and at certain times either individual members may wish or need to leave or the coalition as a whole might usefully close down. This might happen for example in a situation where strong government leadership provides an even better forum for policy development, or where government creates more permanent structures for carrying out watchdog functions. In such cases the coalition may adapt or may choose to wind down its activities.

However, it is not easy for a collaborative idea such as a coalition to exert pressure on members to leave (when, for example, their contributions are no longer useful) or to voluntarily put itself out of business. Procedures, and indeed a culture of exit, are more likely to be successful if they are embedded in the coalition at the start. Ironically, talking about exit is often a good entry into discussion about overall governance issues as well as generating a clear and mutual understanding of what would constitute success for the coalition.

3. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

3.1 WHICH COALITIONS ARE ALLOWED TO CALL THEMSELVES "WASH COALITIONS"?

Only those coalitions that are endorsed by WSSCC are allowed to call themselves WASH Coalitions.

WSSCC is governed by core principles based on the Vision 21 document and will only endorse those coalitions whose work is aligned with these principles. It is expected that WASH Coalitions have the following characteristics:

- aim ultimately to serve poor people;
- put people at the centre;
- enhance collaboration among sector agencies;
- adopt a gendered approach;
- have scaling-up potential for outreach and impact;
- aim to be at the forefront of knowledge, debate and influence;
- concentrate particularly on sanitation and hygiene;[6]
- have clear outcome and follow-up strategy based on measurable indicators.

3.2 ARE WASH COALITION MEMBERS ALWAYS WSSCC MEMBERS?

When a WASH Coalition is established, it is often the case that some or most of the members are not already WSSCC members. However, by joining the coalition it is understood that they automatically become members of WSSCC. This membership **does** need to be formalised by registering on the WSSCC website or by completing the special WSSCC membership postcards. This will ensure that all members are included in the central WSSCC membership database.

3.3 HOW IS THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR APPOINTED AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?

The WSSCC National Coordinator is appointed by the WSSCC Executive Director after consultation with the national WASH Coalition or, where no WASH Coalition is in place yet, through consultation with national WSSCC members and upon receiving references from trusted partners. The national WASH Coalition may choose to select its proposed National Coordinator through various processes, such as selection by consensus or election.

6. Depending on the context, and not to the exclusion of water supply or water quality issues.

The WSSCC Executive Director appoints a National Coordinator for an initial period of three years. After this, extension is possible upon the agreement of the WASH Coalition and the Executive Director. A WASH Coalition may opt to review the position of National Coordinator more often, for example every two years, but this should be discussed and agreed with the WSSCC Secretariat.

National WASH Coalitions may decide to appoint a WASH Coalition coordinator who is not the same person as the WSSCC National Coordinator. However, the WSSCC Secretariat discourages this as it may cause confusion.

National Coordinators are held to account by the WSSCC Secretariat on the basis of a general terms of reference, which includes the following roles:

1. to develop and implement an annual national programme of action;
2. to act as the focal point for coordination of a WASH country coalition to support the goals of WSSCC;
3. to contribute to regional and interregional activities;
4. to identify and mobilise national-level resources to complement WSSCC's core funding;
5. to report to the Secretariat on a regular basis.

Under point 2, National Coordinators will also be expected to enrol new members and spread the message of WSSCC as widely as possible.

WASH Coalitions may opt to include in their governance document a more detailed overview of roles and responsibilities of the National Coordinator, wider than the roles described in the general terms of reference above. In some cases the WASH Coalition might opt to appoint different persons within the Coalition to take different roles. For instance, the WSSCC National Coordinator may be appointed as chair of the Coalition, while another person or entity is appointed as secretariat to the Coalition. In principle the WSSCC Secretariat does not have any objections to such arrangements, as long as they are properly discussed between the Secretariat and the WASH Coalition.

3.4 WHAT RULES GOVERN THE USE OF THE WASH LOGO?

The WASH logo can be freely downloaded from the WSSCC website and can be used by WASH Coalitions and their members. The rules governing its use are displayed on the website. **The logo cannot be used in any way that promotes any product that is commercial in nature.**

3.5 WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM WSSCC?

The WSSCC Secretariat is strongly committed to the WASH Coalitions in the frontline of operations, and aims to support WASH Coalitions in various ways:

- provide guidance to WASH Coalitions (through National Coordinators) on resources and activities (for example from thematic groups, from Council members) to support the development and implementation of annual programmes of action;
- identify and where appropriate develop resource materials to support the work of WASH Coalitions (guidelines, tools, etc.);
- where resources and circumstances allow, provide seed funding for approved programmes of action;
- set criteria and procedures for special projects and catalytic funding decisions, and inform relevant National Coordinators (for instance regarding the Global Sanitation Fund);
- coordinate the Council's involvement in international activities and milestone events

and invite WASH Coalitions to share their experiences (for example Global WASH Campaign, United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development, World Water Forums);
- facilitate exchange of knowledge and information between national WASH Coalitions and thematic groups, and facilitate South-South collaboration;
- organise an annual meeting for National Coordinators for exchange, capacity development, planning and strategy development.

The WSSCC Secretariat makes available catalytic seed funding to those WASH Coalitions recognised under section 3.1 above. This support entails limited funds that are awarded to a WASH Coalition based on the approval of a proposal submitted by the National Coordinator. Proposals can be submitted annually upon a call for proposals announced by the WSSCC Secretariat, and in line with some general guidance set out by the WSSCC Secretariat. Types of activities that are eligible for funding include WASH advocacy (including work with the media), awareness raising and hygiene and sanitation promotion, partnership building, monitoring progress and impact, and policy development.

3.6 HOW SHOULD THE COALITION BE FINANCED?

The work of WASH Coalitions should generally be funded by contributions from the member organisations. In general individual membership fees have proved unpopular and difficult to administer. Many WASH Coalitions do not maintain a dedicated pooled bank account but members make contributions to pre-agreed activities from their own funds in the name of the coalition.

Small amounts of funding are available from the WSSCC Secretariat for certain specific activities (see 3.5).

Other sources of funding should be explored, including national and international programmes dealing with urban and rural development, the environment, community empowerment, rights and democracy.

3.7 CAN THE COALITION WORK WITH NON-CONVENTIONAL MEMBERS?

WASH Coalitions can work with and include any individuals or organisations that are willing and able to contribute to their work. While many WASH Coalitions have tended historically to have a focus on civil society and the nongovernmental sector, others have included government, the private sector (large and small), bilateral donors, multilateral donors, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international agencies. Sometimes the work of the coalition could be enhanced if new members can be attracted in. Some larger players may have strong convening power and may be willing to bring that to the coalition, even if only for a short time. The participation of major donors such as the World Bank may enhance the ability of the coalition to get the attention of senior government policy-makers.

The key to working successfully with new types of members is to try and develop some mutual understanding of and respect for each other's internal modes of working, constraints and interests. Coalitions work best when the interests of members are closely aligned with the interests of the coalition.

WSSCC encourages the presence of media partners in WASH Coalitions, as they can make a valuable contribution to awareness raising and advocacy, two groups of activities that form the core business of many WASH Coalitions. When working with media partners, it is important not only to see them as recipients and disseminators of the

coalition's information and messages, but also to include them in the earlier stages of strategy development and planning. Once media partners are committed to contributing to publicising the WASH issues, their vast experience in communications and information dissemination can be a very valuable resource for the WASH Coalition.

3.8 HOW SHOULD THE COALITION DEAL WITH DECENTRALISATION?

There is no single answer to this question. Where adequate resources exist, the coalition can reach downwards and outwards by forming tiered coalitions at appropriate levels (aligned for example with local government bodies, in schools or within the finance ministry). The key to success is to recall the processes that were needed to develop the national coalition and allow those to be repeated locally. A strong set of internal relationships based on gradual development of the coalition is more important than rapid action.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Specific web-links relevant for coalition building and related governance issues:

- **Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation** – BPD has produced a range of relevant documents that could assist in the design and maintenance of WASH Coalitions. Although geared more generally towards implementation partnerships, the analysis and tools provided are easily applied to coalitions. See www.bpdws.org for documents on partnership agreements, assessing the enabling environment, partnership governance and assessing partnership effectiveness. Also available on BPD's website, the Policy Principles and Implementation Guidelines on public private partnerships (available at www.bpdws.org/web/w/www_133_en.aspx) provide a wealth of solid guidance that would be useful in framing activities and interventions of WASH Coalitions. BPD's website provides a range of links to other websites and documents that will be of interest to WASH Coalition coordinators and members.

- **The Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability** – AccountAbility has developed the Partnership Governance and Accountability (PGA) Framework, an interactive tool designed to assist practitioners in ensuring that the governance elements of collaborative efforts are appropriately designed. See www.pgaframework.org/index.asp for further information.

- **InterMediation** – InterMediation, recently formed, provides guidance on issues relating to conflict resolution and conflict transformation, alliance building and other aspects of collaborative working.
  See www.inter-mediation.org.

- **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** – Given the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of collaborative efforts, IDRC has developed Outcome Mapping, an innovative way of reviewing how the outcomes of coalition activities and processes have influenced the practices and activities of different stakeholders. For a quick overview of Outcome Mapping, see www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/10945665201om_pamplet_final.ppt or search through IDRC's document library on www.idrc.ca.

- **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)** – Focusing perhaps more at the network end of the collaborative spectrum, IISD has produced a range of documents aimed at ensuring that networks are designed for purpose.
  See www.iisd.org/networks for further information.

- **IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre** – See the IRC website (www.irc.nl) for information on the formation and maintenance of Learning Alliances (as well as a range of topics specific to water and sanitation).

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is an international membership organisation that has worked, since 1990, to achieve sustainable water supply and sanitation for all people, through enhancing collaboration among sector agencies and professionals.

As part of its activities within two of its programme areas – Networking & Knowledge Management, and Advocacy & Communications – WSSCC encourages the development of national water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Coalitions. The role of WASH Coalitions ranges from information sharing to the advocacy of specific policy changes, but they universally address a felt need for improved systematic communication, collaboration and joint action among the sector players in a certain country.

However, coalitions, like partnerships, are complicated organisms.

This guide provides a practical introduction to the concepts, ideas and literature surrounding the formation of active and effective WASH Coalitions, networks and partnerships. It seeks to support National WASH Coordinators to work within the complexity of coalition building, to support the creation of a clearer mandate for each coalition, and to recognise and respond to the changing context in which each coalition finds itself. Towards these ends, the guide provides a series of checks that National Coordinators and coalition members should consider in the formation, maintenance and growth of their WASH Coalitions.

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