



Global Water and Sanitation Initiative (GWSI)

A ten year initiative 2005-2015

A Mid Term Review

August 2011

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 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Acronyms

CBHFA	Community Based Health and First Aid
CHF	Swiss Francs
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
EU	European Union
EUWF	EU Water Facility
GWSI	Global Water & Sanitation Initiative
HBC	Home based care
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NS(s)	National Society(ies)
PHAST	Participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation
PSSR	Programme and Services Support Recovery
RC	Red Cross / Red Crescent
UN	United Nations
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development

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Executive summary

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and its member National Societies (NSs) have been involved in water programming for many years, though are perhaps best known for the emergency interventions done after a disaster. However, a survey carried out in 2004 looking into the developmental aspect of WatSan delivery by the Red Cross and Red Crescent indicated a significant number of these activities were also being undertaken by up to 60 NSs in 42 countries.

The IFRC developed and launched the Global Water and Sanitation Initiative (GWSI) as a common approach by National Societies to establish larger-scale, longer-term sustainable water and sanitation programmes, which in turn contribute more effectively to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The GWSI, in combination with the MDG initiative and the second UN Decade for Water (2005-2015), was intended to generate more available resources for Red Cross & Red Crescent water and sanitation projects. A number of ambitious targets were set via which to show the consolidated contribution by the Red Cross Movement towards the MDGs. These initial targets – initially five million more beneficiaries to be reached with developmental water and sanitation interventions, and raising the additional funds to pay for these inputs – have already been met and extended, and the Initiative is on course to continue its delivery in the coming five years.

GWSI

Global Water & Sanitation Initiative

Contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by scaling-up existing capacities

The GWSI was developed in late 2004 to address chronic water and sanitation issues. It was designed to run for ten years from 2005-2015, and aimed to provide additional competencies and resources to the RC National Societies for planning and implementing this work. A number of criteria were drawn up as guidance, with the intention being to work with larger communities in more homogenous geographic areas than previously, to benefit from economies of scale thus ensuring better value for money, and via the direct engagement with the communities themselves to try and ensure sustainability and impact for the interventions.

This review has been undertaken at the mid-point of the ten year period of the Initiative with the aim of determining what has worked well and where lessons can be learned from the past, to inform and guide the programmes in the coming period. A number of staff of the IFRC as well as from a range of

National Societies were interviewed, either in person, by phone or via email, and this report has brought together their feedback and comments. Some points for further discussion are presented and eight recommendations to consider for the second half of the implementation period are given.

Main findings

In meeting – indeed surpassing – its initial targets, the GWSI has made a significant contribution towards the attainment of several of the MDGs, specifically Goal 7c, even at the halfway point of the ten-year programme. This has been done via a combination of factors: a close alignment with the developmental thinking of the wider WatSan community, increased availability of funding, a more unified approach between the various Red Cross and Red Crescent partners, more clarity of the vision, and increasingly some good results to demonstrate the past work.

The criteria for ‘inclusion’ in the GWSI listing includes working with larger communities, and in this sense are ideal for areas of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, in countries that face a greater challenge to meet the MDGs. However, strict adherence to the criteria also helps to exclude other communities that could benefit from many of the other considerations and guidelines, and some flexibility has been shown in terms of encouraging the use of the material in these other places. To date 161 projects have been identified as ‘GWSI compliant’, half in Africa and most of the remainder in Asia.

Considering the number of National Societies involved in developmental water and sanitation work, it was interesting during the Review to hear from many of them that the GWSI is not central to their planning and implementation – there were those who actively used it and those who knew limited amounts (or nothing) about it. It is felt that a wider dissemination of the benefits and the materials of the GWSI is necessary, both to support the NSs with the guidance and toolkits, but also ensure quality and to build a comprehensive and accurate picture of the extensive work the Red Cross and Red Crescent is doing.

Sanitation in much of the developing work remains a significant challenge and this MDG is most likely to be missed. It is felt that the RC/RC, like most other partners, have focused significantly more on the provision of safe water over the benefits of good sanitation – facilities and practices – and it is only latterly that this is changing. It is suggested that it still needs to change even more, and an increased priority needs to be given to the sanitation inputs in all programme design. This will include advocating with donors and Governments about the importance of this area.

Accurate reporting on beneficiary numbers and other details of the range of programmes has been challenging, and without this being strengthened the true impact of the overall RC intervention will be lost. This will require both a clearer reporting mechanism (eg: on how to accurately and consistently count the number of beneficiaries), but also on the willingness of the various RC partners to provide information. Some partners saw this as ‘oversight’ by the Federation, whereas it is meant to show the considerable contribution the RC Movement together is making towards the MDGs.

The Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies implement a wide range of health and community programmes, and it is felt that the GWSI activities could be more closely linked with some of the other health initiatives underway. This

would ensure a coherence of messages and avoid unnecessary duplication of inputs, especially as NS volunteers do much of the community health work. This would also ensure that the wider thinking on disaster risk reduction and community resilience are appropriately aligned with all the various programme interventions.

Many of the projects, large and small, are being undertaken by various RC partners with limited opportunity to share programme experiences and to get peer support. As the experience grows over time, a mechanism needs to be developed to allow these lessons to be shared more widely.

Main recommendations

It is vital that the area of sanitation is prioritised, not least as the related MDG for sanitation looks likely to be missed. This will require better and more focussed planning, better advocacy with donors and implementing partners and Governments, and an even greater focus on the 'software' aspects of health promotion and community management methodology to ensure the full engagement of the communities prior to the delivery of any hardware.

It is suggested that a broader communications strategy – including how to proactively broadcast the messages – should be developed, stressing that access to water and sanitation is a human right and an issue of dignity, and that the RC/RC is both experienced and committed to deliver such programming. This should help raise the profile of the RC in developmental WatSan but also increase awareness of the challenges, and in turn potential funding opportunities.

To capitalize on the work done and to show a true coordinated approach, all partners should increase their focus on the quality and scale of the programming, implying an improvement in the timeliness and quality of the reporting to show a joined-up approach to addressing the Millennium Development Goals. Better water and sanitation within communities are crucial components of community resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, which the Red Cross and Red Crescent aim to address.

Some more work needs to be done on sharing experiences and lessons learned. Much experience has been developed in recent years and a risk exists that the potential learning is being missed. Other updating needs are around the current range of documentation and paperwork, which should be simplified and become better coordinated, as well as more inclusive of other health initiatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

To cover the costs involved of the scaled-up interventions, additional funding avenues need to be explored and the options of accessing block funding from foundations, the development banks and/or major corporate donors need to be developed and worked through for the benefit of all NSs.

Other recommendations, such as developing approaches to addressing the differing needs of urban and rural populations are a continuation of ongoing work, but the impetus needs to continue.

1 Introduction

The Red Cross & Red Crescent (RC/RC) has long had acknowledged experience and success in providing emergency water and sanitation inputs to people living in areas affected by disaster. Its development of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) concept has developed into a successful model for rapid deployment and intervention, and in the 12 years up to 2005 some 6.5 million people had benefited from such emergency response activities. Such emergency interventions remain vitally important at such times, but are expensive and often do not leave much long-term benefit behind beyond a limited skills base.

In 2003, all National Societies adopted a 'Water and Sanitation Policy' that underlined the importance of water and sanitation issues in disaster preparedness and response, but also in a developmental context. While the emergency response work remains the core of the readiness planning of the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the IFRC and the individual National Societies in many countries had also undertaken considerable developmental WatSan work over many years. By March 2011, 76 National RC/RC Societies were active in developmental WatSan programming in 54 countries.

The idea of moving towards a more sustainable approach, indeed to address some of the health emergencies before they became too serious and warranted such emergency interventions, was the genesis for the Global Water and Sanitation Initiative (GWSI), and as a way for the Red Cross Movement to make a direct contribution towards the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was coincidental that this initiative was being developed at the same time as the planning for a second World Water Decade (2005–2015) and of several other initiatives designed to match international efforts in the same area, the European Union Water Facility (EUWF) being just one. The GWSI was also intended to better integrate the RC developmental water and sanitation programming with the range of activities of other partners in the sector, and to align itself more closely with the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) strategy established by UNICEF and the World Bank.

The GWSI was therefore designed and launched in 2005 by the IFRC to further scale-up Red Cross & Red Crescent (RC/RC) contributions to the MDGs in developmental water, sanitation and hygiene promotion programming. The initiative was specifically intended to make a significant contribution towards addressing some of the crucial outstanding gaps in water and sanitation provision, and outlined a common approach amongst National Societies to establish larger-scale, longer-term sustainable water and sanitation programmes to contribute more effectively to meeting the MDGs.

Some nine million people had been served by RC/RC WatSan interventions in the years 1993-2005 – 6.5 million through emergency interventions and 2.5 million through longer-term programming. The ten-year targets for the

period (2005-2015) of the GWSI foresaw these numbers increasing to a total of 14 million – nine million through the emergency inputs and five million through the developmental work. The GWSI, and this Report, only focus on the developmental component of the WatSan work.

While much of this latter intervention was traditionally through numerous and widespread rural-based interventions, the new approach intended to continue to target the rural poor ~ communities whose inaccessibility often meant they were forgotten by other programming ~ but on a larger scale, which would offer a significant contribution by the RC for countries to work towards their MDG goals. It would further strengthen the Red Cross and Red Crescent's programming, helping them deliver on their own commitments to assist the most vulnerable communities.

The GWSI is not a 'programme' in itself, but designed as a common approach for the Red Cross/Red Crescent membership to assist these communities to improve their own health, resilience, and their capacities and coping mechanisms. It was designed to deliver sustainable impact through the RC's interventions in the sector, using defined criteria for target selection, development and improvement of existing tools, methodologies and approaches and to generate more available resources for RC/RC water and sanitation projects. To be included under the GWSI umbrella, project planning was expected to follow certain criteria, based on a checklist¹ covering eight principal areas of consideration, including beneficiary selection, scale of intervention, hardware and software, engagement with the communities and other partners, and the anticipated environmental impact.

Rationale for this study

This review was undertaken in early 2011 at the midway point of the Initiative's timeframe. The aim of the study was to determine what had been achieved to date and where the Initiative may need to concentrate or change its focus during the second half of its ten-year cycle. The full Terms of Reference are attached.

Many of the original targets have already been met. This report considers the achievements and successes of the GWSI to date, but also determines how it is perceived and how effectively it has been used by the National Societies of the RC Movement. It looks at the development of partnerships and how resources have been mobilized, what lessons have been learned and what more needs to be done in the period ahead.

A number of recommendations in Section 8 regarding some areas of work that could be considered in the months and years ahead.

Methodology for this study

The principal activities undertaken were:

- a desk study of the related GWSI documents and literature
- development of questionnaires which were e-mailed to National Societies and IFRC delegates in all Zones

1 <http://wwwdev.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/health/water/gwsi-checklist.pdf>

- face-to-face interviews with a number of key IFRC officers and delegates in Geneva and the field (a list of names is given as Annex 2)
- telephone interviews with a number of staff from National Societies implementing GWSI projects
- analysis of replies received from questionnaires sent to staff of partner NSs, host NSs and WatSan staff in delegations
- a meeting with the head of the EU's Water Facility and the principal desk officer and other staff
- discussions with former and present key staff in the Red Cross/European Union (RC/EU) Office in Brussels
- a field study was made to a multilateral delegated GWSI project in northern Namibia.

Outcomes | Impact upon beneficiaries | Contribution to the MDGs



Angola New water point at a Red Cross clinic



Philippines Hygiene promotion in schools

The targets initially set by the IFRC for the ten-year period of the GWSI (2005-2015) estimated that the emergency needs would increase to nine million people over the period, and the number of people targeted for developmental programmes would also increase from 2.5 million to a cumulative total of 7.5 Million, of which five million people, at an estimated cost of Swiss Francs 150 million would be supported by the GWSI. By late 2010, this developmental target had already been raised to seven million people.

By March 2011, the 161 projects¹ globally included under the GWSI umbrella showed 4.215 million beneficiaries had been reached to that time, out of 8.4 million targeted (by completed and ongoing programming). The total cost of these projects was reported to be over CHF 267 million (USD 305 million; €211 million). These are the projects that have been identified as meeting all or some of the GWSI criteria – there are other interventions in the WatSan sector being made by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across the world in addition to these.

If the present momentum continues, it is feasible that 10 million people could benefit from the GWSI programming by December 2015. Beyond 2015, there will be a significant opportunity to continue - and indeed improve - the collective efforts, based upon the increased capacity of the membership to undertake developmental WatSan programming. Certainly the needs will continue

¹ Another 23 identified projects have not been reported on in detail.

well beyond that date, and the RC/RC will be in a strong position to continue its support well beyond 2015.

These results clearly show that the revised GWSI targets have been met ~ only halfway through the proposed period ~ and confirm a significant contribution by the Red Cross Movement towards the MDGs as well, although there is still much to be done.

The Millennium Development Goals

The GWSI was designed to contribute towards the MDG targets, specifically that of Target 10 of Goal 7: **Ensuring Environmental Sustainability**.

The Millennium Development Goal No. 7c

Target 10:

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Indicators:

- Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
- Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility

The original Target 10 was to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. At the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, this target was expanded to include basic sanitation, and **water as a resource was recognized as a critical factor for meeting all the Goals**.

However, the GWSI targets were identified as directly contributing also to the following goals:

- MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education: 'Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling;
- MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- MDG 4: Reduce child mortality: 'reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five mortality rate';
- MDG 7, Target 9: 'Integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources',

but as noted at the Johannesburg Summit, in fact the provision of adequate and safe water directly contributes towards all eight Goals.

Overall the MDGs are seriously challenging governments to deliver on their commitments, and some targets will not be met by 2015. Although the world is projected to reach the target for the supply of drinking water by then, the progress towards reaching the target on sanitation will fall seriously short. It has been estimated² that at the current rate of progress, the target will be missed by 13 percentage points, representing one billion people who will miss out on access to improved sanitation facilities. Even if the target is reached,

² 2008 figures. Source: WHO/UNICEF: Progress on Sanitation & Drinking Water; 2010 update

another 1.7 billion people will still not have access to any improved sanitation, with the resultant impact on global human development, equity, poverty/disease reduction, loss of productivity etc.

The challenge of sanitation

Sanitation goes beyond just providing a pit latrine, so the targets for water delivery have been seen as easier and more achievable, and the real numbers for improved sanitation are probably even lower than those currently being reported. The United Nations designated 2008 the 'International Year of Sanitation' to try and focus on this specific aspect of WatSan work. The Federation acknowledged³ that "unless sanitation programmes are scaled up the world's most vulnerable will fall behind even further". Past reviews of the ERU deployments, as well, have highlighted this primary focus on water provision over sanitation, to an extent where a separate Mass Sanitation Unit was ultimately developed to allow dedicated teams to focus on sanitation and health promotion issues.

Many informants to this review expressed concern that much of the RC/RC's traditional WatSan intervention work has been focused more on the provision of water, and less on sanitation. The provision of safe water is seen as 'easier' and is more interesting to donors, but it is also acknowledged that poor or non-existent sanitation severely limits the positive effects of using safe water. Other feedback received indicated that the uptake of sanitation implied "placing a few latrines and giving some health messages", and hoping and expecting "the rest of the targeted community to respond by seeing the benefits and constructing their own facilities". However, in the poorest communities where the RC/RC traditionally works it is quite unrealistic to expect these people to have access to any funds or resources to help themselves, despite any possible desire to do so.

Many National Societies implementing GWSI projects have agreed that sanitation inputs were traditionally not as well-prioritized as the provision of water, although this focus has reportedly changed in recent years for many – several of the larger NSs reported they and their partners had made conscious efforts to greatly increase the sanitation aspects in their programming. In Nepal, for example, the Government has made available additional budgets to address sanitation issues more proactively, and the Nepal RC has been able to access these funds to widen its WatSan programming work. However, simply erecting a latrine structure does not guarantee the improvement of sanitary conditions – it also requires the development of an understanding of the health benefits that using the latrine can offer, and encouraging communities to embrace these ideas via a change in their habits. This is much more difficult and much less visible work, but without it the sustained impact on sanitation will not be seen.

More work needs to be focused in this area, not least through advocacy work with the donors who need to be encouraged to support the 'non-water and software' side of interventions. Limited technical standardization in the area and the need for long term follow up required to make any significant difference remain challenges to be addressed. These sanitation inputs are considerably more expensive per beneficiary than delivering clean water – and a real change in this budgetary balance needs to be addressed in the coming years.

3 IFRC: "The Challenge of Sanitation", 2010

A further point regarding sanitation is to highlight the general lack of experience the Red Cross (and most other Agencies) have regarding urban sanitation issues. This was brought home by the situation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, following the January 2010 earthquake, and although also compounded there by issues around access to land and appropriate shelter and no governmental leadership, the ongoing situation and a more permanent solution continues to challenge the Agencies more than 18 months later.

Long-term perspectives and sustainability

The GWSI takes on board the need to build the benefits of the ‘hardware’ interventions onto a robust framework of engagement with and by the communities themselves to ensure a level of sustainability. This aspect - getting the right software results, knowledge and skills, made and embedded into the psyche of the communities, plus ensuring that the technical support and spare parts are available - are the critical and the more difficult programming areas to ensure sustainability and long term impact of the interventions.

The EUWF, a major contributor towards a number of these developmental projects as discussed in Section 5, acknowledged that in their experience over the first two Calls for Proposals, it had become clear that the sustainability of the interventions, notably ensuring the robustness of the ‘software inputs’, was a significant ongoing challenge, to such a point where the Facility only considered those projects (for its 3rd Call for Proposals) which were designed to run for 42 months or more, and preferably 48 months or longer⁴, allowing sufficient time to develop and build on this software aspect. The Federation recognized this as critical and acknowledged the time scale factor, and advised the applicant National Societies to extend their project timescales, preferably to a minimum of 48 months, to ensure the necessary groundwork was done to ensure better sustainability. Indeed, it is considered that in general such developmental programming, regardless of the back-donor, should be proposed for periods of around four to five years to help ensure their sustainability.

The EUWF-supported WatSan project visited in Namibia during this Review also demonstrated this – although the project overall had achieved some good results, the weakest part of the programme delivery was the sustainability aspect linked to the sanitation and the water management issues, and not the hardware or the water component. This initially had been a 36-month project that had had another six months added later, and by the end of the project a number of these issues still had to be resolved and finalized.

It is suggested, therefore, that any real impact of the intervention will not be obvious by the end of a single project cycle; indeed it may be several years afterwards when any real sustainable impact can be assured. If the communities have taken the messages on health and sanitation on board in the first place, have they continued to implement these better practices? Has the health status of the community changed significantly because of safe water and/or better sanitation facilities? Does the community link the two together adequately? Have the hardware components continued to function, via the training given and/or community engagement and/or local authority support?

⁴ No projects of less than 42 months duration were approved in Call 3, and most were of 48 months or more.

Conclusions

- The Red Cross Movement is increasingly seen as a significant and experienced player in the developmental WatSan sector.
- The initial goals identified for the GWSI have already been surpassed, half-way in to the ten year project cycle, and have since been extended. It is likely that these too will be reached but more emphasis needs to be given to ensuring quality of interventions, and not just reaching targets.
- The GWSI is seen as a significant contribution by the RC for countries to work towards their MDG goals, appropriate in its timing to coincide with 2nd World Water Decade, the MDGs themselves and other initiatives addressing water and sanitation.
- The Initiative is important in that it prioritizes sanitation inputs as well as water - although more emphasis needs to be put on sanitation in many project designs.
- Getting the right software inputs around health promotion and community management capacities for the systems made and embedded into the psyche of the communities is the most critical part to ensure sustainability.

2 Perceptions of GWSI: from the National Societies | the Donors | Within the Federation

Added value

The GWSI was launched after a mapping exercise in late 2004 showed involvement by the Red Cross/Red Crescent in developmental WatSan programming was increasing, with numerous interventions in post-emergency situations being carried out with a longer-term perspective. Many National Societies had already been involved in WatSan programming for decades, but it was realized that much of the effort was going into small, rural project activities that were relatively labour-intensive to manage and expensive per beneficiary. It became clear that to make a significant contribution towards the MDGs, Red Cross/Red Crescent project coverage would have to be scaled up, which would also give a better cost per beneficiary figure.

The GWSI criteria reflected and aimed to improve upon areas in past or existing RC (and indeed non-RC) developmental Water and Sanitation programming, specifically:

- Scale, where projects were too small, the percentage of funding absorbed by overheads and transaction costs limited the funding percentage that benefited communities directly.
- Geographical focus where project target areas were too spread out, once again making transaction and logistics costs too high, thereby reducing the proportion of funds available for direct inputs to target communities and reducing the measurable impact by doing too little over too wide an area.
- Getting the correct balance between focus and expenditure between the hardware and software elements, addressing the imbalance between water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.
- Ensuring that projects reflected the principles of IWRM and Governmental planning, targeting those beneficiaries in most need who had the lowest coverage rates - in principle those that had coverage rates significantly lower than national averages.
- Ensuring environmental degradation was not exacerbated by the technical solutions adopted, such as groundwater levels being depressed or overused, protection of water catchment areas etc.
- Ensuring gender balance in community management and inclusiveness in community planning.

One of the criteria for project identification was the idea of benefiting from economies of scale, by working with large homogenous population groups where fixed costs of project implementation could be kept at a lower percentage of the total budget, for example through bulk purchasing of materials or

sub-contracting of construction activities. A target group of around 20 thousand people was seen as a benchmark. As an example of these benefits, the average cost “for access to water” per beneficiary of the EUWF- supported projects, where the target numbers are higher, was approximately CHF 19/person¹.

However, significant needs exist in poorer, smaller or more isolated communities that do not meet all these criteria. Many of the Federation’s WatSan delegates have been encouraging inclusion of such projects into the GWSI listing as many of the other criteria and project considerations remain valid and useful, even for the smaller projects. Some 15 percent of GWSI projects have been for communities with less than 5,000 people, and another 30 percent of projects for communities of less than 20,000 people. The average over all the reported projects, which includes many of the smaller projects, was substantially more at approximately CHF 32/person².

There is also a growing need to support urban and peri-urban populations, given the ongoing trend of urban migration. While it could be argued that the interventions made in rural areas will counteract the urban drift to some extent, the operating environments and the challenges faced differ between the two, and the RC needs to ensure it has the tools and experience to address the areas of greatest needs, including urban situations.

Perceptions

For those NSs who are aware of the GWSI, there was an overall positive feedback about the usefulness of the initiative, the checklists and criteria, with the GWSI being seen as practical and helpful, and offering a common RC approach, well-coordinated to avoid overlap & duplication. The respondents from a wide range of National Societies were positive that it addressed things on a larger scale, was well grounded in the international standards of good practice, and they felt it was good for the general RC Movement profile.

However, a number of respondents at NS level (even those considered by WatSan team to be ‘key informants’ to this study) indicated that they were not fully aware of the GWSI initiative, and/or not aware their projects were included in the GWSI reporting. Respondents from one NS, running several large WatSan programmes, had not heard of the GWSI, or been aware of any of the documentation, at all until contacted for this review. While to some extent this is undoubtedly due to staff turnover within NSs in recent years, it also indicates that more work needs to be done to continue to promote the benefits of the Initiative.

Some of the more significant WatSan-implementing National Societies stated that the Initiative had had little impact for them although they acknowledged that the criteria were ‘referred to’ (rather than actively used) in project planning. One host NS with three projects listed on the ‘GWSI Project Mapping’ stated they had “no idea about GWSI” and said they were “doing the WatSan projects through bilateral and multilateral funding partners”, thus not really making the link that it was the availability and use of the tools and guidelines which was important, rather than it not being a programme of the Federation.

One NS running a large bilateral project stated that they had drawn significant support from GWSI to scope and lay out the present and future water

1 Figure given as “€16 per person for water access” by EUWF team, 17.02.11.

2 Average cost per beneficiary taken from updated IFRC GWSI Mapping Report, March 2011

and sanitation programmes they were running, and that the lessons learned from the initiative had helped them in anticipating potential risks and threats for future interventions.

Most partner NSs suggested that the Federation team, both in Geneva and in the field, provided quality technical support - although a number of bilateral Societies had not requested such support. The teams were considered to be responsive and solution-focused, and brought the experience of a wider overview of many projects, which was useful. However, there remains a lack of clarity on what support and services the IFRC's WatSan teams are in a position to provide. While over the years it has been much appreciated that they have contributed their experience and knowledge into the proposal preparation and the project delivery, and have led the multilateral programmes, increasing bilateralism has changed this.

Many National Societies have built up their own skills and human resources over the last years and the regular programme demands on the Secretariat teams has reduced. Conversely, a number of the NSs still considered the Secretariat team should have more input to the projects, even bilateral ones, to ensure standardization of approach. They are still used as a resource to answer certain questions or to give general advice, but any greater engagement at project level very much depends on the project's demands and on the ability of the programme partners to cover the associated costs.

Many respondents perceived the GWSI to be very focused on sub-Saharan Africa, and in terms of the value of large-scale projects supported by the European Union, this is the case. These 'ACP countries' are clearly the focus of the EUWF - and are where the achievement of the MDGs will be the greatest challenge. However, in terms of the number of projects classified as 'GWSI compliant', 50 percent are in Africa, with five percent in the Americas and the balance, 45 percent, in Asia. It was acknowledged that some compromises had been made in Asia for the inclusion of a number of projects onto the mapping, especially concerning those that were in recovery or post-emergency situations.

Most of the respondents during this review have been those who have been directly involved with the GWSI, rather than a more general cross-section of NS staff. Consequently, the informed feedback has included the particular knowledge of the way the Initiative was set up and how it functions, its aims and expectations, and as such the responses have been very positive. Nevertheless, with the various IFRC Zone offices now managing much of the programme and resource mobilization work, the GWSI is still seen as an initiative being run from Geneva, which is questioned. It is, though, seen to be a visionary approach that has set and achieved ambitious targets and has clearly raised the profile of the Red Cross and Red Crescent globally. There were many suggestions that the RC Movement is not capitalizing on its successes enough, and that the Initiative could benefit from better advocacy and positioning via a wider communications plan.

However, there were also comments that it could have been 'rolled out' more inclusively, and that there was insufficient engagement of the field WatSan delegates in the early days - this has improved more recently, although more still needs to be done. There are suggestions that it is too driven by money and targets, although latterly it has moved towards the quality of the interventions more than just pushing for the numbers. It is seen as a good marketing and advocacy tool, and something tangible to approach donors with.

Financial support for the numerous projects comes from a very wide range of back donors, including residual funds from emergency operations being engaged into recovery programming. The only major donor this Review gathered feedback from was the EUWF's team in Brussels so it is not necessarily representative of all donors. Their team, though, was complimentary about the Initiative and the consistent quality of the applications that they reviewed was seen as a direct outcome of the standardized approach and the use of the identified criteria. It was acknowledged that the GWSI criteria are used to evaluate the quality of all proposals put to the Facility.

Conclusions

- For those NSs who are aware of the GWSI, there was an overall positive feedback about the usefulness of the initiative, the checklists and criteria, with the GWSI being seen as practical, helpful and presenting a 'common approach' by the Red Cross and Red Crescent, well coordinated to avoid overlap & duplication.
- The European Union Water Facility (EUWF) was also positive about the approach and uses the GWSI criteria as part of its overall application assessment process.
- However, many focal persons in a number of key NSs remain unaware of the GWSI initiative, with some not even being aware their projects were included in the GWSI reporting.
- While the Initiative targets the rural poor, beneficiaries who are often forgotten because of remoteness or inaccessibility, and aims to address larger target groups of beneficiaries to benefit from economies of scale, significant needs exist elsewhere in poorer, smaller or more isolated communities, but they do not meet the criteria, especially on scale. There is also a need to consider the needs of the urban populations and to develop appropriate interventions in these areas.
- The GWSI is perceived as being heavily focused on sub-Saharan Africa, although in fact only 50 percent of its programming is in the area.
- There remains a certain feeling that having set the initial targets, the Federation then aimed to meet them as soon as possible: the process perhaps being driven more by those targets than by the assurance (and oversight) of good programming. The scale of the investment needs to assure a sustainable result remains.

3 The Federation's role and effectiveness in providing guidance | Technical support | Capacity building to National Societies

The GWSI package of guidelines and criteria to help NSs identify and plan their developmental WatSan interventions are based around eight specific areas. Most respondents – regardless of their ongoing relationship with the GWSI – indicated that they had found these criteria of value in their programme designs and preparation of proposals. The checklist helped to clarify and standardize the RC interventions, and thereby strengthened the perception of a common approach, aiming to build on ‘best practice’ lessons from earlier interventions.

The package contains a range of well-presented colour booklets, often with the same materials included on accompanying CDs, but this quality of the documentation was negated to an extent by the wide range – there are many GWSI brochures and booklets, and it becomes confusing as to which ones are most relevant. They have been developed at different times and often make no cross-reference to each other, or have been superseded in the meantime. For example, the Federation’s “Software Tools for long-term water and sanitation programming” is a brochure and CD package principally detailing the process of delivery of the PHAST methodology – a component of GWSI interventions – but this booklet is not referenced in the GWSI brochure itself. There is little or no cross-reference to the community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) materials, despite this being a central plank of most NSs’ community health interventions. In another example, there are five different assessment tools in use with the Red Cross, all with slightly different procedures recommended.

Some of the necessary support tools are excellent but, surprisingly, several seem to be weak or in need of revision. For example, there needs to be a standardised approach to which set of indicators to use, including much tighter qualitative indicators; there should be a standard approach to account for beneficiaries; there could be a more structured monitoring framework available. These would ensure the reporting methodology is more standardized between the various partners and that the consolidated information is seen as credible, although a challenge would be to encourage all partners to use a single model¹.

A good project management tool could be made available for those who may need one – while it is accepted that this would have to be flexible and able to be changed for any particular situation, it is overly time-consuming to start from scratch for each project cycle. However, financial processing and reporting at NS level seems to be a consistent challenge reported by partner NSs. The need also for a good financial management tool is clear, although the different accounting software used between different NSs and the Federation make any inter-compatibility a challenge. The Federation’s role would be to identify what is ‘out there’ and in use, and ensure that access to it is made available.

¹ Note further comments on reporting in Chapter 6.

Technical support

Institutionally, the Federation Secretariat continues to struggle with the question of whether it should or should not run programmes, and in areas such as recruitment and retention of human resources, narrative and financial reporting, and other similar issues that detract from the positive impressions made elsewhere. Similarly, many host NSs also struggle with capacity issues around staff, volunteers, financial and logistics management and reporting ~ highlighting the need for those who commit to implement a WatSan project to be supported as required either by the partner NS project team and/or the Federation.

The WatSan team in Geneva has tended to be the advisor of first resort – many NSs, whether working on delegated projects or bilaterally, have instinctively called the Geneva team for advice. While such advice can (and will) be provided if possible, there still needs to be a better understanding between all sides on what engagement can be expected for support to bilateral programming. Some National Societies have clearly identified the need for ongoing technical inputs from the Federation staff, especially at the Zone levels, on the design, planning and implementation of their GWSI projects. National Societies need to determine what support they may require from the Secretariat’s WatSan team and field delegates. This will be provided if possible and the current structure could be enhanced to allow this to happen, but the resultant costs would have to be covered and it is not easy to plan and pay for additional staff to respond to only occasional adhoc demands. [Contrary to the understanding of many, the NSs’ statutory contributions to the Federation do not support any operational costs, and therefore bilateral projects can only be supported by the technical teams if incurred costs are covered.]

Integration with other programmes

The GWSI was designed to be a core part of the overall health strategy, building resilience and promoting overall risk reduction within communities. Despite its clear success towards its own targets, the GWSI is in fact seen as having remained quite stand-alone as an approach. The GWSI was perceived by some to be a “sectoral preserve of the WatSan team”. While accepting its real successes, a number of concerns were expressed that the initiative was too ‘tightly overseen’ by the WatSan team and it should be ‘shared’ more widely, especially when it comes to working more closely with other health initiatives.

To ensure the consistency of its health messaging there needs to be a closer alignment with other health programme areas to deliver the overall health impact the Federation and NSs aim to deliver. Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion are all preventive health interventions and the GWSI needs to integrate more closely with the other initiatives of the Health Department, notably the CBHFA approach, to ensure complementary messages are being given effectively and without duplication at community level. In most National Societies the CBHFA approach is the main vehicle for community health programming, with the bulk of the NS volunteers engaging in these outreach activities, and as such the WatSan activities need to be seen to be a more cohesive part of the overall package rather than a stand-alone project.

Reflecting the IFRC Health Department’s new strategic direction (the SOF), which also reflects the broader Strategy 2020 of the IFRC and its membership, greater efforts still need to be made to integrate WatSan programming and

disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation work, as well as the CBHFA. These will not only need a mindset change in IFRC and its membership but also increased internal and external advocacy especially aimed at donors, to encourage them to support more integrated programming via more general funding streams. Practically, this would mean access to more general funding to be used for a wider range of health and DRR programming, including WatSan work, and fewer single-sector projects. In this way GWSI should be seen as an element of 'strengthening community resilience' in closer synergy with the other health, and indeed non-health, developmental programming.

Capacity building

Many host and partner National Societies had a good level of skills and capacities already developed after many years of WatSan programming experience. However, beyond numerous smaller projects, few 'southern' NSs felt they had the internal capacity to manage larger externally funded project implementation, due in part to the application and reporting requirements they entailed. While some host NSs would like to build this capacity and be able to apply directly for international funding (eg: from the EUWF), at the present time this is handled exclusively by the partners on behalf of the host NSs.

Capacity building at National Society level is seen as a fundamental responsibility of the IFRC, but this is also a constitutional obligation of the NSs themselves, including partner NSs. It was interesting during this study to hear repeated references to the need for the Federation (implying the Secretariat's WatSan staff and delegates) to ensure better capacity building initiatives at NS level, so bilateral partners could access better qualified local staff to implement the WatSan programming. The idea that it should also be a basic component of their own programming to ensure such capacities were built and retained did not appear to be prevalent.

Nevertheless, there has also been an encouraging change in the number and background of experienced WatSan delegates within the RC system. In the 1990s, the emergency and developmental WatSan delegates fielded by the Federation were almost all from 'northern' countries; this has now changed significantly, through active recruitment and on-the-job training, whereby almost half are now recruited from the 'south'. Additionally, some 30 percent of these are women, while 15 years ago very few women were active in this sector.

One of the principal aims of the Federation's Global Health and Care Strategy is indeed "capacity building: to strengthen the volunteer base of NSs to increase their operational capacity ...", but this is a Federation-wide strategy which includes the partner NSs. Not least, though, any capacity building through these development programmes assists NSs in their relief activities - which remain their primary responsibility.

Regardless of the capacities, retention of these skilled staff remains a challenge to many NSs who struggle to pay market-rate salaries for these personnel.

Conclusions

- The GWSI includes a good range of tools and guidance for NSs to make use of, and these are widely used and appreciated. The Secretariat WatSan team, both from Geneva and in the field, also provides quality technical



Solomon Islands Water tank installed on a remote island

support; this is considered as responsive and solution-focused. However, many partner NSs expect a range of technical inputs from the team, even for their bilateral projects, but do not want to cover the costs – some solution to this needs to be found.

- The GWSI needs to work more strategically with other health programme areas to deliver the overall risk reduction impact the Federation and NSs aim to deliver. While accepting its real successes, the initiative should be ‘shared’ more widely and be less ‘vertically managed’.
- Capacity building through these development programmes has been ongoing for many years and there are clear achievements in the WatSan skills

in many NSs in recent years. However, many host NSs still struggling with capacity issues around staff, volunteers, financial and logistics management, reporting ~ which indicates the continuing need to ensure support is provided as required. Such capacity building is an obligation of all partners, and not just of the IFRC.

Internal (RC/RC) and External Partnerships | Resource Mobilization | Advocacy | Representation



At the time of the GWSI's launch in 2005, it was indicated that the Initiative intended to increase developmental project beneficiary numbers by five million people over the following ten years, with a project value of CHF 150 million. This beneficiary target was in addition to those served via emergency interventions. It is clear that the availability of significant levels of funding, which became accessible at the same time as the GWSI was beginning, helped the Red Cross & Red Crescent reach these targets. This highlights the considerable degree of support that has been raised from a range of other National Societies as well as external donors. Significant amounts of new funding have been raised with further amounts for programme activities coming from balances from emergency appeals, notably in Indonesia, China and Pakistan.

A number of 'partnerships' have been developed during the last five years, the most notable of which is the support the Initiative has received from the EUWF (although this is not a formal partnership as such).

The European Union Water Facility

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the European Union (EU) launched a Water Initiative to help contribute towards the achievement of the MDG and WSSD targets for drinking water and sanitation, within the context of an integrated approach to water resource management. The Initiative covered four geographical regions – Africa, Mediterranean, Eastern Europe/Caucasus/Central Asia (EECCA) and Latin America. The key elements of the Initiative were to reinforce political commitment to action and to raise the profile of water and sanitation issues in the context of poverty reduction efforts; to promote better water governance arrangements, to improve co-ordination and co-operation in the way that water-related interventions are developed and implemented; to encourage regional and sub-regional co-operation on water management issues, using the integrated water resources management approach, and to catalyse additional funding.

The €500m ACP-EU Water Facility (EUWF), adopted by the European Council in March 2004, was a response to this latter objective in the ACP (Africa/Caribbean/Pacific) region. An additional €200m was adopted in 2009. The EUWF was developed as an instrument that could provide the missing link in financing sustainable activities and programmes in the water and sanitation sector, and to help leverage other resources (private, development banks, financial institutions, users' contributions, remittances, etc) to finance water and sanitation projects. This package of funding has been made available to the implementing partners via three 'Calls for Proposals', in 2005, 2006 and 2010.

The Red Cross Movement submitted multiple applications for each call, with a significant percentage of these being approved each time – to date 23 projects

have been approved and supported, representing about 30 percent of applications. These were designed in one of three ways: ‘multilateral’, where the IFRC ran the programme directly; ‘multilateral delegated’, where the IFRC signed the contract but ‘sub-contracted’ the programme work to one or more NSs; or ‘bilateral’, as an application from a single European RC NS or a consortium of two or more.

In each case, the EUWF covered up to 75 percent of the total project budget, with the balance being co-funded by the applying NS or NS consortium. The EUWF stated that its approval decisions were principally based on the quality of the applications, and believed that “the Red Cross has enough funds to be able to afford good proposal writers”. Interestingly, the EUWF actually questioned why the Red Cross applicants always went for the full possible amount available as a grant (75 percent), again believing that the RC had its own institutional funding to draw upon.

Nevertheless, a significant portion of the funding for the GWSI projects has come from the EUWF: approximately CHF 70 million, or 26 percent of the total value of the reported GWSI projects of CHF 267 million (to date).

Total for all 3 EUWF calls	Total no. of approved applications	Total value of project support Received from EUWF (75% of project costs)
Multilateral	9	CHF 26,530,812
Bilateral and/or Consortia	23	CHF 44,007,780
Total	31	CHF 70,538,592
	(30% success rate overall)	Complementary 25% co-financing provided by NSs

The GWSI approach, led by the WatSan Unit in Geneva, has supported the development of these applications within National Societies and has ensured a coordinated approach for each Call, to avoid overlap or competition between applicants and to ensure the capacities of the host NSs are taken into account. As the three calls were announced, the IFRC WatSan Unit and the Red Cross/European Union Office in Brussels convened round table meetings of interested EU NSs to discuss the criteria for the applications, to address issues of expectation and quality, to ensure capacities of host NSs were evaluated as realistic and to avoid duplication of proposals. This was regarded as a very positive approach and greatly appreciated by the NSs involved. For the third Call, this meeting was held directly with the EUWF staff, which was an additional advantage.

Certain NSs have applied for multiple EUWF projects in each Call in the hope that they will get a certain percentage approved. In Call 3, one NS submitted ten bilateral applications in the expectation – as stated to the interviewer – “that three or four will get accepted”. As it happened, six were approved which, on the positive side, shows the high average quality of the applications, but more negatively it also presents the RC concerned with the considerable challenge of finding their co-financing commitment for all six projects – double the amount that they were anticipating. This was an extreme example – although

other NSs indicated a similar attitude of anticipating a certain ‘success rate’, but they had submitted fewer proposals.

The question has to be asked whether this is not the NS concerned simply chasing the available funds, and creating a serious risk of over-committing themselves when it comes to additional requirements, like finding qualified staff and technical skills required to oversee all the activities, let alone the additional financing. Having written up more project proposals than they expect to be supported, with considerable costs incurred during the preparation of the applications, and expectations inevitably being raised within the host communities and NSs, what happens with those not approved?

Responses to that question varied: some NSs indicated that they believed strongly in the projects they had developed and would attempt to find other sources of funding; in some cases, the existing projects would be scaled downwards to match other available funding. Some NSs accepted that they would not be able to find other resources, and the proposals would have to be shelved until other options materialised in the future (such as a possible new EUWF Call for Proposals or funding from another source). One NS responded by saying: “If all our applications had been approved we would have been unable to find matching funds and would have had to refuse some”.

In at least two cases where past projects have run into significant problems during their implementation, a close working relationship with the EU Delegation in the countries concerned has helped resolve the situations. Overall, the flexibility shown by the EUWF and consistent interaction between the Federation and NSs with the EU country delegations has been positive. Regular joint field missions with EU staff and consultants have been productive, and the more formal evaluations carried out by EU themselves at the conclusion of projects have been constructive.

The EUWF appreciates the strength of the Red Cross Movement – the host National Society being the main implementing partner, knowing the country well and having good relations with the government, working with the poorest communities – and they acknowledged the RC applications as being well-balanced, without too much expatriate involvement and thus more funding available for the project activities.

The funding available via the EUWF is targeted to the ACP States (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific). Theoretically the NSs of any of these countries could apply directly for funding support to the EUWF. To date this has not happened, mainly due to the heavy commitments of co-financing and reporting, but partner NSs could consider working with their host NSs to build these capacities over time and gradually step backwards themselves.

The Federation enjoys the status of International Organisation with the EU, giving it certain privileges regarding tendering, procurement and reporting obligations. While this is important it is often not always adequately understood by the EU’s delegations that are unaware the IOs’ privileges are different from those of an NGO. It is not clear either how many officials in Brussels understand the different parts of the RC Movement adequately, and therefore there remains a risk of one ‘bad egg’ (a RC project going seriously wrong, for example) affecting many others by association.

Other external partnerships

A crucial partner in these GWSI projects remains the national Governments at all levels, and it is relevant that the GWSI places importance on the projects working closely with the authorities and adhering closely to the national policies. In Namibia, as an example, this relationship is mutually strong and supportive, and the authorities appreciate the results being achieved by the RC and they work in close partnership on a number of field levels. There are many other examples of productive partnering with Governments at national and sub-national levels.

The Federation is an active member of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee sub-sector on water and sanitation, as well as the WASH cluster led by UNICEF. This ensures representation and engagement at an international level. Recently, IFRC was elected to the Strategic Advisory Group of the Global WASH cluster, increasing its role and interaction at global and regional levels. Further advocacy and profiling work is already being done by the IFRC with international Agency partners and via other initiatives, although it is felt these could be broadened. For example, a working relationship has been developed with the Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council, which has recently agreed to support RC/RC sanitation projects, and there are probably opportunities to develop this relationship further. Other policy initiatives, such as 'End Water Poverty', could be used to enhance the RC/RC profile as a significant developmental WatSan partner. A more systematic engagement with other global events in the sector such as the World Water Forum, World Water Week and similar could also pay dividends over the longer term with regards to building networks and increasing funding opportunities.

From the perspective of the Secretariat, a number of corporate partnerships have been developed to continue support towards GWSI programming, notably with Shell and Nestlé – the latter being a further three-year contribution to health activities in Cote d'Ivoire under their 'Creating Shared Value' initiative. [This study did not explore other partnerships that individual NSs may have developed.] Both these corporate partners were reported to have been positive about their engagement with the GWSI.

Internal partnerships

The third Call for Proposals from the EUWF saw another move towards bilateralism by a number of the National Societies who previously had worked on multilateral or delegated projects, although a number have worked bilaterally for much longer. It is considered there are several reasons for this: in a positive sense, this is undoubtedly due to increased capacities and experience which have been built up at NS levels during the last years, and this can be considered to have been a positive impact of the GWSI. Many NSs have built and retained technical skills and are more confident in terms of overseeing and managing the WatSan programming than was the case several years ago. Only one of the European NSs remains committed to support the multilateral approach exclusively.

However, a less positive reason quoted was the changed arrangements regarding the rates of the Federation's Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery (PSSR), which is charged on all payments made via the Federation's accounts. Although the standard rate of PSSR is 6.5 percent, the

earlier multilateral WatSan programmes enjoyed a special dispensation of a reduced rate of two percent. Even at this rate, some NSs felt that they were contributing excessively towards the WatSan Unit's budgets – which is not the case – and most were unclear on what specific services and support they could expect from the Geneva team and the IFRC's regional WatSan delegates. When this 'special' rate was removed, most NSs felt that it was unaffordable to continue to pay 6.5 percent of their programme budgets to the Secretariat, and this precipitated the move away from working closely on the multilateral arrangements.

Interestingly, one NS that had prepared a bilateral application for EUWF funding nevertheless expected the Federation team to advise and review their proposal prior to submission. While they hold to the view of the PSSR rate being too high, their counter-argument was that the Federation's input would provide the coherence and standardisation in the proposal ... but they did not see that they should pay for this service.

Advocacy and resource mobilisation

The Red Cross is still considered globally to be a disaster response organization, and the knowledge of its long-term developmental commitments is not well enough disseminated. The GWSI projects have made a significant contribution to this side of its activities in many countries, and while this may be known in the limited water and sanitation sector in the countries concerned, it is considered that neither the Federation nor the individual National Societies have effectively capitalized on this experience.

The GWSI can and does play a significant role in advocacy at national Government level, highlighting the needs and working with other partners to determine the strategies required in the water and sanitation sectors. In Namibia, for example, the Namibia Red Cross was the most significant national partner of the Government at local and central levels, both in terms of close practical implementation but also in policy discussion and development of the strategies in the sector. Although this Review did not explore this interaction in other countries, clearly the RC/RC can and should be seen as a significant and important partner, and the NSs need to ensure their voice is increasingly heard.

Although one of the stated aims of the initiative was indeed to leverage more funding from donors to achieve more in the WatSan sector, at least one NS saw the initiative as a fund-raising purely tool for the Secretariat. The GWSI is seen by many as an excellent product for potential corporate fundraising, however, with a good track record and many clear examples of project achievements, which give donors a 'real project' focus. While NSs raise the necessary funding for their own programming, the role of the Secretariat team is to cover the multilateral programme costs, but also to raise the whole profile of the RC developmental WatSan work, and this will have a knock-on effect for NSs.

It is felt that the Red Cross & Red Crescent in general does not adequately explore or develop the potential links with major companies or foundations that could provide further resources. The GWSI, because of the way it is designed and organized, is of interest to these potential donors but considerably more work needs to be done to see any significant benefits. Efforts are currently underway to increase the donor portfolio, with negotiations recently concluded with the Asian Development Bank and several other foundations and commercial companies. A concept note for increased targeting



Ivory Coast Maintenance training for community water technicians

of vulnerable communities has been drawn up (May 2011) but again focusing on selected sub-Saharan African countries as these are the countries lagging furthest behind in the attainment of the MDGs. It does, though, acknowledge the need for an increased focus on sanitation.

Conclusions

- The GWSI is considered as an excellent product for further fundraising with a good track record, giving donors a 'real project' focus. Further IFRC support to GWSI will need funding from somewhere, especially if the recommendations from the MTR are to be realized to add real value to the next five years of the GWSI.
- The experience of having worked with the EUWF has been positive all round, and has demonstrated the strength of the common approach.

However, there are ‘many RC eggs in the EUWF basket’ and efforts need to be maintained to ensure this positive engagement is maintained.

- Certain NSs have applied for multiple EUWF projects in the recent Calls for Proposals, in the hope that they would get a certain percentage get approved. For those not approved for funding, expectations have been raised, costs have been incurred, project justification may be strong, but without funding they may be shelved, and it is important that a realistic approach to these Calls is maintained to avoid accusations of ‘being in it for the money’.
- The move towards more bilateralism (in 3rd Call of EUWF funding) is partly due to increased capacities that have been built up at NS levels, but also is directly due to the removal of the reduced PSSR allowance charged by the Secretariat.

5 Management and reporting | Finance management

- The principal responsibilities of the current WatSan team in Geneva and the delegates at the Zone levels are to plan and support emergency interventions and to provide training and guidance to the Federation's membership on WatSan issues. The GWSI initiative was developed and has been strongly led by the team, and it has been widely acknowledged, even by those NSs now working bilaterally, for the consistent support and guidance provided by the Geneva team and their colleagues in the Zones.
- To date, GWSI income via the multilateral projects has only covered the partial costs of two staff, and at Zone level, partially funded five staff. Considering the scale of GWSI, this is realistic in relation to the services provided. At present, and with the increased level of bilateral programming, even this modest cost recovery has been significantly reduced since mid-2010.
- One staff member at the RC/EU Office in Brussels has supported the file with the EUWF over the last years, and has assisted the Federation and the individual NSs during the application and submission process. The relationship between this desk officer and the EU has been very positive and is seen by the various NSs as a crucial focal point for their relationship with the Water Facility team.

Reporting

Maintaining an updated and correct report summary on the GWSI projects globally remains a challenge. It is important to have this compilation of data to be able to show the overall contributions towards the MDGs by the whole RC Movement, and many acknowledge this is their primary incentive for contributing information towards the list. On the other hand, some NSs, particularly if working bilaterally, do not feel they are 'accountable' to the IFRC for their project. The Secretariat (as compiler of the report) does not see this as oversight, but simply aims to pull together the total figures – even the bilateral data – to demonstrate the impact the Red Cross & Red Crescent is having globally. Several NSs reported that even though they do not adhere closely to the other criteria they still report towards the consolidated list – but the "GWSI Project Mapping" continues to have many gaps, specifically around the numbers of beneficiaries served.

Accurate reporting of direct or indirect beneficiary numbers has always been a challenge for the humanitarian agencies, including the RC/RC. For example, if a household of six people has improved access to water + a family VIP latrine + accompanying software inputs, provided via a RC project, should this be six beneficiaries, or 12 or 18? Different NSs report these numbers differently, suggesting that the accuracy of the beneficiary numbers is far from certain and this variance undoubtedly has a major impact on the final figures, and

therefore on reporting against the targets. A standard approach needs to be identified on this question.

GWSI mapping also needs to be better disaggregated between direct and indirect beneficiaries, those that benefit from improved water access, sanitation and hygiene promotion, and gender. This more detailed mapping will have a cost element if it is to be developed further. In general, reporting to a range of different back donors precludes a standardized reporting format and/or methodology. Nevertheless, certain standards for internal reporting to ensure a consistency of information across all RC/RC projects would be sensible.

In several of the 'multilateral delegated' projects with the EUWF (ie: signed officially by the Federation but implemented by a NS), the partner NSs did not meet their reporting obligations. This is irresponsible as the Federation is legally liable to provide these reports to the donor, and their submission constitutes part of the agreement between the Secretariat and the NSs involved.

Financial management

A number of 'multilateral delegated' projects were also said to have incurred 'losses' in Geneva's books. However, as the EU funds arrive in Euros, the money is kept in Euros and then retransmitted to the implementing NS in Euros, it appears to be the Federation's Swiss Franc-based accounting which created such 'losses', given that the exchange rates between these currencies have changed so much in the last few years.

In one or two other reported cases, the implementing partners had made some non-eligible expenditures, or other indirect costs had been incurred by the Secretariat which the budgets did not cover, and these expenses had to be written off by the Secretariat.

It was witnessed during the visit to Namibia how budgeting for a three or four year programme (often done another year in advance) carried inherent risks of budget overruns, given general inflation costs and exchange rate differences over the period. This indicates the need to maintain a close watch on the budgets and expenditures on a regular basis and to make the necessary budget adjustments when required.

Sharing of information and lessons learned

There was clear feedback from many of the interviewees during this review suggesting that real value was put on learning lessons from other projects carried out under GWSI, but that this process was quite weak at present and needed to improve. All NSs indicated both that they would like to be able to learn from others' experiences as well as contribute to the debate, but also that no sufficient mechanism currently existed for that to happen easily. In some cases discussions were held at regional WatSan meetings, but these were irregular and provided only a limited forum of exchange although many liked the face-to-face contact this offered.

Thought therefore needs to be given to other possible ways of sharing reports and project information that could have a significant benefit to others – this could be an online forum where reports and questions could be posted for

universal access, or some other means of exchange. Will some much experience via the 161 GWSI projects to date, it is unfortunate that this is not happening already and inevitably will lead to mistakes being repeated and lessons not being shared for learning elsewhere.

An example of this was seen in Namibia, where a comprehensive project management database tool was developed during the course of the project. The Geneva WatSan team acknowledged that there had previously been no standard monitoring/management tool to be used, and that each one would need to be context-specific. However, with the amount of time and effort invested in the development of this database it is probable that the Namibian example could be satisfactorily amended for use elsewhere ... but this information needs to be more widely known and access to it needs to be facilitated.

Conclusions

- The GWSI remains centrally coordinated and forms part of the responsibilities of the small WatSan team in the Health Department of the Geneva Secretariat of the IFRC. They, with their field colleagues at Zone level, remain responsible for updating the materials, working on new initiatives and disseminating the messages. One officer at the RC/EU Office in Brussels supports the relationship with the EUWF.
- One ongoing challenge is to ensure consolidated and accurate reporting is undertaken to show the sum of the Red Cross & Red Crescent outcomes towards the targets and the MDGs. A standardized method of counting beneficiary numbers and more comprehensive data submission for all programme activities by all partners would add real credibility to the reporting.
- There also needs to be a better-developed 'lessons sharing' mechanism, so project experiences, reports, evaluations and associated material can be shared between partners. This could be 'virtual' and could be managed by a NS on behalf of the wider Federation, and should be voluntary, but without it the various parts of the RC Movement run real risks of missing out on lessons learning and will not avoid unnecessary duplication of activities.

Looking Ahead ~ some points for discussion



1. How to improve the impact and scope of the GWSI from 2010 to 2015 and beyond

A suitable balance has to be struck between aiming for increased numerical targets and ensuring good, effective and sustainable programming is being delivered. The initial, indeed the revised, targets of GWSI have been surpassed already, and while many of these projects are still underway or just beginning, it would be very unfortunate if real sustainability was not guaranteed and if the level of knowledge and uptake at community level regressed in the coming years. So much for contributing to the MDGs!

There is some concern - voiced not only by the IFRC - that currently the MDG targets are only being measured in quantitative terms. However, it is obvious that during (and indeed at the end of) project implementation periods, only an indication of sustainability can be measured - what is mostly measured is the outputs. For realistic sustainability and impact measurement, GWSI projects need to be revisited again a number of years after conclusion to gain a real insight into impact and to learn what may need to be done in other ways to ensure a realistic degree of impact and sustainability.

The IFRC WatSan Team in Geneva has therefore decided to provide a set of tools (based on the existing GWSI tools) to assist this 'post conclusion' impact assessment, and to field test these tools with a number of the GWSI projects that were completed first (mostly in 2009/10) and measure their impact by the end of 2012.

2. Sanitation, sanitation, sanitation.

Another imbalance needs correction also - that of sanitation. As indicated earlier, the likelihood of the MDG target on provision of clean water being reached is high, but that for improved sanitation is significantly lower. The Red Cross Movement needs to strive to increase its programming on sanitation activities - which will include both more focus in programme planning but also advocacy with donors and supporters about the importance of this less tangible and photogenic component of the work.

In recent years, and following attempts by other players but included in some GWSI projects, the low-cost/high coverage of the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach has been piloted with some initially positive results. Though this approach has its detractors (for example, although it may trigger improved sanitation coverage it has to be linked effectively to the PHAST methodology), this may be a step in the right direction. The IFRC WatSan team would like to see more research done in this field but also needs the support of the Federation's membership to do so.

3. GWSI and further integration of resilience, climate change, food security, DRR and health components.

There is no doubt that by increasing sustainable WatSan coverage and HP awareness and practices GWSI projects contribute to community resilience. There are several examples of where GWSI projects have adapted conventional water supply technology and approaches to contribute to the existing and future threats of climate change and DRR (for example, in rainwater harvesting, protection of water catchments, using 'sub-surface' water sources to protect and enhance deep aquifers, use of solar technology instead of fossil fueled systems, moving water sources away from flood plains, encouraging communities to understand how water may be treated at home or at source when polluted by flooding, etc).

In the area of food security less has been achieved, as water as a source for agriculture or livestock is seldom considered in the available funding streams that traditionally focus upon water for human consumption only.

These debates need to continue actively, and innovative ideas and approaches need to be developed, implemented and shared.

4. The continued relevance of the GWSI 'criteria', their application and the effectiveness and impact of knowledge management.

The numerous National Societies that have built up extensive experience of delivering WatSan programming need to find some better ways to share lessons learned and project documentation between themselves.

Given the stated desire to learn from and contribute towards a sharing of lessons from other programmes, the RC Movement needs to explore options on making available an easily accessible online platform, which all GWSI stakeholders can access. This function does not need to be handled by the Geneva team, but could be managed by a NS or NS consortium on a 'virtual' basis (similar to the Climate Centre or Psychosocial Centre).

5. Increased resource mobilisation and further 'scaling-up'.

Scaling up for the purpose of aiming for higher targets has to be questioned as an appropriate strategy unless the quality and sustainability of the interventions can also be assured. Working with a wider range of NSs to inform their programme planning and delivery capacities would be an effective way of supporting the sustainability and assuring capacities are developed at NS level to continue the work.

Based on the experience with the EUWF, it is feasible to consider that the Red Cross/Red Crescent could raise substantial sums of money from major institutional donors to continue support to the GWSI initiative. A detailed strategy would have to be developed to manage such an approach, but this could give smaller NSs access to funding support to strengthen their WatSan interventions following the GWSI criteria.

The Secretariat could look at and encourage 'framework agreements' with major donors, for example, to complement project-based funding requests, to try to leverage larger funding packages on behalf of the membership. This process is already underway between the IFRC and the European Union. The Secretariat could support and coordinate, in partnership with the NSs and the donors, project 'vetting' of proposals to be financed through allocations of the block funding.

However, there are several unanswered questions at this stage, such as:

- ➔ Who would lead on the approach (it is reasonable to assume the Secretariat would take the lead) and how would this investment be financed?
- ➔ If such money was negotiated by the WatSan Unit and made available for draw-down, would the Federation management agree its allocation to WatSan programming, rather than a range of other priorities?
- ➔ In view of comments made earlier about the need to integrate more closely with the other health initiatives, could these funds realistically be 'ring-fenced' for GWSI projects?
- ➔ If it was negotiated as an allocated fund into which the RC members could apply, who would make the decisions on allocation of funds and using what criteria?
- ➔ Modalities would need to be identified for allocation, management and oversight of any allocation of funds, and accountability for them needs to be tight.

6. What are the management implications and needs up to 2015.

Most National Societies have developed skills and capacities internally to manage their ongoing programme work which is commendable, but at the same time the Secretariat's team can offer supplementary inputs, not least by drawing on the wider overview and greater international focus of their work. These should be complementary and not seen as challenging. However, it would appear that there still needs to be some discussion between the various sides about what can be expected of the Secretariat staff, and how any contributions they make can be financially supported. This is not an appeal for funds – this is a suggestion that the debate is widened to make the best use of the available resources.

7 Summary of recommendations

1. All partners should increase their focus on the quality and scale of the collective RC/RC contribution, ensuring a well-coordinated approach is followed. This also implies an improvement in the timeliness and quality of the reporting to show a concerted approach to addressing the Millennium Development Goals.
2. For the remainder of the GWSI period, highlight the need to scale up the sanitation component of the projects, through advocacy to donors and to programme designers, to ensure the various interventions contribute significantly more on sanitation towards the MDGs.
3. Re-emphasise the importance of the programme designs addressing the 'software' inputs, on health promotion but also the community management methodology necessary, and concentrate on securing full engagement of the communities prior to the delivery of the hardware.
4. Continue the momentum of the GWSI, realizing that development efforts cannot be attained without increased sustainable access to water and sanitation, and that WatSan efforts need to be seen as absolutely crucial to community resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
5. Continue to develop approaches addressing the differing needs of urban and rural populations, not least as the migration to urban areas continues to add stresses to the infrastructure and systems currently in place.
6. Consider developing a workable and effective means of sharing project experiences and feedback between countries/projects/NSs. Most NSs have indicated their interest in this and would be prepared to contribute (however, some would prefer in writing/electronically and some would prefer via meetings/workshops). Consider a NS being asked to lead on this activity.
7. Redevelop the GWSI paperwork and toolkit to encompass:
 - a clearer and more joined-up set of working tools, better integrating other health activities (CBHFA, HIV, HBC, DRR programmes, which often share the same volunteer base anyway) indicating a coordinated approach towards the wider goals of health improvement (as identified in the new Health Strategy).
 - standardization of the various current sets of indicators into a single model.
 - standardization of the M&E system to be used.
 - guidance on reporting criteria around selection and counting of beneficiary numbers.

- in addition to the checklist and tools for initial planning, make available templates and software packages for project monitoring and management, financial oversight and other needs (a basic design which can be tailored easily for each individual situation).
8. Develop a broader communications strategy – including how to proactively broadcast the messages - using case studies and past experiences to help all RC partners with advocacy and fund-raising for ongoing WatSan programming, stressing that access to water and sanitation is a human right and an issue of dignity. Highlight the significant contribution being made by the RC/RC to the attainment of the MDGs.
 9. Investigate the possibilities of working to leverage block funding from foundations, the development banks and/or major corporate donors to be allocated internally to NSs for WatSan programming. Agree an internal mechanism to allocate and manage such funding between the Federation and the NS partners.
 10. Plan to undertake a number of objective post-implementation ‘impact assessments’ on finished projects, several years later, to determine the real impact and sustainability of the interventions, and to develop lessons to be learned from these assessments.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference, Mid Term Review:

The Global Water & Sanitation Initiative (GWSI)

A ten year initiative, 2005 to 2015, 'Contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by scaling-up established capacities'

Background:

Over the last 20 years water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WatSan) activities and interventions have been and continue to be a crucial and significant component of Federation and member National Societies (NS's) responses to both 'acute' and 'chronic' beneficiary needs. The Federation and its membership are recognised as a major player in both emergency and developmental WatSan contexts by its peers.

As a critical component of emergency health in the 'acute' context and health overall in the recovery and 'chronic' context, most major emergency operations have a significant WatSan component and in most cases continue through the recovery phase to longer-term developmental programming. WatSan naturally falls under the health umbrella, and is primarily, in the RC/RC context, a community based preventative health activity with a focus upon reducing and containing WatSan related morbidity and mortality and the threat of such while restoring or enhancing dignity to those in crisis or underserved.

In 2004, an in-house, informal consultation of what had been accomplished in this sector since the early 1990's (and especially since the Great Lakes operations) led the WatSan Unit of the Health Department to take stock and map out to what had been achieved, and how it would continue in longer term programming and the GWSI was the outcome of that process. In particular, we considered what we were contributing in the developmental context and especially in regard to the 8 UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), 4 of which had specific WatSan components but most notably 'reducing by half those without access to sustainable safe water and basic sanitation by 2015'.

The result was the launch of GWSI with a 10 year time frame to further build upon established RC/RC WatSan capacities and further 'scale-up' efforts to contribute to the MDG targets. By coincidence more than by design, the time frame and objective matched both an increase in international efforts and the launch of a 2nd UN Decade for water.

The GWSI from its outset was not seen as a programme in the conventional sense, but as a means to encourage and support the Federation membership, regardless of whether projects in the field would be bilateral or multilateral in nature, to adhere to an agreed upon set of criteria relating to beneficiary targeting, economies of scale, technology choice, methodology, partnership, sustainability and falling in line with Government planning and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM).

Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review (MTR):

Overall Objective: To review and evaluate the GWSI in five areas:

1. Outcomes and impact upon beneficiaries and contribution to the UN MDGs, in quantity and quality.
2. The role and effectiveness of the Federation in providing guidance, technical support and capacity building to NSs.
3. The role, effectiveness and acceptance of GWSI internally especially at Federation Zone and Regional levels.
4. The impact and effectiveness of GWSI in encouraging internal (RC/RC) and external partnerships, resource mobilisation, advocacy and representation.
5. How is GWSI managed, reported upon (internally and externally) and what finance management implications have resulted.

And on the basis of the findings, make recommendations as to:

1. GWSI 2010 to 2015 and beyond, how we can improve impact and scope.
2. GWSI and further integration of resilience, climate change, food security, DRR and health components.
3. Consider the continued relevance of the GWSI 'criteria', their application and the effectiveness and impact of knowledge management.
4. How to facilitate Increased resource mobilisation and further 'scaling-up'.
5. What are the management implications and needs up to 2015

Methodology:

An external consultant with knowledge and experience of working with the RC/RC and a working knowledge and experience in community and health programming will undertake the following:

- i. Principally a desk review of all GWSI literature, tools and guidance documents and
- ii. Through an interview process with key informants, determine the usefulness and 'buy-in' to those tools and guidance and how they may be expanded/improved.
- iii. Review mid-term and final evaluations of GWSI projects (both multilateral and bilateral, and in the three zones, Americas, Africa and Asia/Pacific) and identify achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

Key Informants:

- i. NS focal points in project delivery (both 'host' and partner NSs).
- ii. Federation Departments, Health Department, Resource Mobilisation, External Relations, Finance Department, Zone Offices.
- iii. The RC Liaison Office, Brussels. EU and other external partners.
- iv. GWSI Project Managers and counterparts, past and present.

The Consultant will be responsible as well for consolidating all findings, conclusions and recommendations in the final report (including a 1 to 2 page

executive summary). In principle there is no limitation for the report but if the final report goes beyond 30 pages, a short version (max. 5 pages) highlighting key findings and recommendations should be produced in addition to the main report.

Time scale:

18 working days with draft review submitted at the end of the period. Most work to be undertaken virtually. Preferably to have draft findings and recommendations available by 14th March, 2011.

Annex 2: List of interviewees

(and/or those who completed and returned emailed questionnaires)

Robert Fraser	Senior Officer, WatSan Unit, Health Department, IFRC Geneva
William Carter	Officer, WatSan Unit, Health Department, IFRC Geneva
Uli Jaspers	Head, WatSan Unit, Health Department, IFRC Geneva
Marine Wallace	Senior Assistant, WatSan Unit, Health Department, IFRC Geneva
Kathryn Clarkson	IFRC Regional WatSan Delegate for Asia Zone, Kuala Lumpur
Axel Vande Veegaete	Belgian (Fl.) Red Cross, Mechelen, Belgium
Wim Cloots	Belgian (Fl.) Red Cross, Mechelen, Belgium
Martin Krottmayer	Programme Officer, RC/EU Office, Brussels
Sendy Veerabadren	French Red Cross, Paris
Mirkka Henttonen	Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki
Toni Vasama	Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki
Marco Saarinen	Project Advisor, Finnish RC, Nampula, Mozambique
Michel Becks	Advisor, Water and Sanitation, The Netherlands Red Cross Society, The Hague
Achille Lokossou-Dah-Lande	Chef Unité Suivi-Evaluation, Croix-Rouge Togolaise
Elmar Gobl	Austrian Red Cross, Vienna
Malene Pontoppidan	Danish Red Cross, Copenhagen
Ignacio Roman	Spanish Red Cross, Madrid
Emilie Goller	Austrian Red Cross, Vienna
Izedeem Elghal	Qatar Red Crescent, Qatar (and Niger)
Libertad Gonzalez	Consultant (formerly with WatSan Unit in Geneva)
Anna Marie O'Connell	Asia Desk Officer, Irish Red Cross, Dublin
Ciaran Cierans	Africa Desk Officer, Irish Red Cross, Dublin
Noor Pwani	Southern Africa WatSan Delegate, IFRC Johannesburg
Gonzalo Aquino	Americas Zone WatSan/HP Coordinator, Panama
Erik Pleijel	Belgian (Fl.) RC WatSan delegate, Windhoek, Namibia
Diane Moody	British Red Cross, London
Carla Osorio	Head of Water Facility Unit, European Commission, Brussels

Lellis Braganza	Desk for Water Facility, European Commission, Brussels
Olaug Bergseth	Relationship Management Department, IFRC Geneva
Olivier van Bunnan	Finance Department, IFRC Geneva
Domitille Cadet	EU Advisor, IFRC Geneva
François Courtade	EU Advisor, IFRC Geneva
Padam Kumar Khadka	Director, Drinking Water and Sanitation Department, Nepal Red Cross Society
Amar Mani Poudel	National Coordinator, Drinking Water and Sanitation Dept, Nepal Red Cross Society

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality / It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality / In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence / The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service / It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity / There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
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Robert S M Fraser
Senior Officer, Water and Sanitation Coordinator
Water, Sanitation and Emergency Health Unit
Health Department
robert.fraser@ifrc.org