

# Water and Environmental Sanitation Network India

## Brief Concept Note



**WES-Net India**  
WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION



## WASH India:

The Rural and urban WASH sector is now (since early 2010) in its fourth phase of development in India. The Government of India, and as well as the States Department of Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation focus is now to ensure sustainability (thru.' water safety and security) and assured availability in terms of portability, adequacy, convenience, affordability and equity of WASH facilities, while also adopting decentralized, a demand driven and area specific approach by greater involvement now of PRIs, civil society, community based organizations, apart from the private sector.

The sector has always acknowledged contribution made also by the civil society and interest and attention paid by the international agencies to support India's WASH sector development. There are examples of good practices, the innovative work done by the external agencies and civil society in the WASH sector development, which work merits to be archived, knowledge (tacit and products) managed and disseminated for replication for the overall improvements in the sector.

## Relevance:

The hurdles explain the complex state of affairs as it exists today in the sector such as: Un-matching Performance compared to people's expectations, Policy and programs require to be de-mystified; Vast gap in people's perceptions and sectoral prescriptions -providers role has become complacent; Appropriate and affordable solutions- technological solutions (water-Wastewater) seldom assimilated & disseminated; Engineering approaches disregard traditional & time tested local/ traditional solutions and practices (both implicit and explicit knowledge); Linkages and convergences between projects, people and professionals work ignored- connectivity missing; Accrual of cumulative benefits thru.' peer reviews, sharing and learning, innovations & research is least realized; best practices and excellent work seldom adapted for replication- rather attempt is to reinvent each and every-time, and all this adds up to the Hurdles to achieve Scalability and attain sustainability in the WASH sector.

Based on the need felt (at the GOI and states DDWS, sector professional, Civil society and corporate) it has always been acknowledged that the good work, rich experiences and proven practices in the sector require to be disseminated

for wider replication. To bring in perceptible systemic changes, there is need for a platform, a forum, a learning alliance (at national/ regional level representing WASH sector stakeholders) for greater interaction, professional discussions, exchange of knowledge- information on the existing and continuously evolving multiple thematic & implementation needs in the sector.

## WES-Net India:

The Water and Environmental sanitation network of India or WES-Net India is an informal network, a learning alliance of stakeholders, knowledge management (practices and experiences), research and training, network in the Water and Environmental Sanitation sector in India. WES Net India is a dynamic need-based process of synthesizes of assimilated information and dissemination of the (tacit and products based knowledge) for use by all in the sector, esp. relevant and supportive to the pertinent rural communities requirements as regards plan, implement and manage rural WASH facilities.

WES-Net India was set up in 2004 by a group of like-minded sector professionals and registered in 2009 as a society under the Indian Societies Act, with a Governing Body, a General Body and a National Coordinator. The network membership is open to all individuals and the organizations. There currently are over 2,500 individual and institutional members across the country, including representatives from UNICEF, Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia, UNESCO, UNDP, Water-Aid, Plan International, and a wide range of NGOs, consulting firms and other individuals. WES-Net India has already started the regional/state level consultations on its way to establish the WES-Net India networks in regions/ states thru.' 2015, and in the process enhance the WES-Net India membership from present more than 1,900 members to 3,000 @ 25%/ year growth over next 4 years i.e. by 2015, and strengthen the new ways to assimilate sector knowledge and dissemination for practical use by the community.

## AIM:

WES-Net India aim is to enhance VIA (the road in Italian)- to effectively promote and manage dissemination of sectoral knowledge and experiences, practices and sector relevant information from the agencies and transmit to the commu-



nity for effective, efficient, sustainable rural WASH development in India, thru.' Improved.

- Visibility- debates and discusses thru.' networking and sharing partners professional & innovative work, & improve connectivity through networking, debates and events;
- Information - knowledge about practices, experiences, innovations in the sector and dissemination (churning of sector work into protocols- technical, thematic, policy briefs and practical solutions etc.); and
- Awareness – on what works and delivers, implement safety and security plans, sharing and learning for replication and avoidance of duplication.

## Vision:

Safe drinking water and environmental sanitation for all, at all times, in India by 2017

## Goal:

WES-Net India goal is to contribute to the DDWS-National/ States Rural Drinking Water Programme-2010 and Nationwide Total Sanitation Campaign thru.' Knowledge dissemination, fostering and strengthening partnerships, networking, dialoguing and lobbying and advocacy on issues of strategic and principled relevance in the sector, aimed to enhance the effectiveness of sustainable WASH development in India- **for at-least 1% population by 2017, nationally.**

**Objectives-** WES- Net India- a learning alliance of stakeholders in the sector to:

- **Enhance and integrate** sector partners knowledge (both tacit and knowledge products)
- **Strengthen and utilize** the partners work, experiences and proven experiences/ practices
- Improve coordination, communication for knowledge sharing and foster more **effective partnerships** at all levels
- **Facilitate** and encourage **debates and dialogues** on critical and crucial issues and **disseminate information and knowledge about solutions** on what works and delivers in the sector
- **Advocate support to the DDWS-National/ states plans, policy and programs, with special focus to poor, disadvantaged and marginalized**

The overall objective is to have a better informed local community about its needs on WASH and to which adequate and appropriate technical solutions have been firmed up, adequate capacity has been build of the sector practitioners and beneficiaries towards accomplishing a long term relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable rural WASH development in India.

## KEY TASKS/ INPUTS:

### TASKS to be PERFORMED by WES-Net India (also State Chapters):

The tasks to be performed by the WES-Net India, also thru.' its state chapters (an alliance, a single window sector knowledge information sharing network) are:

- **Knowledge (best practices and experiences) hub, and Action Research network, and Advocacy;**
- **Facilitate Training and capacity building thru.' Networking and Coordination**

### Through Facilitating:

#### **A. Sector Coordination**

**Complementation, collaborations and cohesion between partners work** in WASH sector, India - sectoral knowledge, experiences & operative practices;

Play a **catalytic role** to strengthen and further metamorphose the linkages between DDWS and Donors and Donors and CSOs and community;

**Perform as a bridge** between sector partners and moderate conflicts resolution;

**Support establish a Platform** for benefit of the sector practitioners & community;

#### **B. Sector Communication**

**Make extensive use of WES-Net India and Solution Exchange** e-based interactive modes of communication;

**Develop a mechanism of Sharing** and disseminating information for wider replication of the good work

Acts as a channel to **receive feedback and back feed** for use by stakeholders-practitioners at states/regions/national levels

#### **C. Dialogue, Events and Discussion**

Adopt to a demand responsive approach on DWS-states/ GOI mandate and **facilitate debates, dialogue** and disseminate organization's knowledge and work to the right people and



places;

**Stimulate debates, dialogue** on crucial strategic sectoral issues, also pertinent to regional/ national contexts; Evolve as a venue for outcome focused normative discussions;

Develop into an interaction forum for harmonized- efficient deployment of scarce national financial and human resources; Develop as a sounding box/ mouth piece for the genuine CSO concerns;

#### **D. Capacity Building & Research**

**Based on demand contribute/** participate in **training and capacity building and research;**

Support to bridge the gap between Knowledge Resources Centre of the GOI/ state/region and **develop linkages** between KRC and CCDO, WSSO in states;

#### **E. Advocacy**

Support issue based development focus **advocacy networking** and voice raising.

**Studies** to research the state of affairs in the sector, the **best practices and innovative experiences** aiming replication

**Network with the past and current networks** working in the WASH programmes, and other water-related issues in the State/ Region/ India and work with common approach to contribute to achieve target MDGs by 2015.

#### **Outputs:**

##### **Developing Knowledge products-**

- Over next 2/3 years undertake Productization of technical, IEC and other sector benefit protocols and evolve into a Sector
- Knowledge (synthesis and dissemination) hub- Collation and corroboration of sector knowledge for dissemination to users.

##### **A. Exchange knowledge & information:-**

- Learning and sharing Platform- Organize thematic events and learning alliances at state, regional and national-levels to exchange information and experience;
- Joint events-co-ordinated/ co-branding of events e.g. World water week; people's water week; people's sanitation Week; regional/ state level water weeks;
- Participate in joint (multi-partner) studies, evaluations and specialized work to support sector policy, plans and implementation needs, both at national and states level

##### **B. Documentation-**

- Disseminate partners work on best practices, think pieces & standardized knowledge products
- Policy briefs on contemporary issues and position papers prepared for dissemination;
- Recommendations and findings from various/ all sector meetings compiled and shared with partners;

##### **C. Research coordination:**

- Perform synthesis of the solution exchange work produced in shape of consolidated reply, action in research and publications- perform validation and publish the finished product for wider dissemination
- Publish an Annual Research Compendium with abstracts of all pilot government and non-government projects being implemented in the WASH sector – work mainly done by regional/ state chapters and also national level
- A repository of practical solutions of problems faced at the implementation level by the community and the practitioners (designing, implementation, technical solutions, water quality, water treatment technologies, and O&M of facilities and sanitation related gaps)

##### **D. Advocacy for improved DWS Policy, programmes and systems-**

- Launch strategic issue based advocacy campaigns, also on contemporary issues
- Support DDWS at GOI and state level for message/s campaigning and crucial, thematic and implementation issues
- Debate and discuss also in public domain thru.' events and seminars
- Arrange events for validation of synthesized knowledge products prior to dissemination
- Produce reports as part of inputs to GOI/ states policy and planning

Contemporary issues e.g. Water safety and security planning, WASH in Schools, Barriers to communication (strategy) for Sanitation coverage and usage, Stakeholders networking, Hand – washing, WQM&S, Eco-san, Sanitation systems, Climate change, IWRM, Communication, IEC, Eco- san, P-P-P, E-governance & M&E, CSR, Water quality and Purification technologies..

**MAJOR SUPPORTING PARTNERS: UNICEF India; Action for Food Production (AFPRO); PLAN-India; Water-Aid India; WSP-SA;**