

Guidance Notes on issues for projects and programs to consider when working towards a vibrant water sector

These notes are provided to support projects and programs in thinking about their water related work, and how they can move towards a more strategic engagement in the sector.

In many water related interventions the ultimate goal is to address poverty and social justice. Likewise improving gender equality, contributing to social inclusion, addressing rights to access to resources and services and improving governance systems tend to be objectives that inform our approaches.

The vibrant water sector approach provides a systematic framework which considers all three areas of human condition, social position and enabling environments as well as the objectives above. The framework is based on ten points which map where the project or program is, in relation to key elements of a vibrant sector. A similar map or situation analysis of the sector in the country as a whole is also useful to identify the status of the sector and where there is a potential for influence. These guidance notes provide explanations to the 10 points prior to project or program managers filling in quantitative and qualitative self-assessments of where they are at present.

1. Policy influence and advocacy

This includes understanding of the water sector context at the national and local level, engaging with it and identifying a suitable focus for policy and advocacy influence. Without this element of looking outwards, implementation work risks having limited influence within the local and national context and therefore will not bring about the scale of change required.

2. Networked implementation

In all aspects of work from service delivery to policy influence, best practice is to link up and coordinate with others. This is for many reasons including to maximize peer learning, minimize inconsistency of approaches and to increase collective voice. In networking with others there is considerable value not only in networking with local and international NGOs but also with those that have different comparative advantages including academic institutions, government and the private sector.

3. Scale, scalability and cost effectiveness

The needs in each country are massive and it is important that the sector intervention in each country considers the issue of scale and scalability – i.e. impacting MDG figures. Service delivery work will not make a difference unless the scale in itself is significant enough. The impact of service delivery to a few households can be even more influential if it is linked to the wider country by serving as a pilot, documenting and sharing learning, providing experience on which to lobby for policy change etc. The link to cost effectiveness in this regard is crucial. Only activities that are cost effective can be taken to scale and it is therefore of paramount importance for projects to be concerned with cost-effectiveness not just as an issue of value for money but also in terms of value for replicability.

4. Integrated water resource management and conflict management

Best practice indicates that the multiple uses of water need to be considered, and where possible addressed. This includes attention to the long term resource management rather than just the extraction of water. Also, in addition to water and sanitation uses, consideration should be given to small scale irrigation usage, water for income generation activities, for livestock and washing, etc. Conflict management skills are likely to be needed as there are often competing needs and priorities for water usage and the voice of the less powerful needs to be protected in the dialogue and decision making process.

5. Integrated cross-sector approach

Poverty and social justice can to some extent be addressed through the water sector in isolation; however in theory and practice the water sector meshes in dynamic ways with other sectors, such as with education, health, livelihoods and HIV-Aids. Rather than sticking within sectoral silos, a holistic approach is encouraged that explores cross-sectoral linkages. The links can be useful both within multi-sectoral organizations, and with different other sector based organizations and can be implementation focused and/or in terms of policy advocacy work.

6. Women's needs and women's empowerment

The water sector has potential to contribute significantly to women's needs and wellbeing, since improvements in water access frees women's time and energy from daily water related drudgery. In addition, water related interventions can make transformatory inroads into gender inequalities, by engaging women in decision making and leadership roles, and actively looking at ways in which the work can contribute to women's empowerment. Likewise there are windows of opportunity in terms of engaging men in ways that promote equity, through their involvement in sanitation and hygiene for example.

7. The rights of the poor and vulnerable

The central aim of both service delivery and policy influence work is increased access and rights over resources for the poor and vulnerable. Marginalization might stem from differences, e.g. in ethnicity, religion or due to a disability or chronic illness. Both absolute and relative poverty should be taken into account so the argument that a whole area is poor and hence justifies intervention is not enough without an analysis of comparative poverty and vulnerability within the communities which if ignored can result in exclusion of some people within the community. By contrast if the differences are well understood the project or program can look at ways of addressing the needs and the rights of the most marginalized within poor communities.

8. Voice and stakeholder dialogue

Ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice and engage through an agreed on-going joint process can maximize the chances of the approaches and results being appropriate and sustainable. The stakeholders can include local community representatives, local government, the private sector, funders, local and international NGOs working in the area and others. The dialogue process can increase the voice of women (see point 6) and the poor and marginalized (point 7), bringing them to the table with the traditionally more powerful voices of the locally powerful, as well as with governments and funders.

9. Sustainability

In many developing countries up to 1/3 of water points are not working and latrines constructed not used. Greater attention to issues of social, technical and economic sustainability during the planning and implementation phase would improve these records. Being aware of percentage coverage in an area and monitoring the projects contribution towards improvements in coverage over time – including well after phase out - can ensure greater attention and commitment to long term sustainability.

10. Innovation, learning, documenting

A vibrant approach includes looking at opportunities to innovate and improve on current practices, and to undertake all work with a spirit of reflection and willingness to learn. To maximize the impact of the learning this needs to be documented in ways that ensure that others can benefit from the learning, e.g. for policy influence, peer learning, fundraising. Documenting uptake by others, following the project or program's initiatives, is also important. Innovation, learning and documentation needs to be considered as part of the work, staffed and budgeted for.

Tools available accompanying these notes

- A Quantitative self assessment of contribution towards a vibrant sector
- B Qualitative self assessment of contribution towards a vibrant sector
- C Framework for country level situational analysis of vibrancy of water sector

A. Self assessment on project/program contribution towards vibrant water sector

Country _____
Organization _____ Project/Program _____
Date _____
Assessment made by _____

The findings from this self-assessment can be summarized on the spider diagram in Annex 1, with each notch on the diagram representing the total number scored for that section. The assessment can be done as a one off exercise but is probably more useful as a monitoring tool to track changes over time – e.g. annually. Where an organization has a programmatic approach, the different projects within that program could be monitored separately.

This self-assessment A can be complimented with B - the questionnaire on contribution to the water sector - which can be used to document current experiences and reflect on ideas about what to test out in the future. The accompanying questionnaire is thus the qualitative side to this quantitative self-assessment. Please ask for a soft copy of this form if you only have a hard copy in order to be able to keep soft copies and e-mail them etc. A soft copy can be found at the CARE website at [REDACTED].

Policy influence and advocacy (1)

a) Is the project engaged with local policy issues?	a) 0= not = clear evidence of policy change	1 = some	2 = significant	3
b) Is the project engaged with regional or national policy issues?	b) 0= not = clear evidence of policy change	1 = some	2 = significant	3
Total		0	1	2 3 4 5 6

Networked implementation (2)

a) How is the project encouraging coordination and linkages with other NGOs, b)... the private sector, c) academic organizations	a) NGO links (one or more) 0 = none 1 = occasionally meet 2 = ad hoc activities 3 = significant link with one 4 = strategic ongoing with 2 or more			
	b) Private sector links (one or more) 0 = none 1 = occasionally meet 2 = ad hoc activities 3 = strategic ongoing link			2
	c) Academia links (one or more) 0 = none 1 = occasionally meet 2 = ad hoc activities 3 = strategic ongoing link			2
Total		0	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Scale, scalability and cost effectiveness(3)

a) What is the % coverage you have contributed so far in each district for water	a) 0 = ≤25 % 3 = 76+ %	1=26- 50	2 = 51-75 %	
b) What is the % coverage you have contributed so far in each district for sanitation?	b) 0 = ≤25 % 3 = 76+ %	1=26- 50	2 = 51-75 %	
c) Are you tracking impact on hygiene in measurable ways?	c) 0 = not tracking	1 = tracking and measurable impact		
d) Are you tracking your cost effectiveness?	d) 0 = not tracking	1 = tracking and measurable		1 =
e) What evidence is there of others scaling up ideas/processes from your project/program	e) 0 = none 2 = some 3 = significant and attributed	1 = vague/ a little		
Total		0	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Integrated water use, climate change and conflict resolution (4)

a) Have you provided regarding additional water uses (e.g. cattle troughs, clothes wash-basins, micro-	a) 0 = none 3 = integrated with all work	1= a few	2 =
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irrigation)? b) What have you done towards watershed management, water source protection and 'climate proofing'? c) Have you learned, developed and documented conflict management processes	b) 0 = nothing 1= some 2 = significant amounts 3 = integrated with all work c) 0 = no expertise 1 = significant 2 = documented and systematic Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
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Integrated cross-sector approach (5)

a) What cross-sector links with other activities or programs within your organization are you involved in? b) What cross-sector links with other organizations are you involved in with this project?	a) 0 = none 1= a few 2 = significant 3 =strong internal cross-sectoral linkages a) 0 = none 1= a few 2 = significant 3 = i strong external cross-sectoral linkages Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
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Women's needs and women's empowerment (6)

a) Data on meeting women's needs is output, outcome or impact level b) What is the average % of women in leadership positions on the committees? c) What additional thinking or activities undertaken to increase women's empowerment and gender equity?	a) 0 no data 1 = output 2 = outcome 3 = impact level b) 0 = ≤25 % 1 = 25-50 % 2 = 50%+ c) 0 = none 1= some 2= significant 3= integrated work with evidence of impact Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
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The needs and rights of the poor and vulnerable (7)

a) Have the most vulnerable and poorest been defined? b) What mechanisms have you used to ensure that the most vulnerable and poorest within a community are supported and not discriminated against?	a) 0= no 1= yes in general terms re community involved 2 = clear definition and analysis of poorest b) 0 = nothing specific 1= some 2= significant 3= clear strategic targeting with evidence of impact Total 0 1 2 3 4 5
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Voice and stakeholder dialogue (8)

a) What systematic mechanisms have you used to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in decisions? b) What systematic mechanisms have you developed to ensure that the voice of the less powerful is heard?	a) 0 = no mechanism 1= ad hoc consultation 2 = significant 3 = systematic consultation b) 0 = no mechanisms 1 = ad hoc 2 = significant 3= systematic ways of addressing imbalance with evidence of equal voice Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
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Sustainability (9)

a) What % of the water work implemented by you in this project area is currently functioning?	a) 0 = ≤50 % 1 = ≤75 % 2 = ≤ 80% 3 above 80% b) 0 = not in place 1 = in place but some
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<p>b) Are water quality monitoring processes post phase out in place and sufficient? b) What % of the sanitation work shows evidence of being sustained? c) Is the hygiene promotion process developed in a way that the promotion will continue and be sustained post phase out?</p>	<p>doubts 2 = can have confidence in sufficient and effective system being in place c) 0 = ≤50 % 1 = ≤75 % 2 = ≤ 80% 3 above 80% d) 0 = no process for continuation post process 1 = some processes 2 = significant thought given to post phase out ongoing hygiene promotion processes Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ____</p>
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Innovation and learning (10)

<p>a) What have been the key successes this period? b) Have you tested out a new idea in this reporting period? What was it and what are the findings? Have you documented and shared these? c) Is there any evidence of others doing things differently based on your lessons and innovations?</p>	<p>a) 0 = none 1 = one key success, not documented 2 = success documented and shared b) 0 = none 1 = idea tested out 2 = findings documented and shared b) 0 = none 1 = some 2 = clear, documented evidence of uptake Total 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____</p>
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Summary

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 -----
----- 7 ----- 8 -----
9 ----- 10 ----- TOTAL _____

Once you have filled in your assessment, including the web diagram on the next page, please keep in a safe place so that you can compare with your analysis in future years, thus showing changes over time. Also please e-mail us with a copy so that we can also track changes over time in different projects and different countries and also as another backup.
E-mail copy to hpankhurst@care.org so that she can put it on a shared drive at CARE in Atlanta.

B. Self-assessment report on project/program contribution towards vibrant water sector


Country _____

Organization _____ Project/Program _____ Date _____

Assessment by _____

This questionnaire on project/program contribution to the water sector be used to document current experiences and reflect on ideas about what to test out in the future. The assessment can be done as a one off exercise but is probably more useful as a monitoring tool to track changes over time – e.g. annually. Where an organization has a programmatic approach, the different projects within that programme could be monitored separately.

This questionnaire can be complimented with a quantitative self-assessment with spider diagram (format A).

Please ask for a soft copy of this form if you only have a hard copy, in order to be able to fill in the expandable boxes. It can be found at the CARE website at 

Policy influence and advocacy(1)

- c) Has the project engaged with local policy issues relevant to the sector since last report? If so explain
- d) Has the project engaged with regional or national policy issues? If so explain
- e) How can the project link better with policy issues relevant to the sector?
- f) What aspects of local policy which currently inhibit activities could there be room to explore engagement on?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

Networked implementation (2)

- a) Who are the ongoing implementing and funding agencies working in your project area and which of these are you linked up with?
- b) How has the project encouraged coordination and linkages with the private sector, other NGOs, academic organizations?
- c) How can this be improved?

- a)
- b)
- c)

Scale, scalability and cost effectiveness (3)

- a) What is the % coverage you have contributed in each district for water, what is the project goal?
- b) What is the % coverage you have contributed so far in each district for sanitation what is the project goal?
- c) What is the impact on hygiene so far and how are you measuring this?
- d) Are you tracking your cost effectiveness? If so what does it show?
- e) What are some reasons for achieving the % coverage of the project or for preventing the goals?
- f) What evidence is there of others scaling up ideas/processes from your project/program?

a) b) c) d) e) f)

Integrated water use, climate change and conflict management(4)

- a) What have you provided regarding additional water uses (e.g. no of cattle troughs, no of clothes wash-basins, micro-irrigation)?
- b) In what way have you promoted multiple uses of the water resources, what have been the linkages?
- c) What have you done towards watershed management, water source protection and 'climate proofing'(e.g. designs that takes into account current understandings of effects of climate change)?
- d) Have you developed capacities in the area of conflict management, has the project been involved significantly in conflict management? Is the process and learning documented?

a) b) c) d)

Integrated cross-sector approach (5)

- a) What cross-sector links with other activities or programs within your organization have you been involved in?
- b) What cross-sector opportunities are there that you could explore?
- c) What cross-sector links with other activities or programs on the ground with other non-water focused organizations have you developed?
- d) What cross-sector opportunities on the ground are there that you could explore?

a) b)

- c)
- d)

Women's needs and women's empowerment (6)

- a) Does your data on meeting women's needs and well-being through the project provide output, outcome or impact level information? Explain
- b) Can you provide some statistical figures in this and subsequent report regarding the promotion of women in leadership, e.g. what is the % of women in leadership positions on the committees since last report?
- c) What additional thinking or activities have been undertaken to increase women's empowerment and gender equity?

- a)
- b)
- c)

The needs and rights of the poor and vulnerable (7)

- a) Have the most vulnerable and poorest been defined?
- b) What mechanisms have you used in this project period to ensure that the most vulnerable and poorest within a community are supported and not discriminated against? Give examples.
- c) What % of the poorest are targeted for specific additional ongoing support (e.g. cross-subsidy)?

- a)
- b)
- c)

Voice and stakeholder dialogue (8)

- a) Who are the key stakeholders in this period and what mechanisms have you used in this project period to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in decisions? Are they systematic or one off? How is accountability and responsibility shared amongst stakeholders?
- b) What mechanisms have you developed to ensure that the voice of the less powerful is heard? Are they systematic or one off? Give examples.

- a)
- b)

Sustainability (9)

- a) What % of the water work implemented by you in this project area is currently functioning? (how and when measured)
- b) Are water quality monitoring processes post phase out in place and sufficient?
- c) What % of the sanitation work shows evidence of being sustained?
- d) Is the hygiene promotion process developed in a way that the promotion will continue and be sustained post phase out? explain
- e) Which activities or process that you are undertaking do you think are the least sustainable once your organization leaves and what can you do to address this?
- f) What factors are the most inhibiting vis a vis ensuring sustainability?
- g) What new ideas have you had to increase the sustainability of the project?

a) b) c) d) e) f) g)
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Innovation and learning (10)

- a) What have been the key successes this period?
- b) Have you tested out a new idea in this reporting period? What was it and what are the findings?
- c) Is there any evidence of others doing things differently based on your lessons and innovations?
- d) What are your plans regarding documentation and dissemination of progress regarding learning and innovation?

a) b) c) c)

Any other reflections

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Once you have filled in your assessment please keep in a safe place so that you can compare with your analysis in future years, thus showing changes over time. Also please e-mail us with a copy, so that we can also track changes over time in different projects, and different countries, and also as another backup for you.

Self-assessment re contribution towards vibrant water sector
Each notch on the dotted line represents one score. Self assess, score and then link up to form a web representation of achievements. Peer assess scores given

... at CARE in

