

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

Learning from experiences and success factors in Ghana and Liberia

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Foreword

This guidance paper on learning from experiences and success factors was developed based on donor missions to Ghana and Liberia in support of effective implementation of the National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) under the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. These countries represent early countries to have developed National WASH Compacts between 2010 and 2011 from deep and broad national consultations.

The SWA Secretariat and the Country Processes Task Team (CPTT) have identified and communicated a number of countries to be supported through the National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) which makes this publication a major resource. The momentum gathered to date with preparations underway for the next SWA High Level Meeting (HLM) in 2014, the timing for launching this publication is impeccable.

Representatives of the Governments of Ghana and Liberia contributed significantly to the content of this publication. Naa Demedeme, Director for the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate of the Ministry of Local Government in Ghana and Assistant Minister George Yarngo of the Ministry of Public Works in Liberia, shared a range of success factors while at the same time identified pitfalls to avoid in the NPRI process.

Key sector institutions in the countries (The United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF), WaterAid and others) were instrumental to in-country processes, serving on the technical committees that steered the processes from stage to stage. Yaw Sarkodie, Ibrahim Musah and Apollos Nwafor – from the technical or steering committees in Ghana and Liberia respectively – contributed to the content of this publication with support from the civil society representatives, including Prince Kreplah among others.

The WaterAid team in the West Africa Region (Mariame Dem and Nelson Gomonda) and the UK (Henry Northover and Clare Battle) were the architects of the structure, consultations, content quality, and timing of this publication. Without them, this learning document wouldn't have been produced for audiences likely to cut across the WASH and related sectors.

We, the WaterAid West Africa Regional Team, sincerely thank Mr Abdul-Nashiru Mohammed for preparing the draft and all contributors in Government, civil society and WaterAid to the process that led to this publication. We hope it serves a useful purpose especially as a learning document for all actors for human development.

Mariame Dem
Head of Region, West Africa

List of abbreviations

AU	African Union
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency,
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
CSO	Civil Society organisation
CPTT	Country Processes Task Team
HLM	High Level Meeting
PCD	Policy and Campaigns Department
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
NPRI	National Planning for Results Initiative
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

1. An overview of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative is a global framework for action. It was initiated in 2009 as an international partnership of national governments and development partners, including donors, multi-lateral agencies, civil society, and other development organisations. The rationale is for the partners to work together to achieve universal and sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as the sector is typically fragmented with responsibilities in many sector institutions.

It is an alliance of like-minded organisations working through members/partnership **but it is not** an organisation in itself. The members have a common vision and a set of values and guiding principles for a transparent, accountable and results-oriented framework for action to address the obstacles to global progress. Their commitment is based on mutual trust, support, and recognition of the principles of aid effectiveness, including national ownership of plans¹. The vision of the SWA partnership is **universal, sustainable sanitation, hygiene and water supply**.

1.1 The SWA framework

To effectively focus the efforts of members and galvanise support and momentum for consistency in actions across the member countries, three key priorities and two key outcomes were agreed.

Priorities:

- **Increased political prioritisation.** Engage decision-makers at the highest level (and ensure focus of the meetings and fora is 'getting results').
- **Improved evidence-based decision-making.** Ensure a greater body of evidence that tells us what to do.
- **Robust country processes.** Strengthen country-led strategic planning to make countries more investment-ready

Outcomes:

- **Increase the impact of resources.** National budgeting, aid, and existing resources target the unserved.
- **Strengthen mutual accountability.** All stakeholders (Government, CSOs, donors, and other development partners) fulfill their commitments and assigned roles.

1.2 SWA principles

Five key principles were agreed to guide members in pursuing the priorities and outcomes and these are as follows:

1. Sanitation and water is a priority sector and underlies the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

¹ SWA master PowerPoint presentation

2. Sanitation and water is a sector that requires political prioritisation, institutional capacity building and investment.
3. Efforts should focus on targeting the unserved before improving services for the already served.
4. Accountability, mutually with donors and to the country's own citizens, is necessary to achieve sanitation and water for all.
5. One national plan and planning process is necessary for sanitation and water, including detailed sector investment requirements, targets and capacity needs.

1.3 Prevailing WASH sector barriers

The WASH sector in most countries in Africa experiences similar blockages. These blockages represent major obstacles to be resolved in order for the vision of universal, sustainable sanitation and water supply to be achieved. Common barriers are summarised as follows:

1. Weak political will among national leaders and decision-makers (mainly at the national or central level) contributing to poor implementation of existing policies and enforcement of regulations.
2. Large capacity deficits across central and decentralised levels to effectively plan for WASH, implement and monitor accordingly.
3. Weak sector governance, particularly low responsiveness and accountability by duty-bearers and other service providers in fulfilling commitments.
4. Low and ineffective financing of WASH from both national and local governments worsened by poor coordination, utilisation, targeting and quality of work among others.
5. Fragmented and inefficient development partner funding as well as in-flexibility in applying resources in response to changing short and long term needs of the sector.
6. Poor monitoring and evaluation of services delivered and inadequate data at sub national levels to inform decision-making.
7. Wrong targeting of scarce resources necessary to build strong frameworks and structures for sustainability.

2. Learning from the SWA processes in Ghana and Liberia

Ghana, in the West Africa Region was among the earlier group of countries which joined the SWA partnership and developed a compact in 2010. This is currently being revised (process started early 2013). Liberia, on the other hand, learned from the process in Ghana and organised a Donor Mission also referred to as the 'Liberia Mission'. This culminated in a Liberia WASH Compact in May 2011.

The lessons drawn from both experiences are meant to serve as a guide for countries initiating the SWA National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) process. The process is likely to culminate in country WASH Compacts (or a strategic document of that magnitude) to accelerate the delivery of WASH commitments in the country. Factors that were determined to have significantly contributed to the success of the processes and efforts in both Ghana and Liberia are discussed below with suggested actions for in-country support teams.

2.1 Common factors of success

Success factor 1: Ensuring a positive/receptive policy environment exists:

The Government may have signed up to SWA and other regional and global commitments such as eThekweni, Sharm-El-Sheikh, UN Resolutions, etc. In some cases it may have participated actively in sector events at global or regional levels such as SWA High Level Meetings (HLM), the African Union (AU) organised Africa Water Week, or even developed important policies on water, sanitation and hygiene towards achieving key results. A collation of these evidences will be critical at different stages of the NPRI and Compact development processes - serving as building blocks.

The Governments of Ghana and Liberia are at different levels in terms of WASH sector capacity and there are variations as well in the institutional arrangements. However, both signed up to eThekweni at different times, participated in the SWA High Level meetings as well as Africa Water Week meetings. In addition, both Governments had developed critical WASH sector documents such as National Water Policies, National Environmental Sanitation Policies, integrated water resource management (IWRM) policies, Poverty reduction strategies in which WASH is presented as a priority. While these are signs of good policy environment, they do not guarantee a functioning WASH sector since inadequate national government financing and weak sector co-ordination still exist. Failure to reform and ensure alignment between priorities and budget allocation only further affected the water and sanitation sector.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. Collate and catalogue the evidences – commitments, memberships, important events consistently attended, among others.
2. Undertake a rapid review of the policy environment to establish a basis to determine the level of receptiveness to be built upon, noting that country sector analysis will be the central evidence for the processes.

3. The findings can also be used to promote sector coordination and harmonisation as part of the in-country planning processes. It will be essential for Government to be supported to use this information as a basis to articulate its expectations in terms of outcomes of the NPRI process.

Success Factor 2: Setting up a representative technical team²

A technical committee composed of different institutions is set up to provide steer and oversight as a priority first step. While the team is often made up of individuals with different expertise the need to ensure a fair balance of public, private, CSOs and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) is critical but delicate. This will help in moving the process forward seamlessly from stage to stage. It helps to ensure the decisions are unbiased as they are interrogated before a commitment is made by all sides.

In both Ghana and Liberia, such teams were formed with similar terms of reference. In the former, it was called the Technical Working Group (TWG) while in the latter it was known as the National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (NWSHC) with a smaller Technical Committee responsible for long-term compact review and evaluation. WaterAid and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) staff were active members of the teams and actually led some of sub-groups at some stages.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. The right institutions need to be identified together with Government and other in-country donor groupings. Where possible, specific individuals with unique expertise relevant to the purpose can be proposed to guide the process through donor missions, in-country consultations, fulfilling past commitments and making new commitments at HLMs to developing the SWA Country Compact.
2. It is absolutely important to get WaterAid on the technical team to contribute to the organisation's knowledge of WASH and its global profile to bear on the discussions, decisions and choices to be made.

Success factor 3: Strong national/Government ownership and leadership

The value and credibility of the product or outcome document rest on the level of interest, leadership and ownership demonstrated by the Government. The process has to be locally-driven hence the lead Ministry is expected to take charge on behalf of Government. Consultations, planning meetings, and external support requirements should be initiated and managed by the lead Government agency as identified. The lead agency also determines the final list of experts and institutions to be on the technical committee. It clarifies the entire work package with the SWA Secretariat and Country Processes Task Team (CPTT) on the planning and entire support arrangements. Criteria will either be proposed for or developed by Government. The lead Ministry then takes charge in developing them for consultation and application. The main aim is to foster open but thorough dialogue among key stakeholders.

² See the Technical Working Group Composition of Ghana attached

In Ghana, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development played the lead role serving thus as the champion of SWA activities, while in Liberia it was the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. It was noted that ‘the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs was the lead ministry responsible for external aid and national planning which made the process legitimate and attracted development partners’³. They adopted an output-based meeting approach and facilitated the active involvement of all key stakeholders in achieving those agreed outputs.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. The identification and orientation of the lead Ministry by the WaterAid/UNICEF team is important. It should ensure all others such as the Ministries and development partners accept that leadership role. The partners will define their role to be supportive, advisory and where required, technical and financial.
2. The team could also work with the lead Ministry to get the involvement of other relevant sector institutions rather than narrow it to traditional Water Ministries only. Their involvement could be through designated focal persons at senior level able to make decisions on behalf of the Ministry. This could further facilitate the realisation of Africa Water Vision articulated by the African Ministers’ Council on Water and Africa Union (AMCOW’s/AU) making water a catalyst for socio-economic transformation of the African people.
3. It will be essential to support the development of simple and realistic terms of reference to guide the lead Ministry perform that leadership role effectively on behalf of the Government and its citizens.

Success factor 4: Visible donor involvement

In each country there is often an array of donors directly or indirectly supporting the WASH sector. Since a coordinated approach is required to attain the needed political prioritisation and requisite funding, it will be essential to facilitate their involvement from the onset through NPRI to implementation phases.

In Ghana the lead donors and development partners, namely the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), World Bank, United Nation’s Children, Education Fund (UNICEF) and Netherlands Embassy, were involved and visibly coordinating donor inputs into the process. In Liberia, the lead Donor, the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), UNICEF, and other key development partners such as Oxfam and WaterAid, were involved and played a significant role throughout the process. The Donor or Country Missions were successful partly due to the visible roles played by donors and INGOs.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. Conducting an initial donor mapping will be important to establish which donors are directly and indirectly supporting the WASH sector and national governments.

³ Apollos Nwafor, Team Leader, Liberia/Sierra Leone. Statement made in a completed questionnaire.

2. Their buy-in should be secured at the beginning of the NPRI process and their perspectives elicited at the sector analysis stage and during the compact development phase. Their role and inputs in the preparation of national sector investment plans will be critical to determining a holistic picture of financial in-flows (budget and off-budget support).
3. However, the need to regulate and clarify their role from initial discussions will be critical in ensuring the process is not seen to be led by donors, pushing the Government into the background.

Success factor 5: Active and engaged civil society

The buy-in and full involvement of organised CSOs could guarantee popular support and effective mobilisation for both the initial phases and the NPRI processes. In Ghana, there was constant reference to working in solidarity with CSOs, in particular the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) and the Ghana Water and Sanitation Journalists Network. In Liberia, there was active participation of two main CSO groups: the Liberia CSO WASH Working Group (now renamed the Liberia CSO WASH Network) and the WASH Media Reporters and Editors Network.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. Facilitate the Government's openness and conscious involvement of recognised and reputable CSO networks in WASH and related fields. They can be used as rallying points⁴ for citizens' involvement and perform a watchdog role for the effectiveness of the entire process.
2. Based on knowledge and experience in the CSO environment, the team should recommend those that are well placed to add value to the process and subsequent outcomes such as the Media Journalists Network and the WASH CSO networks among others.

Success factor 6: Getting non-WASH actors involved:

The centrality of WASH to achieving other MDGs related to poverty reduction – such as health, education and gender equity – cannot be over-emphasised. However, getting non-traditional WASH institutions and actors involved, albeit slowly, has been challenging. Highlighting the impact of poor sanitation and unsafe drinking water on human development was used to get other related stakeholders to join the initial phases of the SWA initiative and the subsequent compact development stages.

In Liberia, the private sector (PSI - Liberia) and Ministry of Education were active members and played a significant role in the rationalisation leading to the choice of priority areas. Ghana used the term 'enhancing quality of life'⁵ as a rallying point for the other sector actors, such as Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to join the efforts. Another set of non-sector actors who have had much influence in accelerating sustainable

⁴ Ibrahim Musah: Head of Policy and Partnerships – WaterAid Ghana. Statement made in a completed questionnaire

⁵ The Ghana Compact, May 2011 Reprint

services are the traditional authorities. For instance, two notable chiefs focused on environmental and sanitation issues and considered respectable champions or advocates of WASH were also involved in Ghana.

Suggested role of in-country core team:

1. A rapid mapping of all relevant institutions that are capable of directly and indirectly impacting on the WASH sector (and human development in general) should be carried out if such information does not already exist. This can be used as a shortlist for invitations as and when necessary.
2. Lobby the technical committee for their inclusion as and when necessary but advisedly from the onset.

Success factor 7: Predictable financial resources and logistical support:

The frequency of preparatory meetings required from the onset of the process could be overwhelming. No single organisation might be willing to fund this all through, hence the need for innovative ways of organising and managing the numerous preparatory and action meetings.

In Liberia, the Government, through the Ministry of Finance, had a standing budget to cover such meetings and also for the Donor mission. The Ministry of Planning and Economic affairs and WaterAid were the main secretariats for holding meetings and providing logistical support at the various meetings. In both countries, the Government, UNICEF, WaterAid and other partners provided financial resources to support SWA activities at that initial phase.

Suggested role of the in-country core team:

1. A shared approach or collaborative effort could be proposed to all members of the technical team/committee for funding and providing logistical support. The Government's interest, commitment and ownership could be partly demonstrated by providing a certain base funding for this process. Other partners could commit funds too and further take turns to provide resources/logistics or by voluntary sign-ups for specific roles.
2. Dedicate a certain reasonable amount of money in the Country Programme budget to support SWA processes. Furthermore, the Regional team could set aside an annual budget to support SWA processes where a regional approach or event is anticipated. This can be aligned with Multi-year Plans and Budgets.
3. The WaterAid Policy, Regional and in-country teams provided technical backing on a regular basis including review of documents, making critical inputs, and providing information relevant to the subject matter at any given time. This role gave WA a huge profile and a strategic role in the entire process in both Ghana and Liberia. A similar arrangement could be reached with PCD and the Regional team.

Success factor 8: Peer south – south support

A support package was developed through the SWA Secretariat for peer support to Liberia. Support was from Ghana⁶ and the SWA Secretariat itself. It included technical persons – one who had been the corner stone of the process in Ghana and highly knowledgeable on SWA and country planning processes from the SWA Secretariat. It was quite useful in many respects, such as ensuring the milestones and non-negotiables were complied with.

The road map followed by Ghana was a useful learning tool for Liberia to build on and as well avoid pitfalls. Having gone through it, Liberia was able to trigger interest in Sierra Leone and a joint learning conference was organised prior to the 2012 HLM involving high-level politicians from both countries and chaired by the President of Liberia and also Goodwill Ambassador for WASH in Africa – Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Suggested role of in-country core team:

- The support facility could be explored, especially now that many countries have the experience and the Country Process Task Team (CPTT) is better organised and functioning.
- Direct bilateral arrangements can also be struck between countries selected for NPRI and either Ghana or Liberia with the in-country team facilitating that arrangement with support from the CPTT.

3. A listing of the success factors

In the order of importance, **green** is very important, **yellow** is important and **blue** is good to do. **Note:** This will differ from person to person and possibly context to context but could be taken as a guide in determining non-negotiables and where energies should be invested.

Coding	Success factors ⁷
	Success factor 1: Ensuring a positive/receptive policy environment exists
	Success factor 2: Setting up a representative technical team
	Success factor 3: Strong national/government ownership and leadership
	Success factor 4: Visible donor involvement

⁶ Yaw Sarkodie was released by the Government of Ghana to support while Cynthia Kushner, Henry Northover, Dominic D and others supported on behalf of the SWA Secretariat.

⁷ Depending on the country context, processes and progress in WASH, the success factors could be given different levels of importance.

	Success factor 5: Active and engaged civil society
	Success factor 6: Getting non-WASH actors involved
	Success factor 7: Predictable financial resources and logistical support
	Success factor 8: Peer south to south Support

4. Pitfalls to avoid

1. Failing to build consensus from the onset on the entire process with clear milestones and an end in mind.
2. Failing to undertake a detailed review and analysis of all relevant national policies and plans to establish a solid basis for determining priorities.
3. Limiting the space for donors, CSO and media involvement.
4. Failing to hold preparatory meetings and thus not making incremental progress moving the process from stage to stage.
5. Failing to secure involvement of senior staff from selected institutions. Junior officers may only make up numbers as they may lack the authority to take decisions or commit their institutions without having to seek clearance. In some cases they do not have the requisite institutional memory on certain issues hence fail to add value to decision points.
6. There is often diminished interest by the lead Government institution post-compact development. Therefore, failing to put in place strong mechanisms and obtaining commitment for continued leadership of the Government during compact implementation will erode the gains made.

5. Summary

The SWA partnership and country processes in particular have significantly improved the profile of the WASH sector. According to a senior functionary within the Government of Ghana, “the SWA process brought about increases in budget allocation for the past three years and development partners are also changing their ways of prioritising water to now include a significant allocation to sanitation”⁸.

Internal structural changes have occurred in both countries eg the setting up of a National Sanitation Working Group (with representation from Government, donors and civil society) to facilitate SWA implementation in Ghana. These have been promoted under SWA to accelerate implementation of related activities (ending open defecation, school sanitation, sewage management etc) and integrated in the Ministry's Action plan.

⁸ Naa Demedeme, Director of the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate. Excerpt from a face to face interview on 2 May 2013.

The frequent changes in political leadership including those within the lead Ministries have affected the pace of implementation of past WASH commitments. The need to build the processes and actions into the structures is far more critical than doing so around high-profile individuals.

The success factors and pitfalls are not meant to be applied across the board but rather to be considered as lessons to be customised in accordance with country contexts and issues. Political stability in the two countries contributed significantly to the entire process, hence in countries where stability is a major challenge, a different approach and timing might be essential.

Note: Since the Liberia and Ghana Compacts, the SWA CPTT has agreed an Exploratory Dialogue Sequence that will guide the NPRI process in-country. The sequence outlines 10 steps that Governments and development partners should follow in order to ensure the effective implementation of NPRI. Countries engaged in NPRI are also now expected to appoint a Government representative to be a member of the SWA CPTT, and participate directly in CPTT meetings and discussions.

6. References

Technical Working Group – GHANA

The National Technical Working Group (TWG) was made of representatives from the following organisations:

1. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
2. Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing
3. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
4. Water and Sanitation Monitoring Platform
5. UNICEF
6. World Bank
7. CIDA
8. WaterAid
9. IRC/WASHCost
10. Royal Netherland Embassy
11. A local consultant

Reviewed documents

1. Liberia WASH Compact: Sanitation and Water for All, Republic of Liberia, May 2011
2. The Ghana Compact: Sanitation and Water for All, Republic of Ghana, Reprint, May 2011
3. SWA Background Documents (SWA Master PowerPoint), SWA Secretariat

Other useful resources/documents

4. NPRI Vision Paper English and French
5. NPRI Introductory Paper - A '2-pager'
6. NPRI Exploratory Dialogue Sequence

Persons consulted or interviewed

1. Apollos Nwafor Team Leader, WaterAid Transboundary Programme. Liberia
2. Clare Battle Policy Team, WaterAid - UK
3. George K Yarngo Assistant Minister, Ministry of Public Works, Liberia
4. Hamani Oumarou Country Representative, WaterAid Niger
5. Ibrahim Musah Head of Policy and Partnerships, WaterAid Ghana
6. Naa Demedeme Director, Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate, MLGRD, Ghana
7. Mariame Dem Head of Region, WaterAid West Africa
8. Nelson Gomonda Regional Advocacy Manager, WaterAid West Africa
9. Pankaj KC WaterAid, UK
10. Prince Kreplah Liberia CSOs WASH Network
11. Yaw Sarkodie Former staff, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Ghana, now a consultant



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