

Operational Research and Support for Water Management Committee Capacity Development

Democratic Republic of Congo

Final Report

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WASH Consortium DRC

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1. List of Acronyms

ACF	<i>Action Contre La Faim</i>
ACTED	<i>l'Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement</i>
AO	Absolute Options LLC
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EVA	<i>Ecole Village Assaini</i>
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
MSP	Maintenance Service Provider
SNHR	<i>Service National d'Hydraulique Rurale</i>
UNICEF	United Nations
WMC	Water Management Committee
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program
ZdS	<i>Zone de Santé</i>

2. Introduction

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) investments in rural water infrastructure are generally made without adequate information on what is required in the long term, especially in terms of financing and technical support, for the infrastructure to provide a sustainable service to the users. The responsibility for organising and financing long-term operation, maintenance, and minor and major repairs is left to the users by default, usually through community-based water management committees. The actor with the greatest influence on the choice of infrastructure and the decision to invest is often an external NGO or private company who is present in the area only for a limited period.

However, evidence shows that communities are rarely able to maintain infrastructures without some form of long-term external support. At the very least, technical support is required such as skilled mechanics who can carry out significant repairs. Other forms of support are also usually needed, such as support to help communities raise money to pay for repairs (for example, through helping develop local tariff systems or income-generating activities), and also direct financial support for some repairs themselves. Given the weak capacity of all local actors in DRC (communities, local authorities, health services, private sector etc.), it is important to make investment decisions about what infrastructure to install and where to install it based on a realistic assessment of local capacities to ensure the infrastructure functions in the long-term.

In this context, the DRC WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Consortium comprises five international NGOs working to increase the coverage of sustainable water and sanitation provision and hygiene behaviour in rural areas of DRC. The Consortium members are: Action Against Hunger (ACF); Agence d'aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED); Catholic Relief Services (CRS); Concern Worldwide (as lead agency) and Solidarités International. The DRC WASH Consortium is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through a grant of £23.9m from 2013-2017 as part of DFID's 2013-2019 WASH programme in DRC.

In total, the DRC WASH Consortium aims to support 461 villages and 554,122 beneficiaries in up to 17 health zones in rural DRC through a 12-step process which lasts eighteen months in each village, followed by additional monitoring and evaluation for a further six months. Programme activities include the promotion of good hygiene behaviours through "Small Doable Actions", support to the construction of household and institutional latrines, and (where judged technically and economically feasible for long-term sustainability) the development of water points such as spring protections, protected wells, and boreholes. The Consortium also works with local health services, local authorities, the private sector and civil society to develop their capacity to support communities and promote the sustainability of WASH services. The Consortium aims to use its experiences, innovation and research to produce and disseminate evidence for sustainable, community based solutions to WASH needs in the DRC.

The *Community Water Service Management Manual and Training Guide* is the primary output of operational research into capacity development needs of water management committees supported by the DRC WASH Consortium. Building upon its 2014 research of the Hand Pump Spare



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Parts and Maintenance Service Supply Chain, the development consulting firm Absolute Options (AO) developed this management manual and training guide through a five-step analytical process. First, AO conducted secondary research to identify and analyze existing capacity development training material at three levels: 1) existing Consortium training materials; 2) training materials available in the broader WASH sector and 3); materials related to community owned non-WASH assets. AO then conducted rapid field research to confirm findings and conclusions from the 2014 Spare Parts study. AO staff members conducted in-depth field interviews of ten WMCs in Kwamouth and Bolobo health zones (Bandundu) and Manono health zone (Katanga). AO developed draft training materials based upon field research and secondary research, including modules on Good Governance, Quality Water Service Delivery (operations and maintenance), Basic Financial Management, Business Planning and Financial Sustainability, Income Generating Activities, and Conflict Management. Training tools, management tools, and training exercises for all modules were field tested in the health zones of Bolobo/Kwamouth, Manono, and Mbulula. AO consultants solicited feedback from Consortium partner staff and WMC members on the effectiveness of tools presented, and revised the training materials accordingly.

Although the Community Water Services Management Manual and Training Guide is quite thorough, AO deliberately chose not to develop materials covering technical water point repair, as the topic is well covered by *Village Assani* training materials. AO also did not develop materials related to the promotion of improved hygiene and sanitation behaviour, as the Consortium already has training materials on this subject (soon to be augmented by further operational research).

The *Management Manual and Training Guide* is intended to offer a menu of training materials that can be customized and sequenced according to Consortium partner beneficiary needs. Partner staff should conduct capacity assessments of WMCs (whether through Consortium-led Auto-evaluations or through independent assessments) to identify the most critical capacity development needs of WMC training participants. Based upon this assessment, Partner staff should adapt the modules presented herein to best address capacity needs identified. Although the full complement of modules could be implemented in as little as one month, given the complexity and breadth of the materials and time constraints of both Consortium staff and WMC members, complete training cycles could likely take anywhere from six to twelve months to implement, within the Consortium's overall 12-step approach for community-based WASH.

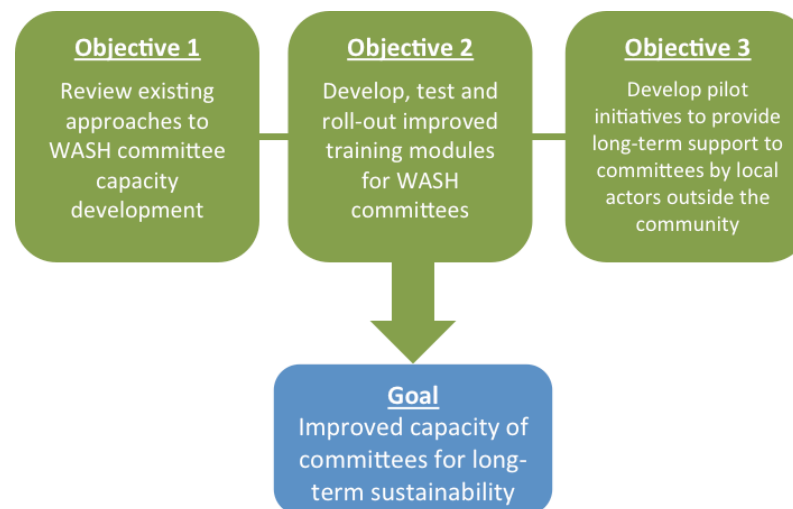
This final report is essentially an executive summary of the research methodologies, findings and conclusions from secondary research on existing capacity development materials, WMC field assessments, and field testing of individual training modules. The final section summarizes key recommendations to improve and sustain WMC capacity development, including guidance for implementing partners on the use and adaptation of the Manual.

3. Research Objectives and Methodology

In collaboration with the Consortium Coordinating Unit of the DRC WASH Consortium, AO endeavoured to develop WMC capacity development materials according to several guiding principles:

- Build upon WASH sector best practices;
- Avoid redundancy with capacity development materials already available in the DRC;
- Develop tools and training approaches that are relevant and practical, especially given constraints unique to remote rural communities;
- Incorporate training tools and approaches proven useful for non-WASH community managed public assets, and;
- Incorporate potential models for long-term WMC support from local actors including government ministries, specialized agencies, other WASH-related initiatives (e.g., *Village Assaini*), local community-based organizations (CBOs), and private sector actors.

Figure 1: Objectives of WMC capacity development operational research



The design of this operational research engagement, therefore, included three primary objectives.

Objective 1: Review existing approaches to WASH committee¹ capacity development. Review the Consortium’s current approach and other approaches in the sector to supporting and training village committees for managing rural WASH services, in particular the management of water points such as hand pumps on boreholes or dug wells, spring catchments, and small gravity flow schemes. AO completed the following tasks to complete this objective:

- 1) Review of existing DRC WASH Consortium Approaches, including materials from the Global Water Initiative (GWI) that have been adapted for the programme. This review included discussions with Consortium implementing partner project managers, technical staff and water management committees themselves. Through these discussions, AO solicited targeted feedback on specific WMC training tools and approaches implemented previously in the programme.

¹ The abbreviation WMC is used throughout training materials and the final report. The term WMC has been shorthand for water management committee, but committees have expanded scope including promotion of improved hygiene and sanitation practices at the community and household level. The term WASH committee is intended to capture this expanded scope, and may or may not include the management of improved water points.



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- 2) Review of capacity development materials from other organizations in the WASH sector globally and training materials from organizations active in WASH in the DRC.
- 3) Review of capacity development materials and approaches used in non-WASH community management of public assets.

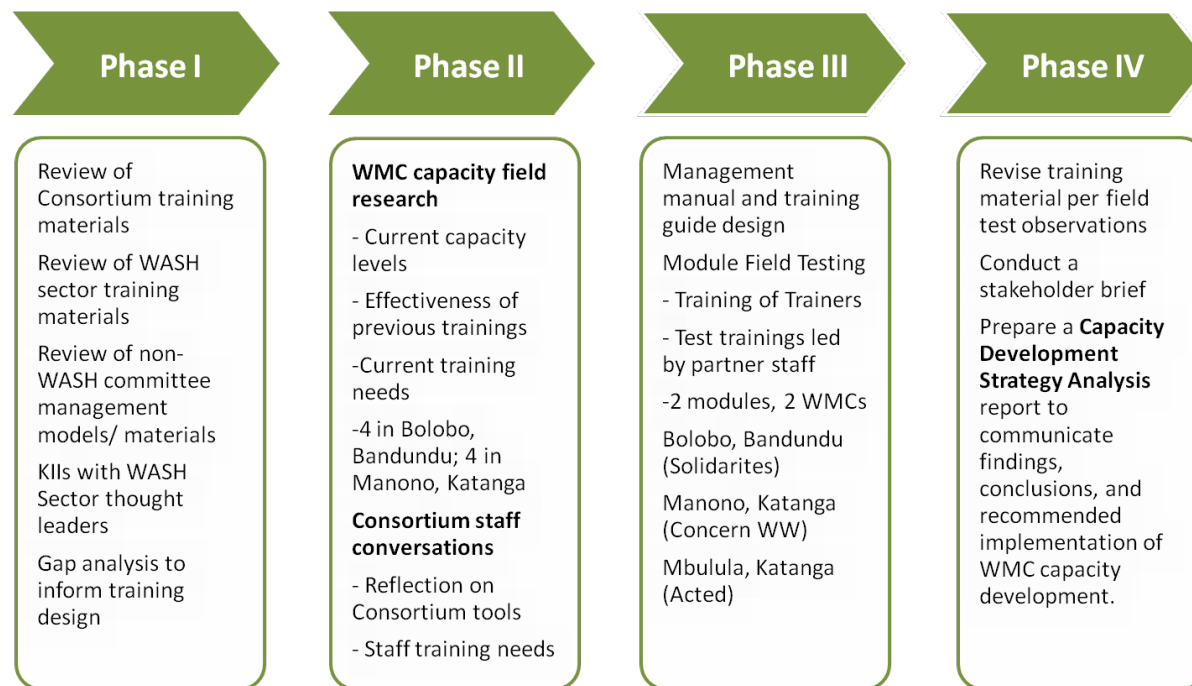
Objective 2: Develop, test, and recommend implementation strategies for improved training modules for WMCs, especially on project management, financial management and social marketing to encourage payment for WASH services. This included how to develop local 'business plans' for rural WASH services which enable all life-cycle costs of different technical options to be considered as part of informed investment decisions by communities and local authorities. To accomplish this objective, AO completed the following analytical tasks:

- 1) Rapid survey of current WMC capacities. Building upon its earlier assessment of 33 water management committees in 2014, AO interviewed 12 additional water management committees in Bolobo/Kwamouth (Bandundu province) and Manono (Katanga province) to assess the effectiveness of previous capacity development materials and approaches previously implemented by the Consortium as part of the first phase of villages during 2014-2015.
- 2) Develop training modules based upon field research and a gap analysis of existing materials conducted as part of Objective 1.
- 3) Field-test each module with WMCs to assess the efficacy of new/revised materials, and to test a training-of-trainer approach with implementing partner staff conducting the actual trainings. Feedback from trainers and AO observations of WMC member understanding of the material used to revise the draft training materials.

Objective 3: The final objective of this operational research engagement is to investigate potential models for on-going and long-term support of WMCs from local actors including government ministries, district and territory authorities, specialized government agencies, other international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations. Recommendations (see Section 7) are based on current local engagement initiatives of implementing partners (particularly Concern Worldwide in Manono), conversations with *Zone de Sante* officials, local government officials, NGOs including ADIR, and feedback from partners and key stakeholders during a consultative presentation of research findings and conclusions.

Research and development of training materials was conducted in four phases:

Figure 2: Research methodology for the development of WMC capacity development materials



4. Review of Existing WMC Capacity Development Material

AO consultants reviewed existing WMC capacity development material from over a dozen organizations engaged in improving rural water services. AO conducted a comparative analysis of materials according to 21 capacity development topics. The purpose of this comparative analysis was to identify gaps and overlap in existing training materials, and to identify existing tools appropriate for the DRC context. Figure 3 summarizes the findings of this analysis. The vertical columns highlighted in light orange signify key areas less commonly covered by existing WASH sector training materials², such as:

- training needs assessment (conducted by facilitators, trainers or supporting agencies to identify the needs of committees)

² Materials Tuungane and CIIR-Progressio are highlighted in dark orange because they are non-WASH sector.

- establishment of a legal framework and legal registration
- business planning for organisational sustainability
- customer/client-service approach; alternative income generating activities
- risk analysis
- promotion of representative bodies through association

Figure 3: Comparative analysis of existing Consortium and WASH sector capacity development materials by topic

Competencies/Tools	Facilitator/Facilitation guidelines	Training needs assessment	Organizational Governance	Administration	Asset Ownership	Legal Framework/Registration	Community Mobilisation & Engagement	Operations & Maintenance Mgt.	Operational Monitoring	Technical Skills Training	Financial Management Systems	Roles & Responsibilities	Business Plan / Financial Sustainability	Tariff Setting / (Full Cost Recovery)	Client-Service Approach	Income Generating Activities	Risk Analysis	Conflict Resolution	Performance Monitoring	Representative Bodies (Assoc.)	H&S Promotion Activities
Committee Capacity Development Approaches																					
WASH Consortium RDC				+			+	+	+		+	+	+	(FCR)	+		+		+	+	+
Village Assaini (EVA)	+		+	+			+	+	+	+								+		+	+
ADIR-ASUREP			+	+		+					+	+		+	+	+				+	
World Bank WSP			+				+	+			+	+			+				+		
TUUNGANE			+		+		+	+	+		+	+				+			+		
arche noVa	+		+			+	+	+	+		+	+		+					+		+
CRS – Sudan WUCs			+	+		+	+				+	+		+							
Fundación AVINA			+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+						+		+	
GLOWS Ethiopia	+			+			+	+		+	+	+				+			+	+	+
IRC-IWSC	+		+		+		+	+		+	+	+		(FCR)				+	+		
Oxfam-Kenya		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+				+	+		+
SNV-Rwanda				+					+		+	+		+							
CARE	+		+	+	+		+					+						+		+	
GWJ													+	(FCR)						+	
CIIR-Progressio			+	+					+		+	+	+						+		
AO WMC Training Guide	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	(FCR)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

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Most training modules focus on the establishment of WMCs, including administration guidelines, development and adoption of governing documents, organizational governance including election and decision making rules, and the roles and responsibilities of various committee positions. However, much less material focuses on financial sustainability of water committees. For example, only three approaches provide guidance on business planning (13th column from the right) or on the importance of linking WMCs to income generating activities (IGAs). The blue row in Figure 3 shows which topics have been included thus far in Consortium WMC capacity development tools and approaches. Four curricula touched on the establishment of umbrella associations (association of WMCs) or the importance of legal registration of committees. Over the last five-years, thanks in large part to work by IRC WASH, greater attention has been paid to the inclusion of full life-cycle costs in sustainability analyses. However, targeted tools to assess and incorporate life-cycle costing into feasibility analysis are not readily available. Although previous Consortium training materials did have gaps, the Consortium clearly focused on skills and capacities related to long-term financial sustainability. These capacities are among the most difficult and important skills to facilitate, and reflect the Consortiums emphasis on the “economic approach” to WMC development.

Figure 4: Consortium 12-steps



5. Findings and Conclusions from WMC Capacity Assessment & Field Research

Key informant interviews and site visits to WMCs yielded additional insight into the efficacy of Consortium capacity development efforts and insight into remaining technical, managerial, and operational capacity development needs of water committees and partner technical staff. AO consultants held one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions with three distinct groups: partner program management staff, program technical staff (i.e., community mobilisers, WASH staff, etc.), and WMC members themselves. Key findings and conclusions from each stakeholder group are summarized below.

NGO Partner Management

Strengths of Existing Consortium Capacity Development Tools and Approaches

General feedback from program management was that Consortium guidance on the first seven steps of the twelve-step process was particularly useful. Many Wave 1 villages are actively managing improved water points, and collecting water user fees (in many cases prior to the completion of improved water points). The community action plan (CAP) process was seen as a useful mobilization tool and an effective strategy to catalyze community buy-in and ownership of water service improvement initiatives. Promotion of improved WASH behaviours (e.g. hand washing with soap), which are always difficult to achieve, were considered largely successful, especially when coupled with “small important doable acts” or *Petite Actions Important et Faisable* (PAFI). Further, program management appreciated the Consortium focus on financial sustainability and the economic approach, even if they found implementation of these concepts challenging in rural communities.



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Challenges

Most Consortium partner management staff felt that the wave time frame of 18 months was far too short to adequately develop the “soft” skills required for sustainably managed community water services. Program management staff also stated that more technical support is needed for some of the more challenging phases of the twelve step process, which are focused on managerial and financial sustainability of water management committees. In particular, management staff mentioned the need for a more “accessible” approach to business planning. The Consortium has utilized the GWI financial model, and GWI community training sessions, but staff and WMCs have found the format and level of complexity difficult to master. An additional challenge facing project managers is the field staff-to-committee ratio. Management staff mentioned that many Wave 1 WMCs and communities still require support to reach CAP goals and to improve sustainability, but now that most projects are moving into Wave 2 and Wave 3 villages, field technicians are not able to work with Wave 1 committees with the frequency required.

Opportunities

First, the Consortium has the opportunity to reinforce tools and approaches proven successful in Wave 1. Community mobilization techniques, development and facilitation of community action plans, and promotion of PAFI have established a strong platform for continued momentum in subsequent programme Waves. Next, increased training in market research and analysis will help field technicians guide WMC selection of income generating activities. A staggered approach to training delivery will help increase WMC understanding of the economic approach, including business planning and the development of a client service mentality. Lastly, engagement of local stakeholders will improve the sustainability of WMCs. Community-based organizations such as local NGOs and women’s group have the potential to reinforce key Consortium messages related to WASH behaviour change and promotion of user fee payments. This model is about to be launched by Concern Worldwide in Manono, in partnership with the local Director of Family Welfare and Women’s Affairs. Engagement of Territory and District Authorities is another strategy to empower WMCs and to establish governance relationships that will continue beyond the programme.

NGO Implementing Partner Field Staff

Strengths of Existing Consortium Capacity Development Tools and Approaches

Field staff reported that community mobilization strategies related to improved WASH behaviours have been largely successful. The implementation of household economic surveys by Solidarités improved WMC member and staff understanding of the rationale for water user fee levels. Partner staff interviews demonstrated a high-capacity level of most field technical staff, and staff members are eager for more training including market research and analysis, business planning, and conflict resolutions.

Challenges

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Implementing partner field staff tend to maintain an “emergency mentality” when implementing Consortium programming, and therefore, struggle with sustainability-related components of the programme including business planning and user fee pricing methodologies. A common request of field staff was for more training in conflict resolution, business planning, IGAs, and in particular user fee setting (e.g., cost-recovery versus demand-based or user willingness and ability models). AO also noted that staff implementation of existing tools is largely ad hoc, that is, not uniform across project sites (although part of the reason for this was to encourage ownership by field teams in adapting tools as they saw fit in their context. A standardisation of programming tools (such as financial cash-count sheets and assets ledgers, etc.) could greatly aid the WMC capacity-building efforts of the Consortium. As mentioned above, staff-to-village coverage ratio was repeatedly mentioned as a challenge for partner staff concerning providing continued support during the phased rollout of programming, particularly for Wave 1 committee support. The challenges of “emergency mentality” and staff-to-village coverage ratio were also challenges highlighted by the Consortium’s internal review of its overall community mobilisation and behaviour change process in March 2015.

Opportunities

A number of staff comments relating to capacity development needs reflect buy-in to the Consortium’s economic approach. As staff requested further training on topics such as market research and analysis and business planning/financial sustainability, the common attitude was one of genuine interest in learning more and increasing the quality of interactions with Consortium communities and water committees. The *Management Manual and Training Guide* developed as part of this operational research is an important first step in providing a comprehensive and methodologically consistent set of tools for WMC capacity development and community mobilization. These materials help create the opportunity for the Consortium to develop both its own staff and to develop the HR capacity of the DRC WASH Sector. Given the Consortium’s economic approach, such sector-wide capacity development efforts will help transform emergency mentalities towards longer-term, sustainable development. Next, the Manual’s expanded/revised approach to business planning should make the material more accessible and help both staff and WMC members to understand that business planning is much more than a spreadsheet.

Water Management Committee (WMC) Members

Strengths of Existing Consortium Capacity Development Tools and Approaches

Based upon field interviews with WMC, WMC members clearly understand their specific/individual roles and responsibilities, although they have yet to fully develop an understanding of the collective mission and purpose of their committees. The clear understanding of individual roles and job responsibilities reflects effective training by implementing partners. Committee members also demonstrated a clear understanding between the collection of water user fees and operational sustainability of improved water points. Committee members also expressed a sincere desire to increase their management capacity as several committees stressed the importance of prudentially managing community funds. Several WMCs expressed concern over potential community member reaction if they fail to adequately look after user fee funds or if they are unable to maintain functionality of improved water points. Another positive observation is that many of the WMCs surveyed are effectively promoting



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improved hygiene and sanitation conditions and behaviours within their communities. Most of the WMCs visited did not have prior notice that AO consultants were coming and yet several villages were clearly maintaining their seven norms (i.e., clean public areas, use of pit latrines at the household level, proper disposal of refuse, and even hand washing stations (although less prevalent). Lastly, WMC members clearly understood the concept of engaging income generating activities (IGAs) as a means to increase WMC working capital and expressed enthusiasm for further technical support to select and implement high-potential IGAs.

Challenges

On the whole, WMC Capacity still very low, and though members are enthusiastic about their role, even basic skills in record keeping and cash management need reinforcement. Transparency and accountability also require reinforcement, as several committees explicitly stated their desire not to share details of WMC finances with committee Presidents, village chiefs, or communities at large. This sentiment is clearly related to a concern over theft or confiscation of committee funds, but is antithetical to transparency and accountability norms required for long-term sustainability. WMC members tend to lack a global or a strategic vision about the objectives, mission and purpose of the WMC. WMCs continue to lack agency and power that constrains their ability to enforce water usage policies, including payment of water fees. The lack of WMC power leaves them vulnerable to informal taxation by village authorities, police, and members of the military – a vulnerability that is exacerbated by the lack of effective grievance mechanisms. WMC members also expressed the need for training in conflict management and resolution at several levels: between water users and the committee, between the committee and the village chief, and *among* committee members themselves. The recognition of the importance of conflict resolution by several WMCs is encouraging, as it demonstrates a more strategic level of thinking about the role and responsibilities of the committee within the community context, and sincere efforts to execute committee duties in a responsible and sustainable manner. Although most WMCs have a balanced number of men and women members, women are often relegated to hygiene promotion or advisor roles on committees. Although many women are selected treasurers, few are selected as WMC President or Vice-President. Lastly, while many communities visited were demonstrating increased use of improved WASH behaviours, a few Wave 1 committees no longer receiving frequent, regular visits from Consortium field staff showed signs of slippage with full, unmaintained latrines, visible lack of hand washing at critical moments, and cessation of PAFI solutions. Continued practice of improved WASH behaviours requires constant and continuous reinforcement. Given the mandate and timeframe of the Consortium, this reality increases the importance of engaging local CBOs and other actors to assume WASH behaviour reinforcement responsibilities.

Opportunities

Given the varying capacity levels of WMCs (even among Wave 1 villages), Consortium training materials should target different capacity levels from basic tools and approaches (basic record keeping) to more advanced topics (long-term financial sustainability and business planning). The *Management Manual and Training Guide* attempts to do this, but it will be up to Consortium implementing partners and field staff to customize trainings according to the needs and capacity level of the WMC or group of WMCs being trained (see Section X Implementation



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Recommendations). Several opportunities exist to catalyze WMC capacities. The promotion of legal registration, for example, will likely improve WMC agency and ability to resist local authority demands for informal taxation and/or preferential treatment. The facilitation of a Federation of Water Management Committees at the Territory level has the potential to reinforce rights obtained through legal registration while engaging the power and influence of authorities at the territory and district levels, establishing a formal grievance mechanism for committees, and creating a platform for continued technical assistance and support after the completion of the DRC WASH programme.

6. Overview of WMC Capacity Development Training Materials

The purpose of the accompanying Community Water Service Management Manual and Training Guide (the Manual) is to provide information, approaches, and tools to implementing partner staff to help WMCs develop necessary skills to sustainably serve as good stewards of improved water points. WMC sustainability will hinge on numerous and varied factors related to their capacity to manage assets and funds appropriately, and as such any capacity development curricula must allow for maximum flexibility and adaptation in its implementation, and must provide information and tools relevant to all capacity levels, including even very basic management and operations techniques. The DRC has one of the highest failure rates (within the last ten years) of recently improved water infrastructure. Training tools and approaches must therefore be practical, actionable, and delivered via mechanisms appropriate for very low organizational management capacities, and low technical skill levels, low literacy and numeracy, as well as other extant challenges in rural areas. The Manual has been developed with this context in mind.

As mentioned, the subjects covered by the Manual under different modular sessions have been selected based upon numerous inputs, such as: interviews with water management committees, discussions with implementing partner staff and management, an online survey of WASH RDC practitioners, strategic input from the Consortium Coordinating Unit, and experience of the developers conducting previous research into WMC capacity levels. The AO consulting team elected not to develop new materials related to technical operations, maintenance, and repair of alternative water systems, as this is well covered by Ecole Village Assaini materials. Similarly, the Manual does not include guidance on WASH behavior change strategies, as the Consortium already has effective materials on the topic. The Manual includes six technical modules including governance, operations and maintenance, basic financial management, business planning, income generating activities, and conflict resolution, as described below.

Module I: Introduction to Sustainable Water Management Committees

This module introduces participants to key concepts of effective community management of public assets (e.g., improved water point). This module includes an overview of the technical modules, solicits the expectations of participants regarding the training, and explains the ground rules for the trainings: participatory, respectful, freedom and responsibility to ask clarifying questions, and an overview of how exercises will be implemented.

Module II: Organizational Governance

Module II covers fundamental concepts of good organizational governance such as representation, equity, accountability, transparency. It also provides technical information on the formation of the committee including the development of a governing document, by-laws, key committee positions and responsibilities, election policies, operational policies and procedures (i.e., procurement and record keeping), legal status options, and an introduction to public engagement. The virtuous circle of quality service-sustainable fee revenue, a tool that is referenced throughout the manual, is introduced here.

Module III: Quality Water Service Delivery (Operations & Maintenance)

Module III emphasizes the challenge WMCs will face in achieving sustainability of their improved water point. Technical causes of water system failure are discussed and participants are engaged in developing an operations and maintenance plan to mitigate the frequency and severity of breakdowns. Basic operational management is discussed including hours of operation, access and equity, collection of water user fees, and basic record keeping. Alternative operations models are discussed (WMC-led, water point supervisor model), as are key tools such as maintenance and repair logs, maintenance schedules, responding to breakdowns, and the use of external resources such as maintenance service providers and spare parts suppliers.

Module IV: Basic Financial Management

Module IV introduces basic financial management approaches and tools to help WMCs manage community water fees in a transparent manner. Key topics include cash ledgers, storage of cash, cash counts and reconciliation, reporting to the WMC, reporting to the broader community, and new strategies to protect WMC funds such as banking services and IGAs. Financial sustainability, business planning, and fee setting strategies will be introduced in the final session of this module, but the majority of this content will be left for Module V.

Module V: Business Planning and Financial Sustainability

Module V is the most technically complex module and will require more time to implement than other modules (see individual modules for time allocations). This module moves beyond spread-sheet based financial models (currently the Business Plan using consortium terminology) to include comprehensive business planning components such as a Vision Statement, Strategic Plan, Organizational Development Plan, Operations and Maintenance Plan, and Financial Planning for Sustainability. This module builds on previous consortium business plan work and allocates significant content to cost projections, the three Consortium defined financial equilibria, fee setting strategies and promotion, alternative sources of revenue, and cash flow projections to help WMCs understand water user fee targets and longer term financial sustainability.

Module VI: Income Generating Activities

Module VI focuses on alternative sources of revenue introduced in Module V. For many WMCs, initial collection of water user fees and fee amounts will not be sufficient to cover anticipated major repairs. This module introduces other strategies to enhance WMC revenue by investing committee financial capital into income generating activities, and potentially other strategies such as providing seed capital for savings groups. Concepts such as liquidity, return on investment, diversification, and risk management are discussed here. This module also provides tools for conducting Rapid Market Assessments (RMAs) to identify potential IGA opportunities, evaluating and ranking of IGA opportunities, and simple cost-benefit analyses to project returns and manage risks.

Module VII: Conflict Resolution and Public Engagement

The final technical module focuses on strategies for conflict resolution, including avoiding conflict, stakeholder identification tools, stakeholder interest and influence analysis (power analysis), conflict resolution techniques, and strategies for the WMC to effectively engage local officials, community members, territory authorities, and other stakeholders.

7. Field Testing of WMC Training Materials

Under Objective 2 of the assignment, AO was responsible for the development and testing of each of the training modules (outlined above) designed for WMCs. The field-testing of the modules was carried out by AO in order to assess how tools could be better adapted and integrated at the community level under any future rollout of a training regime for water management committees by the Consortium. AO evaluated the limits to the use of the training tools, and attempted to address these limitations to the extent possible in the final design of training materials.

AO consultants conducted two beta trainings with WMCs for each module developed in order to understand each of their strengths and weaknesses. To this affect, AO has utilized a training of trainers (ToT) approach, by first working with NGO partner staff who will eventually be responsible for the full roll-out of trainings. The field-testing in this manner also allowed AO team members to observe and identify difficulties experienced by NGO partner facilitators when delivering training to WMC members—either in the material design, translation of key concepts, or suitability of the information to the local context. No single WMC received the complete suite of modules, and only two of the seven technical modules were disseminated through the training with any one WMC, while all of the committees received the introductory module, and some of the background information on the participatory approach. Ideally, the entire regimen of modules should be delivered over several months to reinforce previous trainings and to facilitate maximum understanding and adoption by WMCs. A “flexible” approach is also emphasised here to allow NGO partner staff /facilitators to determine how much of the training manual (i.e. both which modules, as well as the different ‘session’ contents, tools and activities) is given to any one WMC at any time. In this way the delivery should be customisable for each committee.

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AO has tested training materials in the following locations:

- Kwamouth/Bolobo ZdS, Bandundu Province (Solidarités International);
- Manono ZdS, Katanga Province (Concern Worldwide);
- Mbulula ZdS, Katanga Province (ACTED).

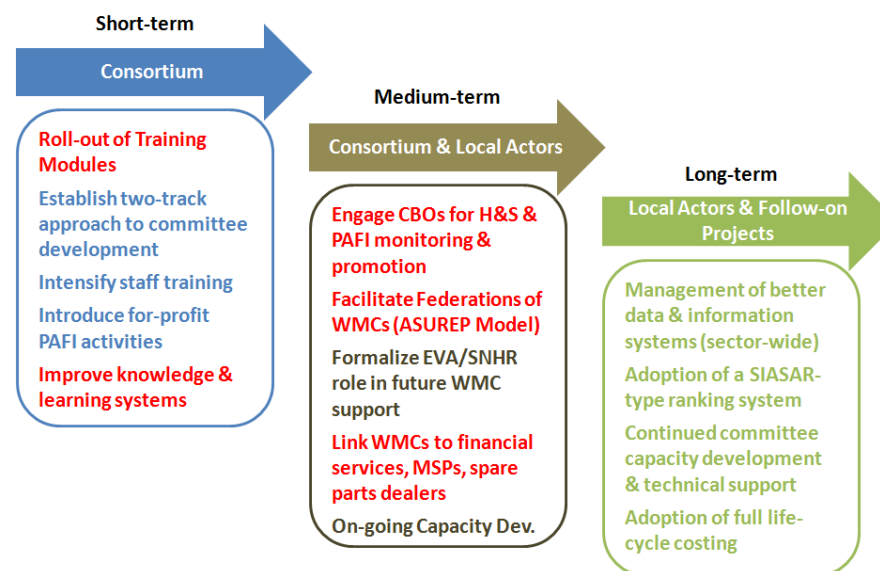
Feedback and observation during field-testing was incorporated into the final draft of the *Community Water Service Management Manual and Training Guide*. Observations and participant feedback, feedback from the DRC WASH Technical Units and community mobilisers of the project NGO and implementing partners has been invaluable. AO's final technical draft of the training manual has benefitted immeasurably from their participation in the process, particularly from the work of the NGO partner staff.

8. WMC Capacity Development Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to discuss recommendations for the implementation and adaptation of the *Community Water Service Management Manual and Training Guide*, as well as recommendations for short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for improved and sustainable capacity development support to DRC WASH water management committees. Figure 5 summarises these recommendations, including level of local actor engagement over-time. Items in red represent higher-priority actions, although all recommendations should be considered important.

One objective of this organisational research engagement is to help the Consortium to understand the full complement of WMC capacity development needs, and to think through what can realistically and effectively be accomplished by the Consortium during the time remaining in the programme. Given constraints of time, and to some extent scope, an additional consideration of this research is identify potential partners who are well positioned to provide technical support in collaboration with the Consortium (in the short- and medium-term) and to continue engagement with Consortium WMCs after the programme is completed. The short-term is defined

Figure 5: Summary of short-, medium-, and long-term WMC technical assistance recommendations



by the end of 2015, by which time the Consortium must be in position to launch the final wave of communities. The medium-term is defined as 2016 and 2017, during which time the Consortium will be implementing and completing final wave activities. The long-term is defined as initiatives taking place post-2017, which are dependent upon third-party involvement and subject to additional funding.

8.1 Short-term Recommendations - By the End of 2015

The Consortium can take immediate steps to strengthen its efforts to develop WMC capacity, including:

1. Finalize the *Community Water Service Management Manual and Training Guide* quickly, and initiate roll-out of the trainings according to the guidance provided below.
2. Establish a second track for those WMCs not yet having the capacity or commitment for the management of improved water points (for waves 2, 3 and 4 of the Consortium, it is estimated in advance that 20% to 30% of villages will be in this category, although this figure is extremely estimative).
3. Introduce “for-profit” PAFI activities per the recent study on alternatives to water service delivery for WASH management committees (the first pilot project of which will take place in May-June 2015)..
4. Improve knowledge and learning systems both internally and sector wide through collaboration and advocacy.

Implementation Guidance for the Community Service Management Manual and Training Guide

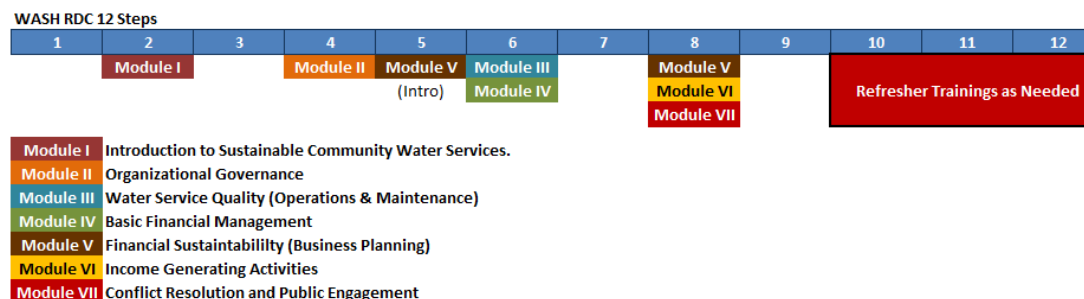
The Management Manual and Training Guide was designed to be modular and customizable in order to address the varying capacity development needs of different WMCs in different geographic locations. The tools and approaches included in each training module are intended to serve as resources for implementing partners, and do not represent comprehensive mandates from the Consortium. Instead, implementing partners should work with their field staff and the Consortium Coordinating Unit to determine which mix of tools and approaches are most appropriate for different WMC typologies. Implementing partners can also vary the sequencing of modules according to the most immediate capacity development needs of their committees. However, it should be noted that the modules were deliberately sequenced according to a typical progression of WMC development. However, with many Wave 1 committees not having been exposed to the full training curriculum, implementing partners should have the flexibility to select which modules are most appropriate in a given context. For new WMCs, Figure 6 suggests how modules might best be tied to specific stages of committee development in the 12-step process. The Consortium should confirm and integrate this guidance on timing into the next update of the 12-step Manual due in August 2015.

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In terms of actual delivery of the modules, based upon training of trainer and facilitated WMC training field tests, we anticipate that each training module will require at least three facilitators from NGO and partner staff. Facilitators should take turns presenting module sections and facilitating exercises, with the other facilitators providing additional comments on the material, assistance with visual aids, and interaction with trainees to monitor understanding of the material. We expect the Training of Trainers session for the entire guide (all seven modules, plus the facilitators guide) will take seven full days to complete (more or less one day per module). In terms of the actual WMC trainings, which should be implemented by implementing partner field staff (as opposed to external consultants or the CCU), we expect

Module I to take approximately a half-day to complete. We anticipate that Module 5, which covers business planning and financial sustainability, will take three full days to effectively implement. All other modules should take roughly 1.5 days to complete. An important observation from the field tests was that the attention and focus of WMC members starts to fade after about 2.5 hours. Further, WMC members often have other household and livelihood responsibilities, which increase the burden of day-long and multiple day trainings. Module sections should be grouped into 2.5 hour segments, with single module sessions taking place over three or four days depending upon staff availability and logistical constraints. At most, two 2.5 hour sessions (one in the morning, one in the afternoon) can be conducted in a single day.

Figure 6: Suggested delivery of training modules according to the Consortium 12-step process



Design Elements

- Modular
- Customizable
- Tools are resources, not mandates
- Roll-out specific to each WASH RDC partner
- Participatory approach essential:
 - Exercises, group work, and trainee presentations

Operational Guidance

- Full Training of Trainers: 7 days
- Module 1: ½ day
- B-plan Module: 3 days
- Other Modules: 1.5 days
- Staff requirements:
 - Three facilitators per training

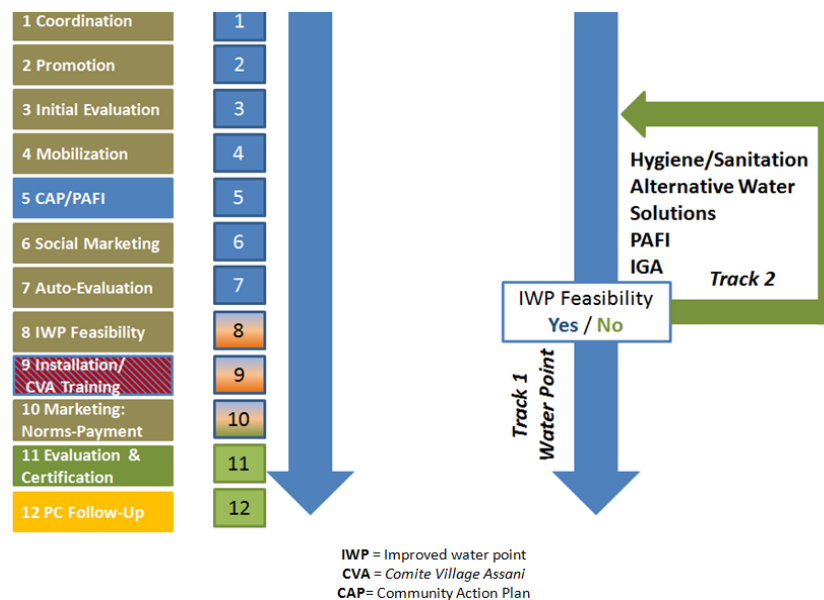
Establishment of a Two-track Approach to WMC Development

AO understands that the Consortium has been considering alternative approaches for those committees not qualifying for an improved water point at Stage 7, based on the analysis of their ability to cover life-cycle costs. As of right now, those committees not qualifying are essentially responsible to achieve the required performance targets and norms before being re-considered for an improved water point. Continued programme support to non-qualifying committees is not formalized and these committees run a high-risk of back-sliding on the norms they have achieved without continued targeted technical assistance. Further, although some committees will not qualify at any point for improved water

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points, they may have the potential for meaningful and sustainable continuation of non-water service activities. As such, AO recommends quickly formalizing a “second-track” to provide on-going technical assistance to non-qualifying committees and to allow them time to improve performance on WASH behaviours and achievement of Consortium norms. For those committees that improve performance, they should have a mechanism to be re-considered for an improved water point and re-join the process at Step 8 of the 12-step process. Other committees who either are not able to reach required performance goals or whose proposed water points are not technically or financially feasible (for waves 2, 3 and 4 of the Consortium, it is estimated in advance that 20% to 30% of villages will be in this category, although this figure is extremely estimative), other Consortium support can assist them to adopt a sustainable model of good WASH behaviour promotion, the promotion of PAFI, and facilitation of income generating activities (IGAs). Given staff and other resource constraints, the Consortium should consider these Track 2 committees as prime candidates for support from community-based organizations.

Figure 7: Recommended two-track approach to WMC capacity development



Introduction of “For-profit” PAFI

At the time this operational research was being conducted, the Consortium was also investigating income generating alternatives to water service that committees might be able to engage in. Preliminary findings share with the AO team showed promise, and if their financial and technical feasibility is confirmed, they should be quickly introduced to WMCs, especially Track 2 committees.

Improve Knowledge and Learning Systems

Another short-term recommendation is to improve knowledge and learning systems *within* the Consortium. Although technical lessons are shared frequently via periodic meetings of the Programmes Technical Working Group, collection and sharing of project data and information not specifically related to programme indicators is not systematic across implementing partners. For example, data bases regarding the installation, location, and functionality of water hand pumps is stored in different formats that render comparative data analysis difficult. Lessons learned regarding efficacy of approaches, tools, and mobilization techniques are largely siloed until partners come together for Technical Review Committee sessions. Methods to share lessons and tools in real time via programme wide cloud-based data management systems, staff-to-staff



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learning sessions via webinars and cross-visits will help create programme synergies and increase the uniformity of programme technical approaches.

8.2 Medium-term Recommendations - 2016 to 2017

These recommendations focus on increased Consortium collaboration with local actors, particularly as the programme begins to near completion.

Engage CBOs for Additional Health, Sanitation, and PAFI Monitoring and Promotion

With the initiation of activities focused on Wave 2 and Wave 3 villages, the number of committees assigned to field staff is increasing even if continued support is not provided to Wave 1 committees. As described in the findings and conclusions from WMC field and program staff interviews, many Wave 1 committees would benefit from continued outreach and promotion activities (in areas where the NGO still has a presence for Wave 2 and Wave 3 – in Bandundu and Kasai Oriental there will not be a continued presence because these are non-focal province of the donor). In some cases, Wave 1 committees require additional technical support. Given staff, time, and resource constraints, one interesting option is to engage community-based organizations (CBOs) to continue village site visits and good WASH behaviour promotion and monitoring activities. Concern Worldwide in Manono is about to launch this approach with the support of local government officials. In the Manono example, women's groups have been identified who are capable and interested in continued community mobilization activities. Women from CBOs will stay in villages for multiple days to reinforce key WASH behaviour messages among community members. CBO volunteers will be able to converse with community members even when they are away from the village (e.g., when they are working agricultural plots located outside the village). Without the pressure to return the same day by a designated time (as Concern staff have to do for security reasons), these volunteers have an excellent opportunity to engage community members more intensely and to increase community member trust. Other organizations such as local NGOs, Zone de Sante offices, and other local government agencies (i.e., local and territory-level offices of the Bureau of Women's Affairs) are other potential partners to reinforce Consortium programme activities.

Engaging CBOs

Base upon initial pilots in Manono ZdS from Concern WW, this model entails approximately two volunteers (typically from local women's groups) to spend Monday - Friday in each target village. Enthusiasm thus far has been high, but partners will likely need to pay per diems and transport for CBO support to be maintained. Over the course of the week, the volunteers visit women in the field, in households, and in water point cues to reinforce key hygiene and sanitation messages and to promote payment of water fees. AO recommends that volunteers be engaged for roughly six months after communities have "graduated" and DRC WASH turn their focus to the next Wave of villages.

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Facilitate Federations of Water Management Committees

Another interesting approach is to establish territory-level Federations of Water Management Committees. Based on the successful ASUREP model facilitated by ADIR (predominantly used in urban and peri-urban areas so far), such Federations would create a platform for continued technical assistance and the facilitation of linkages to private service providers (i.e., repair technicians, spare parts suppliers, etc.). In collaboration with territory and district authorities, such Federations also have the potential to serve as grievance mechanisms for WMCs who experience informal taxation or demands for preferential treatment from village chiefs, police, or other local authorities. AO recommends piloting the Federation model in two- to- three target areas where the programme has been active for some time, and then scale according to the success of the pilots. Concern WW in Manono is already moving forward with the establishment of such a Federation, and can provide input and insight into Federation formation in other areas. Further, the Consortium should approach ADIR to inquire about technical support, trainings, or sharing of best practices based upon their ASUREP experience in the course of establishing Federations in Consortium target areas.

Formalize EVA and SNHR Roles in Future Support of Water Management Committees

Similarly, the Consortium should increase its efforts to collaborate with *Ecole Village Assaini* (EVA), and work to establish formal cooperation with the SNHR. These governmental (or quasi-governmental) agencies are formally tasked with improving water and WASH-related services in rural areas. Although the Consortium has engaged EVA regarding their assumption of Consortium WMCs into the *village assaini* support system, actual mechanisms for their assumption have yet to be clarified. Although SNHR continues to have a shifting mandate, SNHR leadership at the national level has expressed interest and enthusiasm for increased support of Consortium WMCs in the future, including facilitating linkages between WMCs and territory, district, and provincial authorities. Formalizing future collaboration and eventual stand-alone support (without Consortium involvement) is clearly an important component of a successful programme exit strategy, including more MoU language regarding hand-over procedures and responsibilities.

Link WMCs to Private Sector Actors

Another medium-term recommendation is to ensure that WMCs are linked to private sector actors such as private maintenance service providers and spare parts suppliers. Although efforts to establish these links are currently on-going, it will likely take several months to solidify these relationships. In addition to linkages with CBOs to increase programme bandwidth, and formalization of future support roles from government and quasi-government agencies, linkages with the private sector would create sustainable mechanisms for technical support (from maintenance service providers, for example) and improved access to spare parts that are typically supplied by NGOs.

8.3 Long-term Recommendations - Post-2017

These recommendations focus on initiatives that the Consortium can facilitate through advocacy even if initiatives are implemented by local actors or future WASH development projects.

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Institutionalize Management of Improved Data and Information Systems

From its previous research for the *Hand Pump Spare Parts and Maintenance Supply Chain Study*, AO was tasked to review data on the functionality of existing improved water points in the DRC. The most recent data base available was from 2009. Despite dozens of NGOs installing thousands of improved water points annually, no central repository of the location, type, and functionality of water points currently exist in the DRC. The lack comprehensive and up-to-date information on water service infrastructure greatly constrains the ability of NGOs and government officials to understand the costs and benefits of alternative water service delivery mechanisms, and to identify trends regarding infrastructure failure rates, repair or replacement costs, and other functionality data that would inform new infrastructure development decisions. The Consortium should at least engage with:

- Mapping done through the WASH cluster;
- Village Assaini national database;
- Work by GIZ on national information systems for water (SINEAU).

Initiate a SIASAR-style Committee Ranking and Support System

Another potential area for Consortium advocacy is the adoption by government agencies and INGOs of a classification system to assess and rank different capacity and service levels of water management committees. The classification is useful not only for research and analysis purposes, but also to help government agencies and INGOs better target their interventions. For example, donors tend to invest in physical infrastructure for committees that have only C or D level management and technical capacities. The return on these investments is often extremely low as the committees are not capable of properly maintaining water service infrastructure, including an ability to collect adequate user fees to pay for repair and capital maintenance. WMCs falling into the C or D categories first require managerial technical assistance prior to investments in infrastructure. Such a classification also serves as a motivational tool for committees, as funding and support can be tied to service quality levels.³

Figure 8: Water committee classifications from the UN-developed SIASAR system in Honduras

Level	General Description of Condition
A	System functions well, there is potable water every day, with regular maintenance.
B	System may function well but there are management problems.
C	System may function but with serious management and infrastructure problems. Some investment in infrastructure required, but costs should be covered by community/users.
D	System is so degraded that the community cannot repair with its own resources. A major rehabilitation or new system is needed.

³ See <http://siasar.org/mapas/honduras.php> for details about SIASAR.