

# Terms of Reference for WASH Sector Co-ordination (WASH Cord) Meetings

## Background

---

The WASH sector in Sierra Leone, (SL) as in other countries, has many actors and stakeholders. These include: policy-making institutions (MoEWR, MoHS), agencies in facilitation and regulation (District Councils, Donors and NGOs) and service providers (GUMA, SALWACO, Environmental Health Department). In addition communities, the private sector, academic and research institutions play various roles to support service delivery. In the present circumstances of SL, there are a number of donors and several NGOs whose activities are intended to support the GoSL in increasing access to WASH services.

The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MoEWR) has taken a major step in formulating and publishing a National Water and Sanitation Policy and an accompanying WASH Policy Implementation Strategy. Among other things, the policy seeks to strengthen the leadership role of the ministry. Key to this is the ability of the ministry to co-ordinate WASH sector activities, align and harmonise activities and approaches that will ensure cost-effective and sustainable delivery of services. To do this MoEWR is encouraging dialogue, promoting effective reporting by sector actors and providing a platform for lesson-sharing to support its co-ordination efforts and drive sector reforms.

WASH Co-ordination meetings were a regular feature of the WASH calendar, but had been abandoned for some time as interest in meetings waned. These meetings created a platform for sector actors to report their activities but concrete outputs from these were missing and over time these became a bit monotonous. It is reported that the Government side also failed to give reports that could provide a balance in the engagement.

The Water Supply Division (WSD) of the MoEWR has reviewed the reasons for the low interest in the sector co-ordination meetings and, by these terms of reference (TORs), is seeking to revive and sustain the interest of sector actors. In this respect, these TORs have been defined to set clear missions and objectives for the sector co-ordination meetings, with specific outputs that will inform sector decision-making.

There are a number of WASH sector groups and structures, including the WASH Sector Development Partners Group, the WASH Sector Reform Group, SLANGO, Urban WASH Consortium and others within the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS). The WASH Co-ordination (WASH Cord) platform instituted by WSD is not intended to rival these structures, but is a broader-based grouping of service providers, knowledge institutions and Government agencies dedicated to harmonising their activities in line with the WASH objectives of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL).

## Mission and Objectives

---

The WASH Cord will have the following missions and objectives:

- (i) **Create a platform for a continuous sector policy dialogue** between the Government sector representatives and WASH services providers. This dialogue will relate to the formulation of sector policies, strategies and implementation plans and any other issues relevant to the pursuit of sustainable delivery of WASH services. The co-ordination meetings will also

exchange views and seek agreement on the definition of suitable sector level indicators, expected outcomes, and realistic targets, as input to national plans and budgets.

- (ii) **Report individual WASH actions**, programmes, projects and outputs to assist GoSL and MoEWR obtain a true picture of sector activity and contribution to set targets. Through the reporting by sector actors, solutions to identified challenges and opportunities for improved service delivery will be found;
- (iii) **Review the performance of the WASH sector** at least once a year at an Annual Review and exchange views on progress towards agreed outcomes as well as on actions that could contribute to improved sector performance. These sector reviews will contribute to the performance assessment processes of the MoEWR.
- (iv) **Improve harmonization and alignment** with Government policies, strategies, procedures, projects and programs in order to ensure the efficiency of implementation of Government's sector strategy.
- (v) **Provide a platform for sharing lessons** in innovation and best practices.

The mission objectives of WASH Co-ord will be reviewed from time to time in response to changed circumstances.

## Membership and participation

---

Membership and participation in WASH Cord meetings shall be open to all sector actors who are actively engaged in the delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, in both hardware and software. In this respect the following shall be automatic members of the group and shall abide by its memorandum of understanding (MoU).

- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
- Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Ministry of Education
- Government water-related institutions (WSD, SALWACO, GUMA) and any new bodies to be created as stipulated by the NWSP
- Local Councils
- Development Partners
- International NGOs
- Local NGOs
- Private sector providers (contractors, drilling companies, consultants)
- Academic and research institutions with activities dedicated to WASH
- Statistics Sierra Leone

Each organisation shall nominate a representative to the meetings of WASH Cord.

## Scope of Group activities

---

### Sector dialogue

The WASH Cord will pursue an open and constructive sector dialogue using the following meeting formats:

- [Monthly] meetings to share information and views will take place [WSD shall host but WASH Cord consider possibility of rotating to give broader ownership]

- Specific WASH Cord meetings to be called when needed to address issues of concern, as the Government side may wish or as a groups of stakeholders may request;
- A Sector Annual Review, involving civil society and other sector stakeholders, will be held each year to assess the annual performance of the sector and identify new challenges for the coming year;

### **Reporting by service providers**

A main priority of the WASH Cord meetings is to give opportunity for service providers to report their activities to WSD (and other members) in a format that allows for consolidation into a national report. Whilst these reports will need to be sent formally to WSD, reporting this at the WASH Cord meetings creates a field for learning and sharing experiences.

### **Sector review**

An Annual Review Conference (ARC) will be held to undertake an assessment of sector activities over the past year. The date for the conference shall be agreed a year prior to the event but should in all cases precede the annual budgeting cycle of the Government. Planning for this event will be commenced at least 2 months ahead.

The lead for the organisation of the conference shall be MoEWR (WSD). Collaboration with the ministry for the organisation of the event shall rotate among sector interest groups (e.g. donors, NGOs). Each ARC will address a specific theme. In addition to the traditional sector actors, the ARC will involve civil society, parliamentary representatives, the private sector, traditional authorities, academia and research institutions and the media.

### **Sector harmonisation and alignment**

One important goal of the NWSP is to ensure harmonisation and alignment with GoSL systems and procedures, and more particularly in approaches to service delivery. Whilst MoEWR does not intend to implement measures that will impede innovation and new approaches to better service delivery, it no doubt wishes to ensure that service providers and DPs are implementing through common approaches to avoid conflicting messages and outcomes.

WASH Cord meetings will be used to facilitate adherence to agreed strategies, procedures and guidelines, which will be documented and coded to ensure compliance.

### **Sector learning**

Sector learning generated through WASH Cord meetings will be a useful means of spreading good practice. WASH Cord members will be offered opportunities to present findings from pilot projects, lessons from ongoing interventions and innovation towards dealing with s specific sector challenge. WSD will seek support for the dissemination of such knowledge for the benefit of all, and also ensure that it informs GoSL decision-making.

### **Thematic sub-groups**

---

Sub-groups may be formed either permanently or on an ad-hoc basis to review, report or address specific thematic issues relating to WASH: These could include:

- Rural Water supply
- Urban water supply
- Sanitation and hygiene
- Sector financing

- Capacity development
- Gender

These thematic groups will address specific issues and bring to the attention of the bigger group or for consideration by Government.

## Outputs

---

The main outputs of the WASH Cord meetings shall be the following:

- (i) Minutes of meetings [to be submitted not later than one week after they have been held]
- (ii) Record of partner reports which will feed into a quarterly report to be prepared by WSD and circulated to members
- (iii) Report on Annual Review Conference, incorporating plans for the following year

## WASH Cord Newsletter

---

A WASH Co-ordination Newsletter shall be published, to support learning and capture events of interest to members and the general public. Publication of the newsletter may be assigned to a sector actor that has an interest in doing so.

## Relationship with reform structures and other structures

---

MoEWR has set up a number of structures in pursuance of the implementation of the NWSP. These are the Inter-Ministerial Committee on WASH, the Water Sector Reform Group (WSRG), under which the Sector Policy Co-ordination Team (SPCT) and the Change Management Team (CMT) will function. The WSRG and SPCT has membership from a number of sector stakeholders. The WASH Cord will collaborate with these structures and provide input as may be required for the smooth implementation of the reforms.

## Roles and responsibilities

---

### **Government Lead (Water Supply Division)**

WSD will be the lead sector agency acting on behalf of MoEWR. In this role, WSD will communicate Government sector policy, share information about program implementation progress, and solicit views on policy options and implementation challenges with WASH service providers.

To facilitate the work of the WASH Cord, WSD will have a functional secretariat that will oversee the preparation of meeting agenda, prepare minutes of meetings, liaise with various thematic Leads to put up papers and support the publication of the WASH Newsletter.

### **Other Leads**

WASH Cord shall assess the need to have other thematic or stakeholder Leads such as NGO Lead, Development Partner Lead etc or a Thematic Lead on sector financing, sanitation, Learning Lead etc.

## Calendar of events

---

A calendar of events shall be prepared at the beginning of each year so that members can factor these into their own planning.