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**Work Plan – Thematic Working Group (TWG) on
Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene**

By: Thematic Working Group members on
Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene

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Work Plan –Thematic Working Group on Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Background¹

There are a total of twelve member countries in the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WSS&H): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea, Indonesia and Singapore may join the working group in the near future. The TWG membership thus ranges from the world’s second largest economy with universal WSS coverage and mature institutions to low income countries with limited WSS coverage and significant institutional development needs. The range of environmental health issues faced by the working group member countries, and their ability to address them varies with income, size and level of urbanization.

The overall population in the twelve countries is about 1.8 billion, ranging from less than half a million in Brunei, to more than one billion in China. Some 353 million people (20%) do not have access to an improved water source (300 million of which live in China), while more than 848 million people or 47% do not have access to improved sanitation.

To begin to develop an understanding of the type and nature of the environmental health issues related to WSS&H affecting the TWG members, a grouping based on the number of countries affected is presented in table 1 below.

Issues affecting all TWG members	Issues affecting 5 or more TWG members	Issues affecting 3 or more TWG members
Deteriorating water quality and surface water pollution as a result of discharge of untreated waste water and growing population / urbanization.	Low or very low access to improved sanitation facilities	Low access to improved water supply facilities
	Infectious diarrhoea resulting from poor sanitation and / or hygiene, possibly combined with limited access to drinking water meeting quality standards.	Pollution of ground water with naturally occurring arsenic and fluoride
		Weak or ineffective institutions addressing environmental health issues, contributing to poor collection and use of data.

Table 1: Categorization of WSS&H related EH issues by number of countries affected

Concerns related to surface water quality deterioration are not well characterized or quantified in the available literature, but they are mentioned as a priority issue by almost all countries large and small. For the lower income countries, overall sanitation access ranges from 17% to some 60% although the averages hide wide disparities for rural/urban populations as well as access for the poorest. There are more than 3.3 million episodes of diarrhoea recorded in all countries, mainly resulting from limited access to sanitation facilities and

¹ The primary sources for the background information are the individual country “Environmental Health Profile and Data Sheet” files available from http://www.wpro.who.int/sites/ef_hse/documents/ehe_country.htm

poor hygiene awareness and behaviour. Other water supply and sanitation related diseases such as infectious hepatitis, typhoid and cholera account for a further 160,000 cases.

At least 16 million people in China, the Mekong and Red River Deltas are exposed to arsenic in their well water. Little is currently known about the number of people showing physical symptoms of arsenic exposure. However, without immediate attention to mitigation measures, the number of people affected by chronic arsenic poisoning can be expected to grow significantly over the next 7 to 10 years. In China, more than eighty million people are exposed to excess fluoride in their drinking water, with the prevalence of dental and skeletal fluorosis 262 per 1000 and 16 per 1000 respectively in endemic areas. Occurrence and effects of fluoride in other countries is not as well documented, although it is known to be an issue in parts of Laos and Vietnam.

Improvement of water supply coverage and control of water quality are of high priority both in urban and rural areas. Insufficient management of water services cause water loss and water quality deterioration. Sustainable management of water supply and sanitation systems is essential for mitigating risks to health.

Capacity limitations mean that a number of countries can neither produce reliable sector data, nor effectively use what data are available. Strengthening existing approaches to monitoring and reporting is an important measure towards improving regional data availability and reliability.

2. Objectives

Some of the issues listed in section 1 have been turned into project objectives as described below. Longer term developmental objectives (such as a decrease in incidence of diarrhoea) have not been listed explicitly, but may be expected to result from the successful implementation or follow up of specific activities listed in section 3. In addition, the TWG itself is a new entity that needs to more firmly establish its membership, identity and work program. For this reason an overall organisational objective has been added directing the TWG to establish its profile, ways of communication, etc.

TWG formation

- Clear identity, terms of reference and work plan for the Thematic Working Group established in its first year of operation.

Protecting water resources

- Promote and improve the sustainable management of water supplies by (i) focusing on surface water pollution, (ii) developing Water Safety Plans, water quality and diseases surveillance systems, and (iii) improving Operation, Management and Maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.

Increasing sanitation coverage

- Raise political awareness and support regionally for increased investment in sanitation and hygiene at national levels.

Widening technology choices

- Enhance cooperation in researching low cost options for sanitation and water treatment.

Improving data collection and availability

- Harmonize existing monitoring and reporting activities on water supply and sanitation coverage, as well as water-borne diseases.

3. Activities and timeline

The activities are for the period 2007-2009, with a review taking place in the last year.

Please Note: Timing has been provided for ongoing activities in which the TWG can play an important role. Timing for newly proposed activities should be considered in the process of reviewing and finalizing the plan. Thus, no specific recommendations have been made yet.

Activity codes used in the planning table			
a	Knowledge management and technical support	c	Coordination and advocacy
b	Progress reporting to the regional forum	d	Resource mobilization

Objective	Cat.	Activity	Timing		
			2007	2008	2009
1: TWG establishment	c	Develop an initial work plan through a participatory process of development and review	→		
	c	Finalise membership and develop mailing list	→		
	b	Establish TWG website at CDC Beijing	→	→	
	c	Finalize national counterpart bodies to TWG; either existing, or through establishment of national TWGs.	→		
	b	Establish annual meeting and reporting schedule 2007-2009	→		
2: Promote and improve the sustainable management of water supplies by (i) focusing on surface water pollution, (ii) developing Water Safety Plans and water quality surveillance systems, and (iii) improving Operation, Management and Maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.	Quantitative assessment plans on water quality of surface water resources affected by pollution				
	a, c	Collect information from member countries which have carried out (or will carry out in future) such quantitative assessments of surface water bodies	→	→	
	c, b	Post methodology and guidelines on TWG website	→	→	
	a	Analyze country approaches and findings	→	→	
	a	Develop framework for assessments		→	→

		based on country experiences and analysis.			
	Water Safety Plans and water quality surveillance				
	a	Conduct workshops on WSP development	→		
	c	Document process and outcome of member country WSP development	→	→	→
	b, c	Make process guidelines and WSPs available on TWG website	→	→	→
	c	Collect information on organization of water quality surveillance in member countries, including tools and instruments.	→	→	
	Operation, Maintenance and Management				
	c	Collect information on the problems and good practices concerning O & M	→	→	
	c	Establish collaboration with the O & M Network	→	→	
	a	Organize inter-country workshop on operation, maintenance and management of water supplies		→	→
	c	Encourage member countries to develop national O&M frameworks		→	→
3: Raise political awareness and support regionally for increased investment in sanitation and hygiene at national levels.	c	Use TWG website and national contacts to disseminate information on regional sanitation economics studies, and East Asia Ministerial Conference on Sanitation (EASAN)	→	→	
	a, c	Participate in post-EASAN planning and follow-up	→	→	→
4: Enhance cooperation in researching low cost options for sanitation and water treatment.	c	Collect information from member countries on problem areas for sanitation (e.g. flooding) and water (e.g. arsenic) and successful solutions	→	→	
	c	Collect information on relevant ongoing research efforts	→	→	
	a, d	Identify priority areas of need and propose ways to jointly address technical and resource needs.		→	

	b, c	Disseminate information, study designs and results through TWG website and other means		→	→
5: Harmonize existing monitoring and reporting activities on water supply and sanitation coverage, as well as water-borne diseases.	a	Request WHO and UNICEF to organize regional and national workshops to improve the accuracy and methodologies employed in the current Joint Monitoring Program system.	→	→	→
	a, d	Member countries to review, develop and strengthen its WSS monitoring and water-borne diseases surveillance tools to make information systems consistent with the WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program.		→	→

4. Outputs and Indicators

Objective	Outputs	Indicators
1: TWG establishment	Work plan, including a meeting schedule, reporting schedule and budget	Plan approved and published Resources for implementation available
	TWG website with background information, relevant links and downloadable documents established	Web site operational Mechanism for web site maintenance operational
2.1 Quantitative assessment plans of surface water resources affected by pollution	Methodology and guidelines from member countries	Materials available from TWG and website
	Analytical report	Study report finalized and available
	Framework for plan development.	Framework based on analysis finalised and available from TWG website
2.2 Water Safety Plans and water quality surveillance	Regional (2) or national (4 or more) WSP training workshops	WSP development underway in 2 member countries 6 months after workshop completion
	Specific (urban) and generic (rural) WSPs developed by at least 3 countries	WSPs available on TWG website Implementation of one or more specific or generic WSPs after development
	General WSP development process	Country experience evaluated,

	guidelines for national use	documented and available on website
	Documented water quality surveillance tools, instruments and experience. Framework template developed based on regional experience.	Summary report on relevant experience and organization from selected TWG members WS surveillance system template agreed and available
2.3 Operation, Maintenance and Management	Collaboration agreement between TWG and O&M Network	Agreement with specific areas of cooperation in force
	Inter-country workshop on successful O&M approaches	Workshop attended by at least 3 member countries, with active involvement from at least one O&M Network member
	Documented positive experience and workable approaches	Collation of country experiences available through TWG website
3: Raise political awareness and support regionally for increased investment in sanitation and hygiene at national levels.	Relevant EASAN follow up activities identified and incorporated into TWG workplan	TWG workplan revision by April 2008
	Relevant International Year of Sanitation (IYS,2008) activities identified and incorporated into TWG workplan	TWG registered with IYS secretariat TWG workplan revision by April 2008
4: Enhance cooperation in researching low cost options for sanitation and water treatment.	Consolidated information “store” on technologies in use in the region	Collected information easily accessible (e.g. website)
	Inventory of existing and ongoing research, with analysis of further needs	National work plans with relevant research highlighted Agreed areas for attention for 2008-2009 TWG work plan
	Proposal for tackling knowledge gaps	Proposal accepted by member countries
5: Harmonize existing monitoring and reporting activities on water supply and sanitation coverage, as well as water-borne diseases	Training workshops in member countries interested in improving systems	Countries with strong existing systems participate as resources
	Monitoring tools and data developed and shared by member countries	Tools and data available on TWG website

6. Resources

objective	Required resources	Type
TWG formation	National and international experts; TWG Website at China CDC;	Available; Available;

Protecting water resource	National quantitative assessment methods on water quality of surface water bodies; Available; Instruction and guidelines on water quality surveillance and water supply and sanitation O & M from international organizations	Need to be mobilized
Raising political awareness	TWG website; Medium	Available; Need to be mobilized
Enhancing cooperation in researching low cost options for sanitation and water treatment	National researches and successful solutions	Need to be mobilized
Harmonize existing monitoring and reporting activities on water supply and sanitation coverage, as well as water-borne diseases.	National monitoring system; Instruction and guidelines on water quality and diseases surveillance	Need to be mobilized; Need to be mobilized