

# WASH ROAD MAP

Delivering qualitative humanitarian WASH at scale, anywhere and anytime

An unprecedented collective working **collaboratively** on specific initiatives to improve the **rapidity, quality and scale** of **humanitarian WASH** responses.



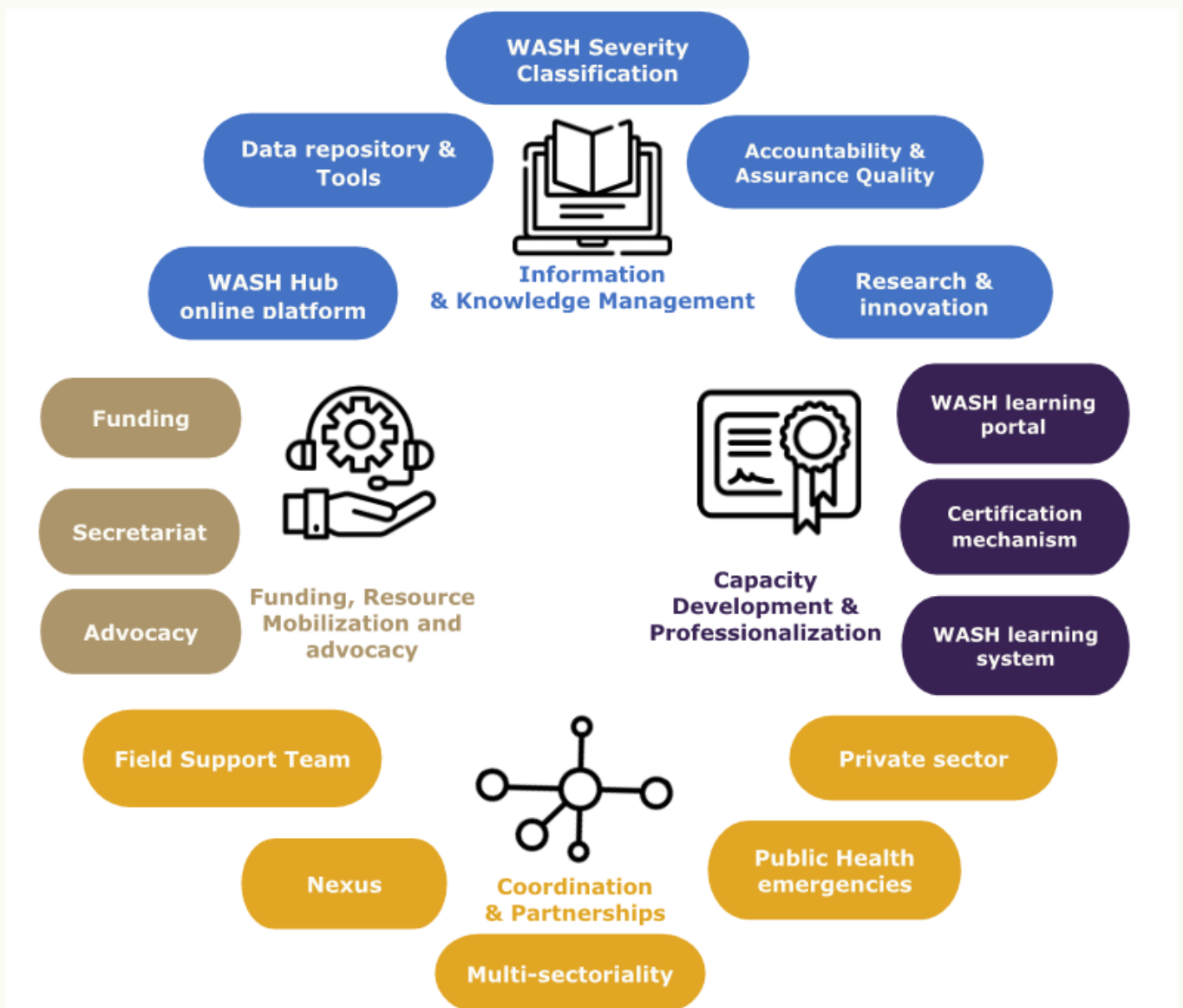
# A joint sector strategy to adapt and improve WASH responses

**The past decade saw an unprecedented frequency and density of emergency responses.** In 2018, the HIIK's Conflict Barometer counted 374 conflicts around the world, almost three times as many as in the 1990s, with one in 33 people in the world in need of humanitarian assistance. Since 2005, the number of humanitarian crises requiring an internationally led response has nearly doubled, from 16 crises in 2005 to 30 crises in 2017. The average length of time that support is required almost doubled too, from four to seven years and "forcibly displaced people" spending an average of 20 years in refugee camps .

**However, as well as becoming more numerous, crises are also becoming more complex.** Humanitarian organizations now face a wide range of emergencies, from those triggered by environmental or climatic factors and protracted conflict-related crises, along with compounding factors such as migration, urbanization and climate change. Added to this is the climate crisis, which is expected to cause the exodus of more than 200 million people by 2050 according to the declaration of the World Bank in September 2021

**Our world is changing, and it is now crucial to adapt to these new realities.**

**In 2019, key WASH stakeholders collaboratively identified priorities to enhance the WASH sector capacity. They developed and committed to implement the WASH Road Map, a set of 16 initiatives organized in four working groups.**



# Discover the WASH Road Map

## Historic

Solidarités International 2019  
Ngala - Nigeria



**The humanitarian WASH sector has always been at the core of emergency responses.** Ensuring an adequate supply and equitable access to clean water and sanitation services are vital for the affected populations. They are the first steps towards a dignified and preserved life.

However, with the increasing number of affected people, in addition to the increasing length, scale, and complexity of the humanitarian crisis, **WASH actors recognised they needed to urgently accelerate and adapt their efforts.** New approaches had to emerge to save additional lives, to achieve targeted public and environmental health outcomes, and to create synergies between acute emergencies, humanitarian crises, and long-term development.



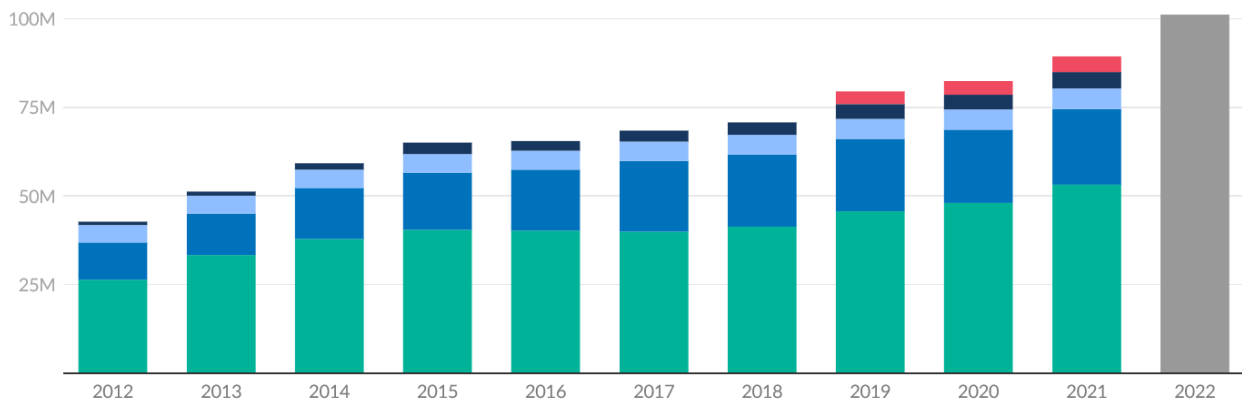
**Every year of the last decade, the numbers have climbed. Either the international community comes together to take action to address this human tragedy, resolve conflicts and find lasting solutions, or this terrible trend will continue.**



*Filippo Grandi - UN High Commissioner for Refugee*

### People forced to flee worldwide (2012 - 2022)

■ IDPs 
 ■ Refugees under UNHCR's mandate 
 ■ Refugees under UNRWA's mandate 
 ■ Asylum seekers 
 ■ Venezuelans displaced abroad 
 ■ Latest available estimates



Note: 2022 figures are estimated using data available as of 9 June 2022

Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder

Facing this situation, in **October 2017**, the Inter-Agencies WASH Group (IAWG) -an informal group of the largest WASH organizations- and the Global WASH Cluster (GWC) **invited key WASH stakeholders and agencies to meet and identify challenges and opportunities for the sector**. This launched several studies, such as the Gaps in WASH in Humanitarian Response one and the humanitarian WASH sector capacity study. The main findings of the latter were presented to the GWC's annual meeting in 2019 which led to the identification of five key recommendations, endorsed by fifteen of the largest organizations involved in the WASH sector:



UNICEF/Global WASH Cluster Burkina Faso  
Martina Rama

- **Recommendation #1: Reposition WASH as a core sector for survival and protection**
- **Recommendation #2: Quality WASH responses should be timely and efficient and reach the most inaccessible and difficult places**
- **Recommendation #3: WASH responses are predictable and effective only when robust protocols are in place**
- **Recommendation #4: The predictability of the WASH response depends on the timeliness and flexibility of financial resources**
- **Recommendation #5: It is essential to build synergies between acute humanitarian situations, protracted contexts and development**

The outcome of this process provides the basis for the strategic framework for the Road Map 2020–2025. **It articulates how, through collective commitments and strategic engagement, the humanitarian capacity of the WASH sector ought to be enhanced**. The document was then finalized in early 2020, outlining three functional pillars and three operational areas. A year later, in January 2021, the fifteen emergency directors formally approved the Road Map, confirming their commitment to contribute to and support the implementation plan through 16 innovative initiatives, organized in four working groups, each led by one or two of the partner agencies.

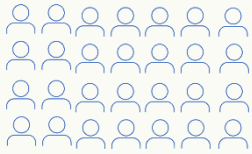
Since then, over fifteen organisations have joined the collective, actively contributing through their expertise and resources to the WASH Road Map vision: **By 2025, the humanitarian WASH sector will have the capacity and resources to deliver qualitative responses at scale, anywhere and anytime.**

WASH Road Map initiatives and activities are directed to better the situations of **populations living in Fragile, Conflict and Violent settings (FCV)**. Standard humanitarian principles, including the respect of basic living conditions, have been incorporated as the basic goal of WASH Road Map outcomes.

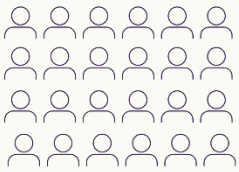


## Governance structures

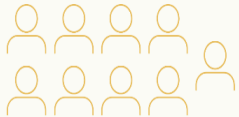
From 2021, WASH Road Map organisations expressed their interests in constituting the following governance arrangement, which has, since then, carried the collective in its evolution:



**The Directors' Collective** is composed of emergency directors of each agency involved in the Road Map. They follow the progress of the collective, advocate on behalf of the whole sector in their own agencies to give more prominence to WASH activities, and can join the efforts to raise WASH issues on the agenda of humanitarian operations.



**The Steering Committee** holds the ruling power of the Road Map. It endorses or refuses strategic and sensitive propositions. It is composed of all initiatives' leads and co-leads, one representative of the GWC CAST, two representatives of the GWC SAG, two representatives of the IAWG, and two co-chairs.



**The Executive Committee** handles the day-to-day governance of the Road Map. It is responsible of the public communication and visibility of the Road Map and advocates for funding and support resource mobilization efforts. It is composed of one representative of each Working Groups, one representative of the GWC CAST, two representatives of the IAWG, and two co-chairs.



**Chairmanship** has been identified as a relevant governance function for the direct and operational management of the WASH Road Map. Two co-chairs are elected for a period of two years, they invest about 290 hours per year to the WASH Road Map and are members of all other governance structures.



To support co-chairs, a **Secretariat** has been put in place. It is composed of a full-time Secretariat Officer -hosted by a WASH Road Map member- and of a Head of Secretariat -a consultant dedicating around 6 days per month to assist the Officer with their expertise. The Secretariat meets with the co-chairs two to three times a week.

# Discover WASH Road Map actions

## Working Groups

The WASH Road Map is a game-changing process in terms of leadership: the large range of actors who compose it -NGOs, institutions, donors, allows to focus on all facets of humanitarian WASH actions, made possible by **16 initiatives**, divided into **four specific thematic areas**, also called working groups.

## Information and knowledge management

**Having the right information and the capacity to manage them is vital to acquire the knowledge to respond effectively in emergencies.**

Promoting cross-learning, and sharing experienced, technical expertise and best practices are crucial to addressing humanitarian challenges. The WASH Road Map aims to achieve this through initiatives such as the establishment of common virtual space(s) for all humanitarian WASH actors ([initiatives 1.1 and 1.2](#)), but also tools such as the WASH Severity Classification - a tool similar to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification capable of measure and anticipate the severity of WASH conditions across various crises and times ([initiative 1.3](#)). Quality is also a primary consideration and requires new monitoring tools ([initiative 1.4](#)). The field of research is also taken into account, notably with the reflection on the research questions to be introduced in the agenda of the next years ([initiative 1.5](#)).



## Capacity development and professionalization

**The need for specific expertise in humanitarian WASH interventions is greater than ever.**

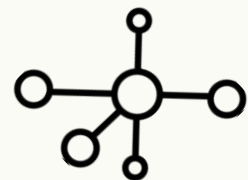
Because of the increasing complexity of crisis, the range of skills needed to develop effective, sustainable interventions requires a range of skills that is growing every day. It is crucial to ensure that the right skills are in the right place at the right time, at all times. This objective requires a better and easier access to existent trainings and courses ([initiative 2.1](#)), the existence of a common competency framework ([initiative 2.2](#)) but also the set-up of localized educational programs capable to empower large range of humanitarian professionals ([initiative 2.3](#)).



## Coordination and partnerships

**A paradigm shift in the way the humanitarian sector works is needed**

– connecting with other humanitarian sectors to work on several aspects of a crisis is a necessity, particularly when it comes to public health issues ([initiative 3.3](#)) but links with shelter, nutrition and other interested sector will be a great advantage ([initiative 3.4](#)). But the humanitarian field also needs to connect with the private sector to diversify fields of expertise and increase the capacity of the humanitarian WASH sector ([initiative 3.2](#)). It is also crucial to strengthen the Nexus approach to get closer to the development sector ([initiative 3.5](#)). Special attention is also given to support the local level through the deployment of Field Support Teams ([initiative 3.6](#)).



## Resource mobilization and advocacy

The tendency of the humanitarian WASH sector to be underfunded is **aggravating** – in 2008, 70% of the funding requirements were met, in 2017 only 59%. As a result, the sector fails to meet its ambitions in terms of coverage, quality and effectiveness of its interventions. The WASH Road Map is in need for strong internal coordination to connect the different stakeholders and allow them to be efficient (initiative 4.1). Creating common and inclusive tools for funding (initiative 4.2) and advocacy (initiative 4.3) for the WASH sector is urgent. This is the sine qua non condition for a rapid and effective response when a crisis occurs.

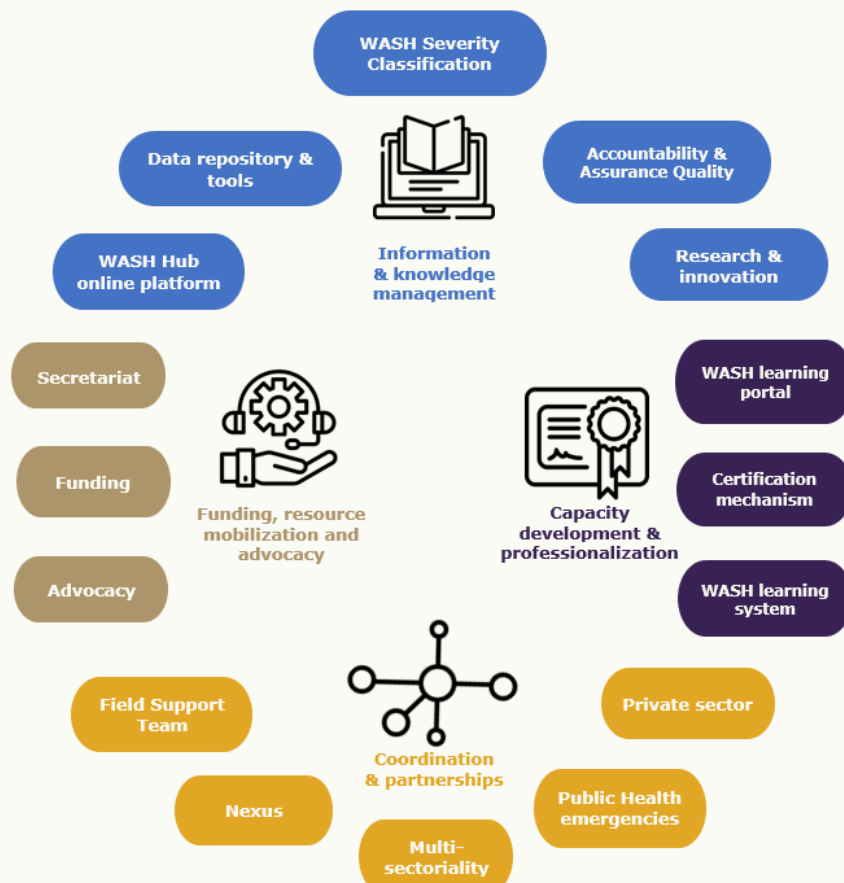


## Initiatives

All sixteen initiatives have been carefully designed to answer identified challenges faced within the humanitarian WASH sector. They aim to achieve tangible, concrete solutions that incrementally, will strengthen the sector by increasing its capacities and resources. All members are involved in at least one initiative, offering their expertise, time and assets. This way, the WASH Road Map gathers the right humanitarian WASH actor to engage itself at the right place.

**Each of the 16 initiatives is detailed in Annex 1 of this document.**

Initiatives' progress is regularly updated in the WASH Road Map's dashboard, an unprecedented monitoring tool gathering maximal information: contacts of its actors; initiatives' goals, budget, secured funds, main achievements, current stage, next expected results; and more. The full version is accessible to all the actors of the collective. The public version is available on the [website](#).



# Discover WASH Road Map events

## Internal events

The WASH Road Map is internally rhythmmed by several series of events outspread throughout the year. Firstly, the governance organs (c.f. governance structures) meet as follow:

1. The **Executive Committee** (ExC) gathers monthly for a one and a half hour. The meeting's minutes are then shared to all WASH RM members.
2. The **Steering Committee** (SC) meets bi-annually for two hours each time. The minutes of the meeting are also sent out to all members.
3. The **Directors' Collective** (DC) only gathers once a month, ideally after the second SC of the year

Additionally, the WASH Road Map strives to offer platforms to discuss diverse relevant topics. All WASH RM members, may they be part of committees or not, are invited to organize and participate in **Virtual Coffees**, happening once every six weeks for a duration of one hour. They offer the opportunity to informally discuss a specific and highly relevant topic. Past Virtual Coffees have tackled the 2021 Dakar World Water Forum, initiative 4.3 on advocacy and the results of the GHV consultancy "[Elevating Humanitarian WASH Advocacy: A Global Landscaping](#)", initiative 4.2 on funding based on the GHV report "[Scoping the Viability of a Humanitarian WASH Fund](#)", initiative 1.5 on research and innovation, and the 2022 Groundwater Summit.

In parallel, **panel discussions** are organized to gather external high-level speakers to tackle WASH Road Map-relevant topics. In December 2023, at the dawn of the UN-Water Groundwater Summit in Paris, Elisabeth Lictévout from the [IGRAC](#) and Geraint Burrows and Lucy Whitley from Groundwater Relief joined an online session named "[How to better manage groundwater resources in the context of humanitarian crises](#)".

## External events

While internal events thus offer continuous opportunities for members to formally or informally discuss, debate, and take decisions on items corresponding to WASH RM initiatives and the transformation of the sector, the collective is also very concerned about its participation to external events.

Indeed, to ensure and accelerate the obtention of the needed capacities and resources to rapidly deliver qualitative humanitarian WASH responses at scale, anywhere and at any time, the WASH RM must connect to the rest of the sector and introduce itself as a strategic and core player and lead unprecedented advocacy actions including external actors.

Thus, so far, the collective has or will participate(d) to the following events:



- The [World Water Week](#) in August 2021 and 2022 in Stockholm: at the 2021 edition, the WASH Road Map offered a presentation of the main gaps in the humanitarian WASH sector according to its beneficiaries and main actors, as well as a summary of the progress made over the previous seven years to assess these gaps. The following year, the WASH RM did not participate as one entity but over 10 sessions were organized by its members
- The [World Water Forum](#) in March 2022 in Dakar: the WASH Road Map presented a joint session with the ICRC and the LSHTM entitled “Joining forces to prevent the reversal of the SDGs’ in Fragile, Conflict, and Violence affected settings”. Overall, the session was a strong call to give the humanitarian WASH sector the tools to do better in Fragile, Conflict and Violent settings
- The **Global WASH Cluster Satellite Events** in October 2022 online: over the week, a total of five sessions were dedicated to topics related to WASH Road Map initiatives and led by WRM actors:
  - By UNICEF and the GWC: [Intersectoral collaboration in Ethiopia and Current global integration initiatives](#) (linked to the 3.3 and 3.4 initiatives)
  - By StC and IMC: [Integrated WASH Programming](#) (linked to the 3.3 and 3.4 initiatives)
  - By IHiP and SI: [Improving the quality of the humanitarian response : how humanitarian WASH and private sector actors are contributing?](#) (linked to the 1.4 and 3.2 initiatives)
  - By SI: [The Accountability and Quality Assurance Initiative](#)(linked to the 1.4 initiative)
  - By the LSHTM: [Research priorities for WASH in Crises](#) (linked to the 1.5 initiative)
- The **UN-Water Groundwater Summit** in December 2022 in Paris: although the WASH Road Map will not participate as a whole, two of its members will organize a side-event in person. Additionally, an online Panel Discussion was organized by the WRM the day before the launch of the Summit, to offer an unprecedented opportunity to bridge the Road Map to this yet un-tackled topic within the collective
  - By ACF and SI: [Groundwater and the right to a healthy environment](#)
- The **UN Water Conference** in March 2023 in New York City: this historic event offers the possibility for water-related topics, including the very under-represented humanitarian WASH sector, to be pushed on the international political agenda. [Initiative 4.3](#) dedicated to advocacy for the humanitarian WASH sector has prepared a historic [Call To Action](#), validated by WASH Road Map actors, to push for five specific points around (i)focusing efforts towards population living in Fragile, Conflict and Violence settings, (ii)needed support and coordination in humanitarian WASH response,

(iii)the necessary sustainability and resilience of WASH services, (iv)the promotion of the effective implementation of International Humanitarian Law, and (v)the establishment of a recurrent intergovernmental UN-hosted mechanism as well as a UN Special Envoy for Water. This document is meant to be open to all actors -may they be in the humanitarian WASH sector or not- to gather as many signatories as possible in order to join forces. Before, during or after the UN23WC, the document can be found and signed [here](#).

## Communications

The WASH Road Map finds important to be present and vocal on online platforms.

Firstly, it is active on **two social media platforms**: Twitter ([@WASH\\_RoadMap](#)) and LinkedIn ([@WASHRoadMap](#)). On both, it intends to keep its audiences up to date on initiative progress, events such as Virtual Coffees and consultancy offers. It also aims to promote members' content relating to the humanitarian WASH sector.

Secondly, it has a unique **visual identity**, which was the mandate of initiative 4.1 (Secretariat): through a new vibrant official color pallet, recently developed impactful narratives, and rigorous documental resources, the WASH Road Map is now equipped to deliver catchy, relevant and effective communication contents.

Lastly, the collective's **website** is in constant evolution. Now integrating the new visual identity, the latest progress made within each initiative, and new gadgets (such as a recruitment page, a continuously upgraded news tab etc...), this website aims to become a "must-know" in humanitarian WASH digital communications.

## Join the WASH Road Map!

You have been seduced by the unprecedented humanitarian WASH collective described above, its concrete initiatives, and the pro-activeness of the diverse agencies composing it? You are confident to have relevant skills, resources, and ideas to join the collective and reinforce its values? Do not wait any longer, join the WASH Road Map and participate in the effort to allow, **by 2025, the humanitarian WASH sector to have the capacity and resources to deliver qualitative responses at scale, anywhere and anytime!**

The process to join the WASH Road Map is available on the [Join us!](#) tab of our website: [www.washroadmap.org](http://www.washroadmap.org)

# ANNEX 1

## Detailed presentation of the 16 initiatives

### WG1 : Information and knowledge management



#### 1.1 "WASH Hub" online platform

→ A "one-stop" shop for online knowledge sharing and learning

On a daily basis, humanitarian workers have to deal with complex intervention challenges requiring practical solutions. However, technical expertise may not be available locally due to inexperience, cost, insecurity or remote locations. **Having the "right systems and information, at the right place, at the right time" is vital to acquire the knowledge to respond effectively in emergencies.** Thus, promoting cross-learning and sharing experienced, technical expertise and best practices are crucial to addressing humanitarian challenges. Undeniably, there is breadth and depth of knowledge within the community of practitioners, and it is now time to share and build them locally. In addition, information and core knowledge are scattered across many websites in poorly indexed libraries which are difficult to access by practitioners globally.

**The online "WASH Hub" platform** aims to answer the above problematic status quo: it **will be a virtual space for field-level WASH practitioners to access key technical resources, events, and training.** It will be designed as a service by and for humanitarian practitioners, particularly those working in local organizations around the world.

The first and main output of this initiative is the "one-stop" shop for online knowledge sharing and learning to provide the opportunity for local humanitarian organizations to engage and benefit from knowledge, data, and learning products. It aims to link existing external partners and stakeholders operated resources, such as, amongst others, the COVID - 19 Hygiene Hub, e-Compendium, Octopus, Wash'Em, to simplify accessing and sharing information and knowledge, particularly for local actors in technologically challenging settings.

Information gathered through mapping of existing platforms and a survey to WASH practitioners will guide the design of a second output: a 2-way communication hub between humanitarian workers and technical experts.

Aside from the resource repositories, the WASH Hub will also link humanitarian workers to key agency document repositories and online training packages and provide regular updates on WASH events and conferences through regular WASH Hub newsletter updates and social media engagement.



#### 1.2 Core and centralised data repository and tools

→ Improving decision-making through the better management of secondary data

Over time, humanitarian workers deal with increasingly complex and varied fields of intervention that require a thorough understanding of the context and the issues it raises. In order to be effective and to implement interventions that are truly

adapted to the needs of targeted populations, **humanitarian workers need to rapidly collect all relevant information on a variety of topics**. Indeed, to be fully efficient, information that has already been studied and surveyed must be readily available to them, so that efforts and resources are not wasted on research or already conducted studies.

Currently, information and core knowledge are either scattered across many websites in poorly indexed libraries or unavailable because not sufficiently shared. In either case, it is always difficult to access for practitioners around the globe. Therefore, after assessing the existing data gap, this initiative aims to provide a one-stop shop for major WASH practitioners to access WASH-related data sector in emergency and development contexts.

**The development of a virtual space gathering core secondary data for the WASH sector will allow the access to all kinds of information including epidemiological, environmental, socio-economic data, at the highest spatial and temporal resolution.** By providing humanitarian workers with a more detailed knowledge of the context, this data will enable better decision-making and can be the basis for the design and prioritization of WASH humanitarian responses.

The repository will be maintained on an ongoing basis to ensure the relevance and accuracy of information. The data gaps identified will also be used to develop an action plan on how to fill these gaps to harmonize data processes through inter-sectoral, institutional and innovative approaches.



### **1.3 WASH Severity Classification “WSC”**

**→ Uniting a global WASH response with an evidence, based approach**

So far, the WASH sector has generally achieved very encouraging results in terms of improving data availability. Yet, the absence of a recognized and standardized framework to transform complex data into actionable information within the WASH sector has become a major bottleneck in decision-making processes. This strategic gap has prevented the sector from effectively delivering evidence-based planning, response prioritization, optimal resource allocation and advocacy. Indeed, WASH does not have any tools like the FSL does with the IPC, based on a methodology that is not challenged and results that everyone has confidence in. More specifically, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a global scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition. Created in 2004, the impetus came from the humanitarian community's need to understand food security crises faster and with greater precision, to shape a more effective response. The same need is currently felt from the WASH sector. This initiative thus aims to design a system capable to classified the WASH needs across various crises and times.

**With the IPC in mind, this initiative aims to launch the WASH Severity Classification, consisting of a set of tools and protocols designed to enable analysts from humanitarian and development organizations to measure the severity of WASH conditions across various crises and times**, through an evidence-based approach that uses recognized standards and existing data (government databases, UN agency and NGO assessments and situation reports).

In brief, the WSC aims to (i)classify geographic areas within a country with different WASH severity scores, (ii)provide a shared understanding of the

magnitude, duration, and drivers of severity in specific areas and for specific population groups, (iii) quantify the number of individuals in different severity contexts, differentiate the degree of urgency, and better tailor aid interventions.



#### 1.4 Accountability and Quality Approach “AQA”

→ **Building a monitoring system integrating quality as a primary consideration**

**High-quality WASH responses are critical to saving lives, preventing harm and supporting life with dignity.** These responses must both provide water and sanitation services in sufficient quantity and quality to guarantee equal access to all beneficiaries, and be people-centred. At the moment, the humanitarian community invests significant resources in providing assistance. However, the studies repeatedly demonstrate an insufficient level of quality, leading to user dissatisfaction, a tendency which is hard to reverse because of the limitation of current monitoring and evaluation approaches: whilst they collect a lot of data, they focus on tracking activities rather than understanding what is working for whom. Reporting requirements are often prioritized, using vanity metrics that evidence strengths but fail to address weaknesses. This leads to opportunities for improvement being missed and programs that are falling short in terms of quality. The AQA is a new monitoring system, integrating quality and accountability as primary considerations to address the above.

**The AQA initiative is about equipping the WASH sector with monitoring tools and approaches that allow it to focus on what is important and to permit continuous adaptability.** These processes are designed to be incorporated in the Humanitarian Program Cycle and used collectively at the national cluster coordination level, which plays an important role in enabling a collective and mutually accountable approach to humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, quality is a broad term that covers many different aspects of performance. The AQA initiative uses three criteria to characterize a quality humanitarian response: achieving objectives – avoiding doing harm – satisfying the community. This requires some changes in practice in the area of monitoring. First of all, the AQA approach aims to move from vanity metrics –the number of latrines built- to integrating actionable metrics -% of people using latrines- which can be used to understand whether activities are working and users are satisfied, and leads to specific improvements. These metrics are not an invention of the AQA initiative : they are at the core of existing key resources, such as the Sphere Standards, but the initiative aims to support their systematic use. However, for the study of these indicators to be effective, we need to collectively set clear standards for quality and hold ourselves accountable.

Indeed, we must engage with those we seek to help and measure ourselves against their expectations to adapt programs accordingly. For this purpose, two tools have been developed: (i) a guidance note: describing the step-by-step process to be followed by coordination platforms to collectively implement the AQA approach and (ii) a modular analytical framework: a flexible tool that provides examples of WASH standards, indicators and monitoring approaches. It is composed of three base modules (Public Health Risk, WASH Service Provision and People-Centred Programming) and optional modules to be selected and adapted based on the priorities agreed by partners.





## 1.5 Research and innovation

→ **Incorporate research into humanitarian WASH programming**

Humanitarian WASH interventions must provide access to safely managed services and implement responses to epidemics with dignity, well-being, and safety. However, **in a context of increasing and complexification of crises, there is also a need to deliver evidence-based strategies and to require to provide high quality and accountable interventions to affected populations.** Responding to these crises demands strong evidence on what works to guide more effective and efficient investment and to achieve better health and social outcomes.

However, recent systematic reviews have highlighted a paucity of rigorous evidence to guide WASH interventions in humanitarian crises. In June 2017, ELRHA's Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) program convened a meeting of representatives from international response agencies, research institutions and donor organizations that are active in the field of humanitarian WASH, to identify research priorities. Although the evidence base for WASH interventions is ever increasing, there are research and innovation gaps that still need to be identified and supported. The aim of the initiative is thus to create an environment that facilitates the production of high-quality research and rigorously tested innovations among agencies and academic institutions to improve WASH interventions in humanitarian programming.

Wishing to address the question "what will assist the WASH sector in delivering evidence-based programs globally?", five objectives have been launched as part of this initiative: (i) **creating and maintain a library of published literature for WASH practitioners**, which will be accessible via the GWC website; (ii) **creating a repository of templates and tools for monitoring and evaluation of emergency WASH programs**; (iii) **updating the humanitarian WASH research and innovation agendas** and provide technical advice to research and innovation proposals on these topics; (iv) **disseminating updates on the latest WASH evidence and provide an annual research conference**: the Emergency Environmental Health Forum, for emergency WASH practitioners and agencies; and (v) **creating a network capable of supporting research partnerships between academic institutions and humanitarian actors** to support the systematic integration of research into humanitarian programming. All activities included in this project will be disseminated frequently through existing networks, and networks created through this project.

## WG2 : Capacity development and professionalization



### 2.1 WASH learning portal

→ **A repository of available WASH capacity development opportunities on a single website**

With increasingly complex crises, the need for specific expertise in humanitarian WASH interventions is greater than ever. Because of this complexity, **the range of skills needed to develop effective, sustainable interventions in line with environmental health is growing every day.** As a result, the number of training courses on offer and the tools needed for these skills are also increasing.

These trainings are usually posted on the websites of the organisations that created them and correspond to their vision and needs. An overview is thus inaccessible to the field practitioner, who is therefore unable to compare existing offers and information to choose the most relevant one.

To counterbalance the above, **this initiative aims to develop a repository of WASH (technical and coordination) capacity development opportunities to be accessed on a single website.**

This will help avoid loss and duplication in terms of capacity building resources and ensure that training materials and online courses are accessible and maintained in a unique and secure location. This repository will be linked to existing repositories in the WASH development sector and learning pathways will be developed based on the competency framework developed by the 2.2 initiative.

The main output of this initiative, the repository, is aimed to become the foundation for WASH agencies to develop capacity by supporting a cohort of staff with diverse backgrounds and expertise, with a focus on local capacity (whether present or to be developed). This website will then become a reference point to identify potential resources to increase the WASH capacity of organisations and their employees. Access to these resources will be greatly facilitated as they will be gathered in one place, allowing comparisons to be made to find the best tool available.



## **2.2 WASH competency framework-based certification mechanism**

**→ For an efficient and effective WASH sector equipped with the right set of skills**

As a result of the increasing number of crisis situations and their average duration, the humanitarian sector's human resources needs have grown exponentially. For instance, there were 569,600 humanitarian workers in 2019, which represents a 320% increase since 1997<sup>[1]</sup>. However, it is not always easy to find people with the necessary expertise, the adapted behavioral competencies and the will to work in difficult conditions (challenging, dangerous etc.).

**To ensure that the right skills are in the right place, at the right time and at all times, it is necessary to standardize the required competencies for all WASH humanitarians and professionals.** An accreditation and certification system to be put in place, guaranteeing the suitability of the staff, would enable such a standardization. This will not only be beneficial to the interventions' quality but also to the practitioners, as it would provide them with a predictable framework to develop their professional careers and facilitate their access to continuing training.

This objective will be pursued through a two-step approach: first, the definition an international WASH sector competency framework used by all stakeholders. Afterward, it will be reinforced by the development of a certification and accreditation mechanism for WASH learning and professionals, of course linked to the competency framework.

This process will will also support the performance management and accreditation through an iso-like certification (International Organisation Standardization), acting like a seal of approval on the competencies shown by a practitioner. It will combine learning pathways, accreditations, qualifications and experience and will

include core and functional competencies, focused on a wide range of expertise areas including -yet not limited to- coordination, technical, program cycle management, humanitarian principles, cross cutting issues etc. Ultimately, the project should establish a universal definition of each profession in the humanitarian WASH sector - this would align agency requirements, allowing humanitarian workers to adapt and train in an informed manner.



## **2.3 Scaling up and localization for learning systems in humanitarian WASH**

**→ A strengthened and accessible offer for all**

**Bridging the gap between academic partners, learning institutions and the humanitarian sector at a more local level is an essential step in the localization of humanitarian aid.** Providing an adapted and flexible educational (graduated and vocational) offer, closer to humanitarian crises, will contribute to the professionalization of the sector.

The sector has identified the needs to: (i) empower local learning institutions/organizations in emergency prone areas to deliver appropriate and targeted humanitarian WASH learning activities, (ii) ensure that WASH professionals (including future staff) have access to a range of appropriate, timely and contextualized humanitarian WASH learning offers, (iii) guarantee that the humanitarian and academic/training sectors have a portfolio of essential humanitarian WASH learning opportunities delivered worldwide in key languages and adapted to the WASH contexts in the region; (iv) establish a system to deliver timely, specific, and certified humanitarian WASH learning opportunities for emergent crisis and/or in emergency prone areas; and (v) create a mechanism to ensure effective coordination with other capacity building initiatives learnings in the humanitarian sector and to foster the mutualization of resources and expertise.

**As such, this initiative's leads, participants and contributors are working together through the co-development of higher-level educational materials that can be scaled up and localized with and by, key academic partners, primarily in the Global South.** As a starting point, 4 online courses have been co-developed to create a Graduate Professional Diploma Program at IHE-Delft, where all developed educational materials will be made available for use and adaptation by partners.

The four courses are "Governance in humanitarian contexts", "Public and Environmental Health in Emergencies", "Water and Sanitation in Urban Contexts", "Building Resilient Systems in Fragile Contexts". Each course consists of 140 study load hours (knowledge clips, webinars, readings, quizzes, group- and individual assignments etc.), spread over sixteen weeks, so that it is possible to follow them alongside professional work.

The next step is now to diversify and systematically scale-up the offer of IHE-Delft's educational programs, based on a robust educational offer that guarantees quality. To start with, the initiative will offer the courses at four academic organizations in different regions of the world (Latin America, West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa and the Middle East) in Spanish, French, English and Arabic, followed by streamlining these learning pathways at other relevant universities. This requires not only the transfer of these courses, but also their adaptation to the local context and their translation in order to make them accessible to the widest possible audience.

In addition, those collaborations have the vision to develop a more systematic generation of evidence at the local level through operational research as a key element of the response quality and to support the creation of global and local knowledge and learning for the sector.

This initiative is a first step in identifying and demonstrating how strategic partnerships between academics from all around the world and the sector, with support from the global level, can develop together the capacity of the sector and enable more local responses. It also raises awareness of the opportunity to create an alliance of academic partners supporting the capacity building effort of the humanitarian sector and to demonstrate the capacity of the academic sector to collaborate with the humanitarian sector in a more systematic and robust way.

## WG3 : Coordination and partnerships



### 3.2 Specialised WASH expertise

#### → Engage with the private sector to ensure the best WASH expertise

The past decade saw an unprecedented frequency and density of major emergencies responses. Since 2005, the number of humanitarian crises requiring an internationally-led response has nearly doubled: from 16 crises in 2005 to 30 crises in 2017. The average length of time that support is required almost doubled too, from four to seven years. Crises situations have also become much more complex – humanitarian organizations have to face a wide range of emergencies, from those triggered by environmental and climatic factors to complex and protracted conflict-related crises, along with compounding factors such as migration, urbanization and climate change.

This evolution has significant effects on how the humanitarian system operates and is magnified by the need to balance the complexities presented by long-running crises while addressing immediate humanitarian needs. These new trends require a paradigm shift in the way the humanitarian sector works, making it necessary to be able to call on a wide range of expertise, from anthropology to collective sanitation, from new technologies to the design and management of urban water utilities, simply and rapidly.

**However, today, still too much expertise is hardly available in the humanitarian sector. Moreover, local expertise is not sufficiently mobilized.** Examples include hydrogeologists, solid waste treatment experts, surface water treatment experts, renewable energy specialists, consulting engineers, urbanists, institutional experts etc. Access to experts with high levels of competence in these fields appears to be a prerequisite for qualitative and appropriate WASH interventions. For these reasons, it has become essential to develop tools to engage with the private sector.

**This initiative aims to develop tools to facilitate the use of various pools of competent and skilled WASH professionals with specific technical expertise that can be predictably and rapidly mobilized to respond in emergencies, both at a global and local levels** (whenever the local options are feasible, they should be favored). For this purpose, mechanisms to effectively engage with non-traditional actors in the humanitarian space -such as the private sector and academic field- have to be developed. The real challenge is therefore

to build a legal architecture that allows effective and sustainable engagement with the private and academic sectors to benefit from the expertise of their members while respecting humanitarian principles and maximizing the use of local expertise. Indeed, engaging with private sector firms is opening the door to multiple questions to which this initiative has set itself the task of responding. It includes: (i) How to balance humanitarian principles and profit driven activities? (ii) What role for firms in advising on best approaches during emergencies? (iii) What role for the firms in post emergency context? And (iv) How to balance international versus local expertise?

**The ultimate objective of this initiative is thus to ensure that the right expertise is made available when it does not exist within the humanitarian organizations implementing a program/project.** The main output could be embodied in a comprehensive list of pools of experts that outlines common “Standard Operating Procedures” (SOPs) for their engagement, templates of memorandum of understanding (MoUs), competency frameworks and best practices related to HR recruitment/management, advocacy campaigns, duty of care etc.



### **3.3 Integration and coordination of WASH into public health issues**

#### **→ Humanitarian WASH programs as an integral part of public and environmental health priorities**

WASH interventions are critical to achieving effective public health outcomes. Unsafe drinking water, inadequate water availability for hygiene, and lack of access to sanitation coupled with lack of safe hygiene practices contribute to approximately 88% of deaths from diarrheal diseases, or approximately 829,000 preventable deaths per year worldwide, including 297,000 in children under five[1]. It is also a major cause of malnutrition: lack of access to safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene services is estimated to be responsible for about 50% of global malnutrition[2]. This situation occurs when people are exposed to epidemics, affected by conflicts and/or forced to flee their homes. In such emergencies, people often lack access to safe, clean water, adequate sanitation, and hygiene because water supply and sanitation systems are damaged, destroyed or inexistent.

In protracted crises, children under five are 20 times more likely to die from diarrheal diseases due to poor access to water and sanitation than to conflict-related violence[3]. **Regarding the fight against public health emergencies and epidemics, frequent and safe hand hygiene is one of the most critical measures that can be utilized to prevent further infection.** Access to quality WASH services in terms of quality and quantity is thus an important sector of humanitarian and public health responses to achieve good public health outcomes.

**Although this is a known fact, over the last decade, the humanitarian community’s public health responses to emergencies have struggled to provide life-saving relief while addressing the underlying causes of infectious disease.** The WASH sector has often failed to assume a critical and proactive role in improving health outcomes. The sector will also need to develop an in-depth understanding of the relationship between public health and the environment. Indeed, environmental degradation and climate change are key challenges to reducing the spread of infectious diseases and aspects such as water



resource management, air and soil pollution control, human waste treatment and management, must be taken as primary considerations.

For this purpose, **this initiative aims to achieve a systematic integration of WASH, Health, Nutrition sectors, and other sectors if relevant, in responding to public health emergencies.** To this end, a set of tools, processes, mechanisms, and frameworks (Joint Operational Framework) will be developed in collaboration with these sectors making WASH the center of excellence to enable these joint responses.

This will be embodied in the development of key intersectoral workstreams with the WASH sector, to promote an integrated response towards outbreaks and other public emergencies and of a framework for roles and accountabilities of WASH responses in health emergencies. But this will also necessitate developing an integrated positioning of WASH, Health and Nutrition sectors (global, regional and national levels), based on R4ACT evidence-based recommendations to ensure its consistent adoption in humanitarian action and correspondence in the humanitarian response plan.



### **3.4 Multi-sectoral integration and coordination of WASH**

#### **→ Breakdown sectoral silos**

The WASH sector is a critical requirement for other sectoral interventions in emergencies, including health, nutrition, protection, shelter and education. WASH also addresses key humanitarian principles and cross-cutting themes that play a vital role in human rights, protection, safety and dignity, gender and age sensitivity and inclusive programming. Despite the recognition of the core contributions and inter-dependency of WASH interventions with other sectors there are no formal coordination mechanisms that can be activated in a simple and effective way.

Tools as humanitarian WASH plans or objectives aligned with those of other sectors, are missing -the only multisectoral integrations are bilateral in silos between WASH and Education, Protection, Shelter, Food security and Livelihood respectively.

**With this initiative, the WASH humanitarian sector aims to position itself within other sectors to maximize more significant results and break down sectoral silos by exploring venues for effective integrated responses in the future.** In concrete terms, this means that WASH's systematic integration across key response multi-sectors is promoted, structured, operationalized, measured, and evaluated, positioning WASH as the binding sector within other sectors' ways of working.

**To achieve this objective, we are aiming to develop new, and/or strengthen existing, inter-sector and inter-cluster collaborations, coordination and partnerships, which could be translated into a new operational model.** This could be embodied in new resources as joint integrated SOP's and reinforced with integrated technical guidelines, joint technical tools (checklists, integrated quality frameworks, multisector Matrix etc.), joint Roadmaps, ad-hoc multi-sectoral capacity building, global and national inter-cluster strategic partnerships, global or regional advocacy campaigns, intersectoral funding mechanisms etc...

With these reinforced and renovated processes, the humanitarian WASH sector will have a structured impact to contribute to the achievements of other sectors'

outcomes or to contribute holistically to the solution of global challenges for coordination and integration -this is particularly true with public health considerations, which depend at least in part on sufficient quantity and quality of water, and adequate sanitation.

To really go beyond traditional bilateral collaboration and to make the most out of these integrated responses, the WASH sector should strategically identify thematic and cross-thematic areas with common grounds, and that is of interest to other sectors. Cross-sectoral global humanitarian challenges should be explored, untangled, and proposed to others sectors/clusters to trigger engagements as new normal for multi-sectoral partnerships in addressing current and future global threats. The thematic considerations are, for example, urbanization and humanitarian crises, resilience, adaptation of communities and infrastructures to climate change, protection, fighting epidemics and environmental health interventions in emergencies.



### 3.5 Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus Framework

→ **By 2030, resilient and sustainable WASH services for all, always, everywhere**

Despite adhering to a host of common principles, **humanitarian and development actors are not aligned in the planning, design and implementation in the WASH sector**, whereas peace is more often not considered. Humanitarian crisis are more frequent, effecting more people and lasting longer. This necessitates close collaboration and coordination between humanitarian and development actors in order to address needs in protracted crises settings and lay solid grounds for advancing the SDGs post crises.

It's against that backdrop that a WASH collective outcome is expected from the Humanitarian, Development and Peace actors to: (i)strengthen the resilience of WASH services; (ii)align humanitarian and development work together with a strong element on peacebuilding; and (iii)protect gains, and where possible, progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for water and sanitation (6.1 and 6.2).

To that end, **it is critical for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to work more collaboratively in order to bridge current gaps**. This initiative aims to provide a global enabling environment to support the "effective operationalization" of the WASH Humanitarian, Development and Peace (Triple) Nexus and its expected WASH collective outcome. It aims to pursue the objectives of the Triple Nexus in the WASH sector -to ensure the sustainability of WASH investments and contribute to strengthening the WASH sector resilience, thus paving the road for advancing the sustainable development goals, while enabling a more timely, predictable, high quality and cost-effective humanitarian response in times of crisis.

**The first step is to create a common vision and understanding between the humanitarian and development WASH actors to increase the sustainability of WASH services in fragile settings**. Relying on high-level advocacy and strategic NGO partnerships, coordination between the humanitarian and development sectors will be strengthened to enable exchanges, as knowledge sharing for example. This will help to strengthen the resilience of local WASH systems through systematic coordination.

The vision statement of this initiative is “by 2030, resilient and sustainable WASH service for all, always, everywhere.” This is embodied in the development of a Joint Operational Framework (JOF) that outlines a harmonized way of working for the humanitarian-development WASH sectors. The JOF will guide the practitioners in joint analysis, planning, coordination, leadership and risk management through relevant approaches and useful tools as series of case studies, monitoring, MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning) framework, JOF training etc. It will also allow the establishment of more precise taxonomies on, for example, risks and opportunities, activities subject to Nexus Development-Peace-Humanitarian (NDPH) and the respective alternatives of H, D and P, accountability, common indicators etc. Through these activities, the initiative aims to facilitate change in the sector by enabling a funding environment and coherent donor policies for the WASH-Nexus.



### 3.6 Field Support Team

→ **Rapid response team to support WASH coordination in emergency contexts**

**The Field Support Team (FST) is the principle means for the Global WASH Cluster to provide operational surge support to National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platforms (NHWCP).** The FST has provided surge support via a partner consortium to NHWCP since 2008. It provides support in approximately 45 countries, with an average deployment of 15 to 20 per year (depending on team size). The consortium operates under a mandate given by the Global WASH Cluster’s Strategic Advisory Group and is independently funded for deployment operations.

**The FST provides support through surge deployments, remote support and global support to NHWCPs to achieve the 7 IASC Core Functions of cluster coordination.** The current FST includes 4 Cluster Coordinators, 3 Information Management Specialists and 1 Assessment Specialist. The FST consortium can provide additional staff on a consultancy basis. It can deliver in-person or virtual deployments support to requesting countries, for an average of 2 months and task-based remote support through the GWC helpdesk (see below).

In practice, the FST offers: (i)operational support to coordination and information management; (ii)support to conducting coordinated assessments; (iii)provides capacity and resources to critical gaps; (iv)mentoring and shadowing on coordination, information management and assessment functions; (v)capacity building and training of trainers of coordination structures and partners; and (vi)accountability to affected populations, quality assurance and advocacy.

The FST operates worldwide on humanitarian response and emergency preparedness, either to set up or support national and sub-national WASH Humanitarian Coordination Platforms. It deploys in complex emergencies, conflicts, natural disasters, and outbreaks. It also acts in case of an immediate humanitarian need (acute crisis), a degradation of the situation or a lack or reduction of the national and subnational capacity to respond to crises.

## WG 4 : Resource mobilization and advocacy



### 4.1 WASH Road Map Secretariat

→ A secretariat to provide operational support to the co-chairs through the coordination and monitoring of the Road Map

To ensure an effective implementation of the Road Map, secretarial, coordination, monitoring and reporting task are required. These functions are part of the mandate of the co-chairs, and to fulfil this duty in the best possible way, they have decided to hire a dedicated Secretariat to carry out these tasks. Through the creation of the Secretariat, this initiative aims to provide additional working capacity to the co-chairs so that they can focus on strategic issues while operational issues are addressed in an efficient et timely manner.

The Secretariat oversees the monitoring the initiatives, it is a key player in the coordination between all Road Map actors, it is involved in the communication around the project and participates in the development of advocacy strategies. To pursue this objective, the secretariat works closely with the co-chairs through several tasks: (i)the organization, preparation, and facilitation of regular and ad hoc meetings with all the stakeholders of the Road Map; (ii)the support for the finalization of the terms of reference of different governance structures of the Road Map; (iii)the organization of regular data collection and the establishment of regular communication with all actors involved to monitor and report on the progress of the 17 initiatives; (iv)the development of communication tools and/or organize events to improve visibility of the Road Map; and the (v)preparation of reports, arguments, proposals to support fundraising efforts for the Road Map.



### 4.2 Sector funding

→ Explore the possibility of a global fund for the WASH Humanitarian Sector

The increase in the number and complexity of humanitarian crises in recent decades calls for a change in the conduct of humanitarian action. For the WASH sector, this translates into a significant increase in the demand for funding to meet the needs and expectations of the affected populations. Unfortunately, this increasing need has not been matched by a similar increase in donations and today, **WASH humanitarian responses are only 47% funded worldwide. Even when the funds are obtained, they often arrive too late.** Unlike the development sector, one of the major issues for the humanitarian field is reactivity – the first response must be deployed within the 72 hours after the triggering of a crisis. But currently, grants take in average 17 days to reach NGOs<sup>[1]</sup>. This results in poor quality WASH interventions, and still insufficient coverage of safely managed WASH services in crises contexts.

To counter this, **this initiative wishes to explore the potential of a global humanitarian WASH fund or other potential financing facilities.** Indeed, since the current funding system does not seem to correspond to the requirements of our sector, it is necessary to be innovative in the search for funds. A pre-organised funding system would allow the humanitarian WASH sector to be more

effective in the emergency response phase, as its work would no longer be dependent on fundraising delays.

New financing mechanisms such as multi-donor pooled funds will be studied. **The idea is to move from a 'reactive' to a 'proactive' fundraising system, funds could be directed to support specific areas such as first phase emergency responses, multi-year preparedness and resilience, overall sector development and capacity building, coordination of emergencies etc.** The overall objective of the fund would be to support global resilience, preparedness and risk-informed WASH emergency response by increasing the flexibility and adaptability of humanitarian actors.



### 4.3 Sector advocacy

→ **Identify key messages that can represent the entire humanitarian WASH sector**

**The tendency of the humanitarian WASH sector to be underfunded is aggravating –in 2008, 70% of the funding requirements were met, in 2017 only 59%.** As a result, the sector fails to meet its ambitions in terms of coverage, quality and effectiveness of its interventions.

**This initiative aims to develop an integrated approach to establish a common and inclusive WASH sector advocacy strategy.** By identifying priorities as well as gaps, key actors and trends, the objective is to create a set of relevant messages for the whole sector. These messages, aimed at decision-makers, institutions, donors and key stakeholders, will provide support to the humanitarian WASH sector to be better funded and better considered in the global and national agendas. This effort will be carried out at global and local (national/country) levels. At the global level the idea is not to stop at fundraising advocacy level, but to identify and disseminate political and diplomatic messages. At the local level, the priorities are to give the elements, tools and training to fill the gaps in their advocacy strategy. In this way, advocacy will have a mirroring effect between raising the voice at global level (fora, declarations, press releases) and support WASH sector partners and national coordination platforms in their advocacy plans (as part of the 6+1 core coordination functions).

In order to achieve these outcomes, it is crucial to first map existing advocacy strategies at all levels to identify strengths and weaknesses. Once this is done, the initiative would produce an advocacy strategy that will be common to the entire humanitarian WASH sector in order to gain coherence and therefore attractiveness. This initiative also aims to promote the Road Map and its 17 initiatives, by integrating it as a primary consideration in this advocacy strategy.



## ANNEX 2

### List of WASH Road Map members:

- [Action Against Hunger](#) (AAH): co-lead of initiatives 3.6 and 4.3
- [Care International](#)
- [Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology](#) (CAWST): lead of initiative 1.1
- [French Water Partnership](#) (FWP): co-lead of initiative 4.3
- [German Toilet Organization](#) (GTO)
- [Global Wash Cluster](#) (CAST): co-lead of initiatives 3.5 and 3.6 X
- [German Wash Network](#) (GWN): co-lead of initiative 3.5
- [IHE Delft](#): co-lead of initiative 2.3
- [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC)
- [International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent](#) (IFRC): lead of initiative 2.1
- [International Humanitarian Infrastructure Platform](#) (IhIP): co-lead of initiative 3.2
- [International Medical Corps](#) (IMC): co-lead of initiative 3.3 and 3.4
- [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM)
- [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC)
- [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#) (LSHTM): co-lead of initiative 1.5
- [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) (NRC)
- [Oxfam](#): co-lead of initiative 1.4
- [Polish Humanitarian Action](#) (PAH)
- [REACH](#): lead of initiative 1.2
- [Registers of Engineer for Disaster Relief](#) (RedR): co-lead of initiative 2.2
- [Sanitation and Water for All](#) (SWA): co-lead of initiative 3.5

- [Save The Children](#) (STC): co-lead of initiatives 3.3, 3.4 and 4.1
- [Solidarités International](#) (SI): co-lead of initiative 1.4
- [Swiss Development and Cooperation](#): co-lead of initiative 4.1
- [Tufts University](#): co-lead of initiative 1.5
- [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee](#) (UNHCR): co-lead of initiatives 3.2 and 4.2
- [United Nations International Children's Fund](#) (UNICEF): lead of initiative 1.3 and co-lead of initiatives 2.2, 3.5 and 4.2
- [Welthungerhilfe](#) (WHH)
- [World Vision](#)