

Concerning the granting of a contribution to the project/activities:

**WASH Hub, center for knowledge management**

Credit proposal no. 7F-09981.02.07  
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## Project Outcomes, Recommendations and Activity Report

May, 2022

*This report covers the key outcomes and recommendations from the grant provided by SDC towards assessing and building the “WASH Hub” initiative of the WASH Roadmap 2025.*

### Executive Summary and Recommendations

CAWST held individual meetings with 19 global-level stakeholders including leads to explore perspectives and initial scoping of what the WASH Hub could provide to the WASH sector. Input and feedback was provided by eight related initiatives of the WASH Roadmap. The lens CAWST used is one of building a digital platform with associated services. We started by focusing on the end-goal of knowledge sharing rather than the tool/platform and then incorporated learnings from digital platform development.

The WASH Hub, with its initial scope of features is seen by stakeholders as needed in the WASH Sector. It should be designed and implemented as a *service* (not just a website or online platform) available globally, with a focus on localized knowledge, peer sharing and integrated with existing knowledge management tools and practice. The main value proposition of the WASH Hub is “An easy access to curated resources that help you today”. The Wash Hub could be developed as “Knowledge Management as a Service” (KMaaS) following other examples where digital services are centrally managed to decrease costs, by avoiding build and operation costs of a KM service set up by each organization, i.e. “we build it, help maintain it, and you use it”.

In scoping the features of the WASH hub, the core value-adds are:

1. Better “Knowledge Translation” (ie. from research to practical application; and research informed by practice, helping identify and solve challenges faced by practitioners),
2. “Knowledge Transformation” taking information in one format and transforming it to make it more useful for practitioners,
3. Better information dissemination.
4. Combining human support with self-serve information/learning.

Further work and analysis needs to be done on:

1. For it to be “living and breathing” alongside current and new sector platforms, until it truly enables cohesion across other platforms or replaces legacy sites.
2. The integration of online and human interaction, facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges
3. Ownership, governance, financing and human resource model to support the sustainability of the platform and services.

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## Context: Project Scope

The WASH Hub initiative 1.1 was originally broken down into four components (listed below). SDC funding was used to support activities under components 1. and 2. The intent was to advance these, while the WASH Roadmap 2025 lead and members continued on the initiative for components 3. and 4. as funding became available.

*During 1. Review and Coordination, it became clear that the original concept for the WASH Hub, and the process for developing it, needed to be re-scoped from WASH Hub as a “web platform” to a “service”. At the same time, three key challenges were identified that need to be addressed for the WASH Hub to be successful (see Executive Summary).*

**This report covers 1. and 2. as well as further platform and scoping recommendations.**

### 1. Review and Coordination: Bring key stakeholders and existing learnings together (5%)

- Coordination of stakeholders and engagement of local early adopters
- Updated desk review, targeted data collection and platform feature scoping
- Mapping of existing platforms and how they will integrate or be housed within this service

### 2. Platform Adaptation: Adapt the innovation to sector needs (30%)

- Platform development improving Q&A forum, Resource Library, Data Store, Events and Training
- Platform integrations with key communications software of users and group owners such as email, existing websites, social tools, etc.
- Resource library, data and events, expanding the AI engine to aggregate relevant WASH resources, events and training, allowing for user feedback and upvoting.

**This report does not address 3 and 4 below as they are no longer deemed a priority at this stage of the WASH Hub scoping. Elements of 3 and 4 are taken into account in the rescoping and challenges to be addressed.**

### 3. Adoption and Ongoing Operations: Use the innovation, iterate, improve (55%)

- Group & content moderation and user support, including training of external moderators and content post-moderation to ensure high quality.
- User engagement through content seeding and frequent interaction
- Content dissemination through other existing channels and networks as an entry point for users to engage with the platform.

#### 4. Monitoring and Learning: Ongoing highly iterative feedback loops on platform use (10%)

- Automated monitoring of platform use, analysis of user flows and patterns to determine feature improvements
- Capturing, analysis and sharing of learning amongst key stakeholders

# Activities, outcomes and Recommendations

## 1. Review and Coordination

### 1.1. Coordination of stakeholders and engagement of local early adopters

CAWST held individual meetings with 19 global-level stakeholders including initiative leads from the roadmap and WASH sector to engage in the scoping exercise (see Appendix 1 for list). Local early adopters (i.e. the first targeted users of the WASH hub) were not engaged in this phase of the initiative, but will be once a clearer concept of the WASH Hub is developed in order to glean more valuable input from the potential user base.

The following sections (1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5) provide an initial scope of the WASH Hub, by looking at the overlap with other roadmap initiatives (1.2) and other platforms (1.3), the role it plays as a service, not just a platform (1.4) and a summary of the interview findings (1.5)

### 1.2. Synergies and overlap with other Roadmap Initiatives

Initiative 1.1 (WASH Hub) plays a key role in the success of many of the other initiatives both in profiling and functionally supporting the initiatives.

#### ***1.2 Core Data Repository and Tools***

The WASH Roadmap Secretariat is recommending that this be merged with the WASH Hub as the data repository could be a sub-feature of the platform. This requires more scoping to understand the type of data that is most valuable to the users and the human resources requirement to maintain the data sets. Recommended is that the WASH Hub play an initial role in providing a catalog of links to data sets, but not yet integrating or displaying the data directly. - *Contact:* Augusto Come, REACH

#### ***1.3 WASH Severity Classification***

The management of the WASH classification data and updates should/could reside with the cluster and therefore not be housed on the WASH Hub, the page would be referenced.

#### ***1.5 Research and Innovation***

A key feature of the WASH Hub is a smart library. This library should be designed to accommodate the needs of this initiative (in terms of tagging, categorizing, adding research comments, expert feedback, and user reviews). - *Contact:* Lauren D'Mello Guyett, LSHTM – Danièle Lantagne, Tufts

### ***2.1 Training Course Offerings, WASH Learning Portal***

Another core feature of the WASH Hub is an up-to-date list of online and in-person training offerings. This feature should allow for auto-aggregation of existing offerings as well as the ability to add original offerings manually - *Contact: William Carter, IFRC*

### ***2.3 Scaling up and localization for learning systems in humanitarian wash, 3.3 integration & coordination of public health emergencies, 3.4 multi-sectoral integration and coordination of WASH***

The secretariat recommends that when context specifics and cross-sectoral learning systems are developed, they should also be present on the hub.

### ***3.2 “Specialized” expertise for the WASH sector***

Another content type for the WASH Hub “resources”, beyond the library and events (training opportunities) is a list of updated WASH experts and private companies. The moderation and maintenance model for this type of content will need to be assessed to ensure up-to-date and limitation of spam.

### ***4.1 Roadmap Secretariat***

As the secretariat’s mandate includes external communication about the Roadmap, the WASH Hub can provide a content/marketing page focused on the roadmap - *Contact: Elisa Dehove, Consultancy - Léa de La Ville Montbazou, SI*

### ***4.3 Advocacy for sector strengthening***

Advocacy is a subtopic of the WASH Hub library, but could also have dedicated thematic pages.

### 1.3. Updated desk review, mapping of existing platforms and how they will integrate or be housed within this service

The initial scope of the WASH Hub, as a platform, can be grouped into the following knowledge management functions and were reinforced in the interviews:

- 1) **Federated search for content that exists** in other platforms and websites
- 2) **Gateway access to browse curated content and websites**
- 3) **List of WASH related events (online and in-person)**
- 4) **Gateway and informational space for the other initiatives** of the WASH Roadmap

There are many existing WASH-related online platforms. What is common, missing and/or challenging with most of them, from the perspective of the types of users we are targeting with the WASH Hub and what we heard as part of the rationale for developing the Wash Hub, is:

- How do I know this resource is useful/relevant to me?
- Is this resource actually being used by others? Where?
- Just give me a short practical answer!
- I need a tool, not an explanation.
- Can I talk to someone to explain this to me?
- (Where) can I add my own set of resources related to my recent workshop or coordination meeting?
- What are other WASH practitioners from my country/region doing?

#### a) Relevant, existing platforms

- Multi-service websites: [Reliefweb](#) (Events, Training Opportunities, and some library items), [Susana](#) (Forum and Library), [OCTOPUS](#) (Case studies, resources, and a small forum).
- Digital Handbooks: [Sanitation Technologies](#), [Water Technologies](#) and [Hygiene Compendiums](#)
- Multi-topic Resource Libraries: [Humanitarian Library](#), [IRC](#), [WEDC](#), [CAWST's WASH Resources](#), [ps-Eau Resources](#), + Most WASH-related organizations will also have their own publications, like WHO, UNICEF, WaterAid, ACF, etc.
- Single topic Resource Libraries : [Sanitation Learning Hub](#), [Hygiene Hub](#)

#### b) Current platforms in design/development

- SaniHub - Led by the German Toilet Organization (GTO) and funded by the Gates Foundation

*The SaniHub project, currently under active scoping and development, is very aligned in terms of mandate, objective and intention as the WASH Hub: serving WASH practitioners with practical resources and exchange online. As CAWST plays a role in the concept and design of the SaniHub there is an opportunity to use similar processes, resources, user-engagement to develop a broader WASH hub. We recommend engaging GTO and Gates Foundation to possibly combine resources to benefit both the SaniHub and the WASH Hub.*



#### 1.4. WASH Hub as a service, not just an online platform

*As the scope for the WASH Hub was reviewed, it became clear that the platform would rely heavily on human resources and expertise (on a continual basis) in order to fulfill its mandate day-to-day, rather than just a self-serve online resource base. We therefore recommend the WASH Hub not be designed as an online platform, but rather a suite of services which include a self-serve type platform and synchronous human-supported services for the users.*

The online platform is a central tool of the initiative, but the full offering of the “WASH Hub” needs further analysis. An initial list of human resource type requirements are suggested below, the amount of staff still needs to be estimated:

Component	Description	Human Resource requirements
<b>Online Platform</b>	Building, adapting, maintaining the platform, integration development	Product Manager, Web Development
<b>Distributed Help Desk</b>	Providing ad-hoc (WASH) technical support to users	Front line support triage agent, technical backstopping (3 levels: basic guidance, wash generalist, wash topical expert)
<b>Library content</b>	Triaging and clearinghouse for the auto-aggregated content from other WASH libraries as well as original space for new content	Digital librarian, interns for synthesis and triaging with topic experts for quality control.
<b>Content clearinghouse</b>	Keeping the content up to date (gateway to other platforms, summaries and guidance)	
<b>Network building, Marketing &amp; Engagement</b>	Designing and executing on user engagement, adjusting with uptake	Digital Marketer
<b>Analytics &amp; Feedback</b>	Designing and analysing the usage of the platform, the feedback on products and services, component and feature uptake	Digital tool analyst

## Key recommendations for the WASH Hub as a service

We recommend further analysis on:

1. The WASH Hub being a “**living and breathing**” alongside current (and new!) sector platforms, until it truly enables cohesion across other platforms or replaces legacy sites.
2. **Integration** of online and human interaction.
3. The **human and financing** model and financial sustainability of the WASH Hub to ensure ongoing support to users: how are the costs covered for the day to day operations, system maintenance, expert input, human resources presented previously? *We expect that the cost of running the WASH Hub would be in the range of \$200-400K CAD per year. With an initial cost of \$300K-500K CAD in the first 2 years.*
4. The **governance** and **ownership** model of the platform and services: who owns the platform? Who decides how it evolves? *We recommend a light governance model with single point ownership of the platform technology (product operation) and emphasis on the contribution of WASH organizations towards human resources (knowledge management support and expertise sharing).*
5. The **perspective of the potential users**, what do target users really want? What are the priority features that we expect to be used? *We recommend presenting sample concepts of the various components and functions of the WASH Hub and having reactions and feedback to truly understand demand and potential uptake of the different components.*

## 1.5. Summary of interview findings

Below we provide a summary, organized by theme, of what was gleaned from the unstructured interviews of various stakeholders from the WASH sector (see Appendix 1 for list) as well as CAWST's experience working with a large global online user base and partner organizations in a dozen countries. We focused on regional/global level WASH practitioners for this first round to get a bigger picture and initial scoping. We recommend a second round engaging the targeted (intended) users of the WASH Hub, by providing concrete examples of what the WASH Hub's products and services would look like.

### *On the hub as central resource repository*

- Organization's libraries aren't always meeting the knowledge management needs of WASH practitioners, so they are looking to have a central external space.
- Having a neutral/external space can provide for less red-tape and more *inter-organizational* sharing, encouraging communities of practice
- Projects and new initiatives don't want to be building their own library to disseminate resources and would rather use an existing, reputable space
- Organizations who have limited or no internal knowledge management services could benefit from the Hub being a "Knowledge Management Service" limiting the loss coming from WASH staff turnover and the cost of setting up internal knowledge management services.
- As users contribute their opinion and experience, this allows for "opinions of the user, not the organization"

In addition, we see an opportunity to leverage economies of scale with the investments by organizations in isolated knowledge tools.

### *On the sub-sector/context scope of the hub*

- There is support for the Hub to support both *Humanitarian* and *Development* sub-sectors/context of WASH considering how much overlap there is from the Knowledge sharing perspective and how "grey" the reality of emergency vs. development is in many contexts.
- Having a clear indication of "what works" in on-set emergency type situations versus longer-term development and tagging resources that are targeted or written in the context of emergencies would be valuable

### On *content and topic scope and organization*

- Content should be organized using:
  - *WASH topics* organized in a hierarchical taxonomy
  - *Context relevant tagging* such as development, on-set emergency, complex settings
  - *Geographical tagging*, country, region, still allowing for cross-regional learning
- The target user-base is likely to need and want support for “non-technical” topics such as project budgeting, proposal writing, resourcing, in addition to the technical aspects of WASH implementation. This should not be ignored and could be used as a great entry point to engage the sector.
- Cross-topic, and cross-cutting topics such as climate change/adaptation, menstrual hygiene management should be presented and organized in a way that it can be found when looking at the associated/integrated topics such as water supply or sanitation infrastructure.
- Language will be a barrier. How will we decide what to translate and what to have as original language spaces?

### On *content curation*

- There is too much information out there without the support on what is useful to “me” as a WASH practitioner in my context with these challenges. Curation is needed.
- What are the most common 100 questions from WASH practitioners? Start with that.
- There needs to be a clear workflow process (who and how) to determine what resources, websites, platforms are “relevant” and “high quality”
- Agreement that “quality” information and resources doesn’t necessarily mean “peer reviewed articles” or “reputable reports”, but include more anecdotal and context specific examples and experience, provided it was clearly presented as such. The hub should have “good enough” information to help remove barriers to implementation.
- Interest in the ability to have “discussion threads” around specific resources that are served (including comments, up-voting, synthesizing)
- How can we avoid duplications and integrate the internal and external facing resources for organizations who already have a resource base?
- There are 2 main groups of resources: (1) *known* good practices, technical knowledge, (2) *new/complex* areas like emergency FSM.

### **On *adding value to content***

- Simply listing existing resources, ie. creating “yet another WASH library” had limited value-add to the sector, even if the items were curated.
- What would make a curated library more valuable would be to have:
  - A small amount of resources grouped together to support a specific challenge by a user, ie. “read this, this and that, and watch this video, that might help you with your challenge”
  - A synthesis version of a resource, possibly in another format (similar to what the Blinkist app does for books, summarizes in short ‘blinks’ you can read or listen to)
- Comments or up/down voting of a resource by other users, specifically with localization in mind (e.g. WASH practitioner from Ghana comments on the use of a tool in their context)

### **On the hub listing *events and training opportunities***

- While events and training opportunities can be found in various websites, it's difficult to find which ones are relevant and worth attending, including a clear geographical facet to find opportunities in-country.
- Having a filter for relevant training for individuals based on their learning journeys, competency frameworks.

### **On the *human resourcing of the hub***

- How can we use the existing funded staff (in existing organizations) whose role is knowledge management (KM) to support similar functions in the WASH hub - ie, using the hub to benefit their organization’s KM mandates.
- Volunteers can play a role in early triage of incoming requests from the help desk.
- Students can play a role in providing guidance on resources or summarizing new resources, with the supervision of topical experts.

### **On a *decentralized Help Desk***

- There is significant support for this feature. Having a balance of automation with smart response bots to find resources and having a human to talk to, to help more information on a topic, to find a resource, to provide better recommendations
- The help desk needs to use a tiered triage system, with high availability of first and second level agents, and a large base of topical/regional experts for complex requests.

- Using help desk agents based “in-country” can help with localization and timezone/responsiveness
- Ideas for (human) resourcing this (and possibly part of the library curation) included the following, but it was recognized that dedicated and paid individuals were needed for this feature

Who	Advantages	Limitations
WASH technical staff from larger organizations	Knowledgeable, perspective and regional/global view	Time & availability. This wouldn't be a priority task for them. Use for advanced, complex requests
Students & Volunteers	They have time and interest, at a lower cost	Sector knowledge and experience
National NGO staff	Understand the target user better, timezone, geolocalized	Limited bigger picture/global experience (i.e. relevance for other geo contexts), time and resources (already overstretched)

### On *user engagement*

- The success of the hub will depend on the perceived value/utility of the tools and service by its users
- Consider non-technical WASH topics as a means to engage/hook users, such as training opportunities, jobs, events etc.
- The platform cannot feel overwhelming for the user and try to do everything
- Create synchronous moments with users, i.e. scheduled group events, one-on-one live engagement

## 2. Platform Adaptation

With the support of Cisco Foundation, complementing this grant, CAWST has put together (1) a rich discussion forum and (2) the base system for a smart aggregation library, on the KnowledgePoint platform that can serve as a basis for similar features in the WASH Hub. The concept has been initially tested and can provide for scalable development.

The [KnowledgePoint forum](#) features:

- A Q&A system allowing for anyone to post a question and/or offer an answer
- Posts, discussions organized by topic with an expanding, hierarchical taxonomy
- Development of processes for creation of new KnowledgePoint groups, engagement and maintenance
- Creation of themed groups in KnowledgePoint, with a group coordinator
- Creation of a “How to use KnowledgePoint” video, available in English, French and Spanish

The KnowledgePoint library features (in alpha/test phase):

- Auto-aggregation of resources from hand-picked libraries such as WEDC, IRC, WaterAid, WHO, UNICEF, etc.
- Auto-classification and organization of resources
- Smart search engine using the Algolia Search system
- Expandable to include other content types, other than document resources

CAWST has also explored, with undesignated funding, other key components the WASH hub could include, based on its experience serving over 20,000 users from over 4,000 organizations online over the past 6 years including:

- 1) The use of different communication technologies to best support WASH practitioners
- 2) The use of analytics tools to understand the user base and serve it better
- 3) Hosting and sharing technical and learning resources
- 4) Smart search tools to better help users find relevant resources.

The CAWST team is focused on the integration of online and in-person platforms to adapt our services to sector needs, seeking to understand how our clients interact with our services and resources through various platforms. From our analysis of the ‘user journey’ across these areas, we’ve adapted the following for CAWST’s (online) helpdesk and activity mapping to:

- Provide prompt guidance to find WASH technical and learning resources
- Subsidize scheduled one-on-one support sessions with WASH practitioners who request technical assistance
- Undertake initial meetings with three training partners (Nepal, Kenya and India) to collaborate on delivering consulting support (live chat and remote consulting service) in their regions.

- Improve the integration of platforms and services to best address clients needs e.g. from a live chat, clients are invited to join KnowledgePoint and/or apply for a remote consulting service.
- Understand what resources and platforms our users use to better serve them with relevant support services and resources
- Review and adapt our tools and resources on water quality to meet our clients' needs
- Map our services by our clients' learning objectives and aspirations



## Appendix 1: List of people engaged in concept scoping

Organization	Name	Relevant Initiative
arche NoVa	Andrea Bindel	
arche noVa	Lorenz Ewers	
FHI360	Aarin Palamores	Global Handwashing Partnership
IFRC	William Carter	WASH Roadmap - 2.1 Training course offerings
IFRC	Alexandra Machado Soergel	TWiG HPIE - Hygiene Promotion Technical Working Group
International Medical Corps	Syed Yasir Ahmad	WASH Roadmap - 3.3 Integration and coordination of Public Health Emergencies and 3.4 Multi-sectoral integration & coordination of WASH
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Lauren D'Mello-Guyett	WASH Roadmap - 1.5 Research and Innovation
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Sian White	Hygiene Hub
N/A (Consultant)	Dan Campbell	<i>Formerly Global Waters</i>
REACH	Augusto Come	WASH Roadmap - 1.2 Core Data Repository & Tools and 1.3 WASH Severity Classification
Save the Children	Abraham Varampath	Hygiene Promotion Hub
Solidarités International	Alberto Acquistapace	
Solidarités International	Claire Papin-Stamose	SaniHub
Tufts University	Daniele Lantagne	WASH Roadmap - 1.5 Research and Innovation
UNC Institute	Warner Passanisi	
UNFPA	Adrian Dongus	MHM Global Group
UNICEF	Aliocha Salagnac	Global WASH Cluster
UNICEF	Dana Cristescu	TWiG - Cash and Markets
UNICEF	David Alford	Global WASH Cluster - Venezuela