

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL WATER SAFETY PLAN (WSP) NETWORK IN  
THE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN (LAC) REGION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2008-2010**

**June 2008**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Regional efforts, led by a partnership between the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), known as the PAHO-CDC-EPA Partnership, to promote the implementation of WSPs as an effective means to manage risks associated with drinking water supplies in the Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC) have resulted in a number of WSP pilot projects and an increased awareness of the benefits of their application. However, to up-scale the application of WSP implementation in the region, there is a need to increase the number of capacity building initiatives and associated resources through a more concerted effort. Moreover, the establishment and ongoing support of a regional network of WSP networks will support the long-term goal of improving drinking water safety.

IWA and WHO are coordinating a programme of work aimed at improving the global safety of drinking water supplies through accelerating the application of WSPs. In coordinating these efforts IWA and WHO aim to provide international leadership and stimulate regional activities to promote WSPs and support their implementation. Furthermore, IWA and WHO aim to develop global initiatives aimed at connecting regions to facilitate knowledge transfer and the sharing of experiences. The establishment of global and regional networks of experts to support WSP implementation is one way in which IWA and WHO hope to have impact at a global level. This Strategic Plan is designed to provide direction and priority for the activities and desired outcomes of a proposed LAC WSP Network over an initial two-year period. Like the Network itself, this Plan is a collaborative effort on the part of all participating stakeholders. It reflects their vision of the Network and the opportunities it creates for significantly improving drinking water quality within the water supply system, and ultimately, in turn, having a positive effect on public health of the consumer. It also reflects their commitment and the resources they will bring to bear in pursuing the initiatives and activities necessary to realize this vision.

The Strategic Plan is organized into four sections:

Section 1, Background and Overview, describes the context and events leading to the establishment of the Network

Section 2, Plan of Work, sets forth the mission and guiding principles that the Network will pursue, as well as the specific objectives and activities to be undertaken either by the Network as a whole or by individual Members acting multilaterally, bilaterally or individually.

Section 3, Governance, describes the structure of the Network including the composition, functions, and operations.

Section 4, Implementation, describes the timeline and costs of implementing the Network over a two year timeframe

## 1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Around 10% of the total global burden of disease could be prevented through achievable actions on water, sanitation and hygiene risk factors. The importance of this area is reflected in its inclusion in two specific targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the declaration by the UN General Assembly of the period 2005-2015 as the *International Decade: Water for Life*. Additionally, at the Health and Environment Ministerial at Mar de Plata in 2005, ministers from the Americas stipulated in the resulting declaration to work cooperatively on developing Water Safety Plans in the Region.

Strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders, such as institutions responsible for the provision of drinking water, has been identified as a means to help meet these targets and achieve long-term sustainability in the sector. A number of international, regional and national organizations are supporting these efforts through the organization of capacity building activities and mechanisms.

A global initiative to develop the capacity of key institutions to implement Water Safety Plans (WSPs) – an effective means to manage risks associated with drinking water safety – is being coordinated as part of a project collaboration agreement between IWA and WHO. Through regional efforts being led by organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), there is some progress being made in up-scaling the application of WSPs<sup>1</sup> in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region.

In addition to a series of activities focusing on supporting the further implementation WSPs in the LAC region, there are a number of initiatives which can provide support to these efforts. IWA and WHO have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) to support the coordination of activities of the Operations and Maintenance Network (OMN)<sup>2</sup>. The overarching mission of the OMN is to develop and consolidate the networking of service providers, external support agencies and other stakeholders in order to generate and exchange experiences, knowledge and information through an open dialogue (both demand and supply based) on operation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation systems. The activities of the OMN are focused on developing countries, particularly those in the Asian region. However, there is a desire to extend the activities of the OMN to the LAC region to encourage more global participation in their activities. The effective operation and maintenance of water supplies is a primary objective of WSP implementation, therefore the expertise and resources of the OMN will make a valuable contribution to WSP efforts in the region.

At the same time, a UN mandated initiative was recently launched to establish a global water operator partnership alliance (WOPs) that will promote, facilitate and support not-for-profit mutual cooperation and knowledge sharing between water and sanitation service providers to

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, USEPA and PAHO have formed an effective partnership, organising activities in the LAC region to promote and support WSP implementation since 2005. Activities consisting of workshops, implementation of pilot WSPs and high-level policy formation have included representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.niph.go.jp/soshiki/suido/omn/index.html>

enable public utilities to enhance their capacities. AIDIS (Inter-American Sanitary and Environmental Engineering Association) is the host of the WOPs mechanism in the LAC region. WOPs provides an additional mechanism through which mutually beneficial partnerships can be formed between water operators to, amongst other things, implement WSPs.

The continued development and dissemination of resources tailored to meet regional needs (most significantly the development of resources in local languages) is an underpinning requirement for any capacity building initiatives. IWA has recently reached agreement with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City to operate an IWA Reference Centre, which will focus on the development and dissemination of Spanish language resources to support water professionals in the LAC region. This will serve as an ideal conduit for the dissemination of resources.

The strategy to scaling-up the application of WSP implementation is gradual and relies on building momentum through local, national, regional and global initiatives. Capacity building at a national and regional level is the first step to creating a network of like-minded experts, specifically those at an operational level for water suppliers and those affecting environmental and public health policy. Effective scaling-up can be expedited through the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate knowledge exchange between experts and to signpost and disseminate best practice to a wider audience. The establishment of a network of professionals can help to achieve this.

Building on the activities coordinated by PAHO/CDC/USEPA in the LAC region to support implementation of WSPs, the establishment of a formal network of experts implementing WSPs is underway to ensure that momentum within the region is sustained. The LAC WSP Network will bring together existing international and regional partners and potentiate the inclusion of new partners. Moreover, the formal establishment of a LAC Network will facilitate knowledge exchange with other global<sup>3</sup> and regional networks supporting the overarching objective of the global water community to improve the safety of drinking water supplies.

The WSP Network will include water suppliers, environmental and health professionals, policy makers, academics, as well as other stakeholders such as community groups and industry representatives. The WSP Network will provide a suitable platform to further support the extension of the OMN with the LAC region and the ongoing activities related to the WOPs initiative.

Outputs from the regional network, including case studies and tools, will be disseminated by IWA via WSPortal and the Drinking Water Safety International newsletter; adding to and drawing from the global knowledge base for WSP implementation. Special attention should be given for translating documents from English into Spanish when necessary. Network activities will include advocacy sessions as part of regional conferences, capacity building workshops, web-workshops, tool/resource development and communication via a regular newsletter as outlined in the Plan of Work below.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the IWA Bonn Network and the WHO International Network on Small Community Water Supply Management

## 2. PLAN OF WORK

### 2.1 Mission

The mission of the Network is as follows:

*To improve the safety of drinking water supplies in the Latin America and Caribbean region, through accelerating the development and implementation of Water Safety Plans*

The Network will accomplish this mission by pursuing defined objectives through specific activities. Initial priority will be given to the objectives and activities identified below. It is understood, however, that the specific activities of the Network, and its Members, will evolve as part of an iterative process based on continuing research, experience and lessons learned.

Progress in accomplishing the mission will be reviewed annually as part of a systematic evaluation and assessment procedure.

### 2.2 Guiding Principles

1. The WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality and the IWA Bonn Charter for Safe drinking water will provide the basis for the development of WSPs;
2. The development of WSPs will be undertaken by local partners with support from existing networks in the region, technical experts and international organizations such as IWA and PAHO/WHO, along with other interested stakeholders;
3. The process of developing WSPs and its rate of progress will vary due to local circumstances;
4. The Network will use evidence-based approaches with agreed upon standards of effectiveness (e.g. behaviour change, health impact, cost, sustainability) and promote dissemination of information about approaches to developing and implementing WSPs.
5. The Network will promote the use of local technology and resources and local capacity building.
6. The Network will maintain a flexible structure and administration.

### 2.3 Objectives

**Objective 1 (Advocacy):** The Network will directly advocate, promote and facilitate the inclusion of WSPs as an integral part of national water strategies and the implementation of WSPs by water suppliers, and other key actors in the provision of water supply and the protection of public health, across the region.

**Objective 2 (Communication):** The Network will be a forum and vehicle to actively share information on WSPs within the region and also to facilitate knowledge transfer across regions.

**Objective 3 (Research):** The Network will support and direct research by academic and other institutions to evaluate interventions by collecting, analysing and disseminating independent and comparable data on issues related to WSP implementation.

**Objective 4 (Implementation):** The Network will strive to empower those responsible for drinking water provision and environmental and public health to implement WSPs through the provision of tools and resources and the organisation of capacity building workshops. Furthermore, the Network will aim to provide institutional back-stopping at a national level through developing the capacities of training institutes to support long-term training needs within their respective countries.

### **3. MODUS OPERANDI**

#### ***3.1 Structure***

The Network is composed of Network Partners, Network Members and A Network Coordinator. As the Network grows and evolves, its structure may as well evolve.

##### **3.1.1 Network Partners**

Composition

- The Network Partners are composed of governmental or international institutions, organizations, programmes or agencies, such as bilateral donor agencies, governmental public health institutions, ministries, the UN family, and international financial institutions. Founding Network Partners will include:
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS)
  - International Water Association (IWA)
  - World Health Organisation (WHO)/Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO)
  - United States Environment Protection Agency (USEPA)
  - United States Department of State

Specific roles for each of these partners will be determined and will reflect their respective strengths and constituencies.

- **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
  - Provide technical assistance and share lessons learned and implementation tools developed through WSP demonstration projects;
  - Conduct post-project system assessments to measure the impacts of WSP implementation
  - Participate in education and training activities to promote WSPs and build capacity for their successful implementation;
  - Promote the WSP methodology as a tool to identify and substantiate investment needs in order to leverage financial support.

- **Interamerican Association for Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS)**
  - Coordinate activities with national chapters to promote WSPs in the countries;
  - Encourage the technical divisions of AIDIS to promote WSPs at various national or regional events.
  - Support the promotion and implementation of WSP projects in the Region with the participation of the national chapters.
  
- **International Water Association (IWA)**
  - Act as a founding member of the Network and as an international partner will promote its development throughout its global network, including events, publications and advocacy work.
  - Support the coordination of the network through the appointment of a regional officer to manage the day-to-day activities of the Network and coordinate Network activities.
  
- **World Health Organization (WHO)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)**
  - PAHO will act as a founding member of the Network and will promote its development through the Water Quality Regional Program and PAHO Representatives in the countries;
  - PAHO/WHO will promote the work of the Network to support development and implementation of WSPs within the countries of the Region and the cooperation among countries to contribute in an integral way to the water quality improvement.
  
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (USEPA)**
  - Act as a founding member in the Network and as an international partner will support its establishment and official launch of the Net and continue advocacy of the Net.
  - Promote and strengthen alliances among health and environment sectors regarding the water sector to improve WSPs sustainability.

Joint Functions:

- Be responsible for the decision-making power of the Network.
- Approve Network Strategic Plan and any proposed changes to the plan, including changes to Network modus operandi.
- Approve Network Operational Plan and any other Network activities.
- Revoke membership in case of improper uses of the Network name or violations of Network guiding principles.
- Supervise and guide the Network Coordinator.

Operations:

- Decisions will be made by consensus and only after consultation with the Network Members.
- Network Partners will meet no less than annually, possibly coinciding with the plenary Network meeting. Other interactions may be in person, by teleconference or electronic.

Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared by the Network Coordinator and circulated among all Network Members.

### **3.1.2 Network Members**

#### Composition:

- Membership follows rules described in 3.2.1 Membership.
- Members will recruit and invite new potential Members to join the Network.

#### Functions:

- Take action to achieve Network objectives.
- Actively participate in Network workgroups.
- Review annual reports and propose improvements to objectives, activities, and indicators as appropriate.
- Respect Network guiding principles (2.2) and operating rules.

#### Operations:

- Network Members will meet on an annual basis at different country sites to be determined.

### **3.1.3 Network Coordinator**

#### Composition:

- The Network Coordinator will be hired and paid by IWA (first two years) and be physically located at the PAHO/CEPIS Offices in Lima, Peru

#### Functions:

- Manage membership procedure.
- Develop the Annual Network Operations Plan based on objectives and activities of the Strategic Plan. Share the Network Annual Work Plan with all Network Members for comments and submit it to the Network Partners for approval.
- Coordinate and monitor the progress of Network activities.
- Identify funding gaps and mobilize adequate resources for the agreed Network activities.
- Conduct annual evaluations of Network activities and produce an annual report.
- Plan and organise the external mid-term and final evaluations.
- Plan, organize, and provide logistical support for the Network meetings.
- Plan, organize, and provide support for the Network web-based workshops.
- Develop and maintain the Network web site.
- Facilitate communications and disseminate information related to the Network among Members via email and Internet.
- Disseminate information about the Network to key audiences via email, Internet, publications, press releases, and other means.
- Work to develop regional partnerships and identify complementary networks.
- Report to the Network Partners improper uses of the Network name or violations of Network guiding principles. Notify those responsible.

#### Operations:

- The Network Coordinator will be hosted by PAHO/CEPIS and be physically located at their offices in Lima, Peru.

### **3.1.4. Ad-Hoc Workgroups:**

#### Composition:

- The Ad-Hoc Workgroups will integrate members of the Network or others who voluntarily support the Network in the development, follow-up and implementation of the activities outlined in the Action Plan per the Strategic Plan;
- They will initially be comprised of the “champions” of Water Safety Plans from the countries as designated by the Core Group of the Network;

#### Functions:

- They will support the activities to be implemented for each one of the objectives of the current Strategic Plan;
- They will serve to support the Network Coordinator and will be references or focal points for the Network until otherwise indicated;
- They will report to the Core Group until the Coordinator assumes his/her position.

#### Operations:

The work undertaken by members of the Network will be voluntary and will not be financially compensated.

## **3.2 Operating Rules**

### **3.2.1 Membership**

Membership in the Network is open to all interested stakeholders that agree with the Network mission and guiding principles and who are willing to commit themselves to achieve the objectives of the Network.

Membership will be acknowledged after a submission to the Network Coordinator who will keep a record of Network Members. The updated list of Network Members, with their commitments and interests, will be available on the Network web site.

Membership may be revoked by the Network Partners in case of improper uses of the Network name or violations of Network guiding principles.

### **3.2.2 Manner of Acting**

The Annual Network Operations Plan defines agreed Network initiatives for each year. Depending on circumstances, specific initiatives and activities will be undertaken by the Network

acting corporately, or by two or more Network Members acting bilaterally or multilaterally under the aegis of the Network.

### **3.2.3 Use of Network Name**

Network Members are encouraged to promote their participation in the Network using approved Network materials. Specifically, they are encouraged to promote the Network name on their internal and external web sites and in their public relations activities.

Network Members may use the Network name in communication materials advancing the mission of the Network, consistent with the guiding principles.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no one may use the Network name or any name or reference confusingly similar thereto on any product packaging, sales materials or advertisements, or in any other manner that implies that the Network endorses, authorizes or approves of any particular product or service. Any questions or disputes concerning proper use of the Network name shall be resolved by the Coordinator, who may if necessary submit them to the Network Partners.

## **4. UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **4.1 Time Line**

Network activities are planned for a two-year period from April 2008 to April 2010. The Annual Network Operations Plan will be discussed in plenary by the Network Members and approved by the Network Partners. The Network Coordinator will produce an annual report on Network activities.

External mid-term and final evaluations will be carried out during the two-year period to assess Network progress.

At the end of the two-year time line Network Partners will decide in plenary on the future of the Network depending on evidence, advances, effectiveness, and possible relevant external factors.

The indicative timeline of activities and regional events for the first sixteen months will be:

#### **January–March 2008**

- Finalisation, by Network Partners, of strategy for the establishment of WSP LAC Network

#### **April 2008**

- Stakeholder meeting to establish WSP LAC Network (Honduras)
  - Network strategy presented to prospective Network Members

- Network Partners to adopt strategy and agree on financing

#### **June 2008**

- Caribbean Environmental Forum (CEF) Grenada (June 23-27)

#### **July 2008**

- Network Coordinator employed by IWA

#### **October 2008**

- Participation in The Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) annual conference, Jamaica (October 6-10)
- Participation in AIDIS Biennial Congress, Chile (October 12-15)
  - Formal launch of WSP LAC Network
  - Launch of WSP Manual in Spanish and Portuguese

#### **April 2009**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Network Meeting (subject to additional funding)

#### **September 2009**

- Participation in IWA Development Congress (Mexico)

#### **May 2010**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> IWA-WHO Global WSP Conference (TBC)<sup>4</sup>

### **5. FINANCES**

The finances below are indicative and will be used to fulfill the plan of work described in section two over a period of 24 months.

- **Year 1 Finances**  
Year 1 activities will include the appointment of and ongoing support for a network coordinator, a network establishment meeting, participation in various regional conferences and events, stakeholder engagement and production of resource/advocacy material. Current funding for year 1 activities will be provided by IWA, CDC and USEPA.
- **Year 2 Finances**  
Year 2 activities will include the ongoing support for the network coordinator position, stakeholder engagement and network partnership development. Additional funding from existing and new network partners will be sought for extra activities such as a network meeting and ad hoc activities as appropriate. Current funding for year 2 activities will be provided by IWA.

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<sup>4</sup> Follow-up to global meeting in Lisbon, 2008 (subject to formal proposal from a host country)

## **6.0 WSP NETWORK COORDINATOR**

The Coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Network. This person will serve as the primary liaison between the Network members and the Partners and outside entities. This person will interact with utility managers, policy makers and other key stakeholders in the water sector. The Coordinator will be able to communicate fluently in both English and Spanish.