1.0 Introduction and background

Ensuring results and securing value for money is a key current concern in international development cooperation, along with principles of transparency and accountability. Since the establishment of development aid in the early 1940s, the number of countries, organisations, agencies and institutions contributing and accessing funds has grown exponentially. The fragmentation is particularly apparent in the water sector: a highly diverse sector and essential in health, infrastructure, agriculture, energy and the environment which is characterised by high dependence on international aid, and weak overall coordination at many levels.

The Dutch WASH Alliance (DWA) is a pioneering example of bringing focus and a common purpose to a fragmented array of NGO initiatives. The vision has been to harness the energy and creativity of a disparate group of NGOs to collaborate on an integrated approach to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and a comprehensive approach to the full WASH value chain. Each agency focuses on complementary roles in an integrated partnership. The vision has evolved with the FIETS sustainability cycle providing a further frame for activities, such that partners develop specific sustainability components. So, taken as a whole, WASH interventions are financially, institutionally, environmentally, technologically and socially sustainable.

DWA is a consortium of six Dutch non-governmental organisations (NGOs) collaborating with almost 90 partners in eight countries across Africa and Asia. The focus of DWA is on providing sustainable WASH services from a sector development and service delivery perspective. With €45 million funding from the Dutch Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), DWA has provided water and sanitation services to 880,000 and 1 million people respectively.

Now, after four years of implementation, DWA wants an external assessment of the extent to which the selected approaches contribute to sustainable WASH services. This qualitative approach will complement an outcome measurement survey that has been undertaken in the same period.

Theory of Change: The DWA has recently developed and introduced an overarching Theory of Change (ToC) which describes how DWA intends to achieve sustainable WASH services. The ToC (Figure 1) is built upon 3 pillars: (1) Developing a functioning and enabling WASH market; (2) Developing an enabling public sector; and (3) empowering and organizing citizens. Countries have been initiated individual country ToCs from 2012/13.

FIETS Sustainability Framework: A fundamental question at the centre of the global water service development challenge is: “are services sustainable?”. Sustainability is a multi-faceted issue, whereby solutions must be holistic in nature and work over the long-term. Solutions need to build sustainable systems which affect the entire range of factors that affect sustainability: policy; management and institutional arrangements; financing; community and social aspects; technologies and supply chains. Sustainability within DWA is according to the FIETS principles and the DWA defines sustainability as: “when DWA leaves the project area, the WASH services will remain functional”. As the DWA approach developed the FIETS sustainability principles have been super-imposed over three pillars of the TOC to give the Programme two overall but complementary frameworks. The intention is that the model of sustainable WASH services will be replicated and taken to scale to meet the needs of growing poor populations.
Approaches to be validated: All the DWA partners use different approaches to advance the development of these 3 pillars, to facilitate cooperation between the three pillars and to stimulate that the pillars are strengthened in a sustainable way. The approaches to be validated are those expected to stimulate changes as described in different segments of the ToC:

- Urban sanitation chain (diamond model; includes the service and value chain (faecal sludge management);
- Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS);
- Landscape approach;
- Awareness activities (including behaviour change);
- Budget tracking;
- Capacity building of partners; mainly focused on mind shift from building infrastructure to multi stakeholder approaches;
- Multi-stakeholder approach.
1.1 Objectives
The two main objectives of the consultancy are to:

1. Understand better the contribution of DWA approaches to the sustainability of the WASH services;

1.2 Research questions
The main research questions as set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and proposal are:

1. To what extent have the applied approaches contributed to sustainable WASH services?
2. What are the conditions that have contributed to the sustainability?
3. What are the risks for the sustainability of the WASH services?
4. What are the main contributing approaches?
5. While applying the approaches, is the expected change happening? Or is there a reason to adapt our Theory of Change?

1.3 Purpose of this document
The focus of this review is on three country case studies pre-selected in the ToR, namely: Bangladesh, Ghana and Kenya. These three country case studies are presented as separate documents. This current document presents a synthesis of the findings in the three case studies.
2.0 Approach and methodology

2.1 Country case selection
The DWA programme has been operating in: Bangladesh; Nepal; Benin; Ethiopia; Ghana; Kenya; Mali and Uganda. The selection of Bangladesh, Ghana and Kenya was based on the following criteria:

- All Alliance members are represented;
- All sub-regions are represented;
- All approaches can be studied;
- Partners are working within the same area, so it would also be possible to validate the added value of working in the same area.

2.2 Overall methodological approach
Overall, the validation used a mix of methodologies all focusing on qualitative assessment. Broadly speaking, the main data collection techniques used in the study were: a literature review; field interviews, including semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions; observations on project operations and the status of service delivery; and stakeholder consultations. The large number of field visits enabled interactions with a range of community groups and to observe the local environment and different WASH structures and facilities developed by the programme. This also gave the opportunity to speak with the WASH entrepreneurs trained by the project and examine their products. The Bangladesh country case was used to pilot methodological approaches, such as to assess how many stakeholders could realistically be interviewed during the time available and test the ToC workshop and other aspects of the validation exercise.

2.3 Stakeholder selection
Stakeholder consultations were held with the following constituencies:

- DWA Alliance Partners (in the Netherlands)
- WASH Alliance partners in each of the country case studies (i.e. the Bangladesh Water Alliance (BWA), the Ghana WASH Alliance (GWA) and the WASH Alliance of Kenya (WAK)).
- Country coordinators
- Government stakeholders (national and local)
- Consumers/community members
- Private entrepreneurs
- Schools
- Lead sector agencies.

Depending on the added value identified, further stakeholders, such as university researchers and trainers were also selected for interview.

2.4 Project selection
In each case a sample of projects were selected through judgement and in consultation with the DWA Country Coordinator. A project list was prepared containing the following categories and criteria:

- Geography: country; region/district; town.
- Partner information: DWA partner; sponsor; country partner.
- Project information: project title; project code/reference; sector; urban/rural/peri-urban; project start date (planned); project start date (actual); project end date (planned); project end date (actual); status.
- Project budget: currency; value.
- Approaches: as set out in section 1 above – approaches to be validated
- F IETS sustainability focus: financial; institutional; environmental; technical; social.

The completed list was reviewed by the country consultant and between five and six projects selected for site visits.

Table 1
Sample size of partners and projects selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Case</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>5 out of the 6 partners, All except for one project in the South-Western districts of Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>5 out of the 8 partners; 5 out of the 6 main districts in Tamale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>5 out of the 10 partners; Kajiado County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 Data collection

Document review, interviews (semi-structure and key-informant), focus group discussions and observations during project visits were the four primary methods of data collection.

Document Review

Programme and project documents were sourced through DWA and each of BWA, GWA and WAK (Table 2). Additional searches using Google and searching the DWA website were also undertaken. A full document list is provided in the Bibliography (Annex 1) and each Case Study Report also has a reference/document list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of documents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-Structured and Key Informant Interviews

The validation team undertook semi-structured and key informant interviews in each case using key stakeholder holder groups to ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective was considered. They developed an interview schedule used to guide the discussions. In response to preliminary background reading and the methodology finalisation, sub-questions were identified against each of the main research questions (Annex 2) subsequently used to frame the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. A full list of those persons interviewed by the team leader and sources to persons met as part of each of the country case studies is provided in Annex 3. Table 3 below summarises the numbers of consultations and community members met in the course of the validation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Type</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total numbers of consultations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. # of community members met</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation through project visits

During project visits consultants observed the functionality, use and status of projects supported by the Programme. This ranged from evidence of use of latrines and handwashing facilities to the operation of water supplies and faecal sludge management operations to the use of budget tracking.

Workshops

As a way to validate findings from the fieldwork, workshops were held, bringing together DWA teams, programme partners, government officials and other key sector stakeholders. A workshop programme was drafted to maintain some level of consistency across each case. Power point presentations on components of purpose, ToC and FIETS were also drafted to ensure consistency in methodology across each case, however, cognisant of differences in findings and country level focus.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were also held in each case to a greater or lesser extent. In Bangladesh it enabled as a way to gain collective feedback from community groups, whilst in Ghana was primarily used during the stakeholder workshop. A topic guide was developed and used to direct the discussions.
Table 4
Overview of workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Programme</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>22nd November</td>
<td>26th November</td>
<td>1st December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Purpose; Key Findings &amp; Recommendations; TOC; FIETS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Numbers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Partners</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sector agencies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other
In the case of Bangladesh, the consultant was invited to attend a BWA organised workshop discussing “Best Practice” examples of the partner organisation. This was not a planned part of the DWA Validation, however, presented an opportunity for the consultant to familiarise and give a broad overview of BWA.

2.6 Analytical frame
The two primary analytical frames used were FIETS and the ToC. The review also looked at the effectiveness of the seven technical approaches utilised by the Alliance. OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability were also considered, as were gender and equity aspects.

2.7 Research ethics
In the case of Bangladesh and Ghana the validation team engaged with community members, however, in the case of Kenya, to engage with households would have required a lengthy ethics approval process, which was not possible to complete within the consultancy timeframe. Some community members individually participated in the on-site field visit discussions.
3.0 Synthesis of country findings

3.1 Country Alliance effectiveness

The Alliance is more than the sum of its parts:
The DWA started off as a rather tense alliance between many former competitors. But in every country case the team was able to verify that collaboration between partners had grown and that country alliances were operating in a collaborative, mutually supportive manner. Local partners have learned to collaborate with Dutch partners and were able to negotiate and compromise as necessary with each other. Some tensions still remain (as in the case of whether AMREF should continue to be the lead partner in Kenya) but overall the Alliance has been a very positive experience for the great majority of partners. A significant achievement is that the Alliance is acknowledged to achieve more than the sum of its individual member activities.

There have been several benefits of working as an alliance. Jointly partners are more visible and find it easier to access and to liaise with governments, donors and other agencies. Greater visibility has also meant greater influence and, within areas of focus, where Alliances have developed an effective track record, they are invited to engage at a higher level in development processes.

As an Alliance, partners are able to share skills and resources. This has resulted in better plans, better proposals and better reporting. Since becoming members of the Alliance, partners have created new ways of working. There is now stronger collaboration, less competition and members can build on the good work of other partners, which can improve the opportunities for replication and scale. Joint training exercises have been appreciated and cost-effective.

The role of the Country Co-ordinator has been critical in this and the fact that the Alliance has managed to attract such high level coordinators has been an important success factor. Joint missions and joint contracting are also potential benefits of the Alliance.

The evidence from the field and the response of consumers, communities and other stakeholders is that working together, rather than separately, provides better and more impactful support. This is discussed further under sustainability.

In all countries, the Alliance has worked as an effective learning platform. A key area of learning has been a better understanding of financial and institutional sustainability, both areas in which NGOs are traditionally not strong. For example, in all cases partners have agreed that sanitation, conceived of as a business rather than a handout, is more sustainable. The good response to the Diamond approach has equally brought new recognition of the importance of liaison with local government. Innovations, such as in faecal sludge treatment in Bangladesh, have also been quickly understood and shared amongst Alliance partners. Greater trust between partners has meant that individuals are more confident in asking and interacting in learning sessions, making training more effective.

Despite the progress made in terms of working together, there are still some areas where the Alliance needs agreement or increased consensus. For example, there needs to be greater agreement on the criteria used to evaluate the success of a project or implementation initiative. The Alliance (as in the case of Kenya) comprises small and large partners with differing levels of reliance on funding from DWA. This also affects the branding, whereby some partners can credit the Alliance for their work and others are required to credit their organization or donor. Alliance partners naturally produce work of variable quality, a challenge to the Alliance is that of maintaining high standards: as soon as one partner produces work that is ‘sub-standard’ it undermines the whole WASH alliance brand.

Other challenges to the Alliance include: an overall rather complex structure; a long and sometimes slow learning curve; more meetings and more bureaucracy (as reported by some of the Dutch partners).

3.2 Leveraging policy influence and going to scale

NGOs have had an uneven relationship with all three national governments at different stages of their development. In all three countries the trend is towards clarity of roles and greater opportunities for collaboration, but the space for influencing policy remains limited. National NGOs in the WASH sector have generally been fragmented, without the capacity and resources to national
sector dialogue in a coherent manner.

The creation of national Alliances of NGOs in BWA, GWA and WAK has increased the opportunity for these groups of Alliances to contribute national policy dialogues. The Programme’s main leverage point has been on local authorities, but the experience from a number of innovations (for example school sanitation norms in Ghana and FSM technologies in Bangladesh) has influenced national approaches. The validation team was able to observe how BWA has shared evidence on the outcomes of partner approaches at ‘Best Practices’ workshop In Bangladesh.

But dialogue with the large-scale national sector agencies and investors, such as UNICEF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other European-based agencies has been limited. There is more work to be done to bring Alliance lessons and approaches to these organizations, which can support service improvement at scale. In the validation team’s assessment, the Dutch partners’ support remains vital to assist in this dialogue and to create more opportunities for national associations to be heard by the market-leading institutions. None of the countries had a clear and fully thought-through strategy for scaling up activities. In Ghana efforts were underway to replicate alliance activities in neighbouring districts. In Kenya, the coordinator was increasing the Alliance’s visibility with national authorities. The implications and likely success of each of these options needs more analysis.

3.3 Building and maintaining quality and brand value

One of the benefits of joining the Alliance is an improvement in quality of project interventions. Country partners recognize that many Dutch partners bring comparative experience and have played a helpful role in improving the quality of project approaches.

But the fieldwork found uneven quality between partner interventions. The quality of CLTS triggering, for example, was variable. The smaller partners are not always able consistently to attract sufficiently experienced staff. Some weaker partners may depend on funding from donors who want them to implement approaches not consistent with Alliance approaches partners. Quality has become an increased focus of the WAK and, in the past year through the leadership from KEWASNET, WAK has introduced the concept of integrity, quality and compliance (IQC) training. Across the board, members felt that this is ‘lifting the bar’ and is helping to maintain the brand of the WASH alliance.

3.4 Decentralization and growth

For DWA, having a country alliance in place has enabled the Alliance to become responsive to the local context and needs of each country. Decentralization of the Alliance builds ownership, capacity and brings energy and innovation. All country Alliances have the ambition to grow, work in more districts/counties/parishads and have more partners.

But there are also risks associated with rapid growth: a key risk is maintaining quality and the brand value of the Alliance. Already country partners are a diverse range of organizations, some of whose work entirely falls within the ambit of the alliance and for some (such as AMREF in Kenya) alliance operations only constitute a small proportion of their portfolio.

A comprehensive national alliance of WASH NGOs might be desirable, but the space of national NGO coordination is already competitive. DWA country alliances will need to develop clear and realistic strategies to back up their ambitions of increasing growth and influence.

Autonomous country alliances may also lose strategic direction and not be able to raise the secure core finance that has sustained the Alliance during its start-up years as satellite offices of the DWA. Balancing the pace of decentralization and growth with local management capacity and a secure financing base is a major challenge for DWA in the near future.

3.5 Cost effectiveness

Data on overheads has not been collected in this qualitative assessment, but the validation team’s did not gather any evidence to suggest that the country alliances were not cost conscious and cost-effective. A risk of rapid decentralization to autonomous country alliances is increased overhead costs.

When partners were asked about the basis of the declining unit cost data that is used in marketing the Programme, none could fully explain how this cost data had been derived. The unit costs appear rather low and the assumptions are not transparent.
3.6 Performance of selected technical approaches
The seven approaches are highly relevant to solving WASH challenges, particularly as they have an impact on the poorest communities. The seven approaches include some cutting edge approaches. All country case studies showed a wide range of approaches being applied. The Validation team found these to be a rich and innovative set of approaches, many of which were helping to move Government away from traditional approaches that were unsustainable or did not work. Table 5 shows the main area of focus in each country case study.

Some partners felt that the initial DWA approach was “supply-driven” with interventions being decided on the basis of an external theory. But this has evolved to a Programme responding to needs on the ground. The Validation team views the diversity as a strength since in part it reflects that approaches are responding to specific country needs.

The country case studies highlight some exciting new trends, including: an increased focus on the urban environment and in dealing with waste as well as water; engaging local authorities and the private sector; sanitation financing products; mechanisms, such as budget tracking, which assist governments to build more transparent public sector support systems; and increased engagement with the private sector.

All the NGOs joining the partnership came on board with a track record of prior approaches and interests. For many, their skill areas were retrofitted into the seven project approaches that are the main conduits in the DWA ToC. The Kenya case study observed that the two approaches in which most activities were categorised were: capacity building and multi-stakeholder approaches. Some partners felt that the ToC and specific definition of the seven approaches was an academic exercise that was not highly relevant to what they were trying to achieve on the ground with respect to improving quality of water and sanitation provision. Others felt that having the seven approaches provided structure and clarity to the alliance; and that this helped to not only guide implementation but also helped partners assess the impacts and outcomes from the work they have done collectively as an alliance.

Table 5 on the next page gives a summary assessment from the country case studies of the performance of the seven approaches against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The table shows that the selection of approaches is highly relevant, and most project performances are effective. Some approaches are innovative in that they introduce new approaches which have not been tried out in that locality before.

The approaches are not always that well defined (except for CLTS and budget-tracking) and generally constitute a general category of activities. This raises the question as to whether the seven categories of approach are useful. The approaches introduce another level of complexity to the theory of change. When this was discussed at workshops the value-add of the approach categories was not always clear. The FIETS categories might be easier to understand as “organizing buckets” for program activities.
Of all the approaches being used, those that the Validation team felt were contributing the least to the sustainable service delivery were those supporting citizen empowerment. The reasons for this need to be further analysed, but the vision of what citizens can and/or will do to improve their WASH services is not rooted in local cultural realities in the focal countries. Country context is an important variable in assessing the impact of citizen empowerment approaches. The timescale to show results in this area may also be longer than the initial four years.1

### 3.7 Is the Programme achieving sustainable WASH?

An impressive finding from this validation exercise was the extent to which partners in all countries took sustainability as the central, overarching challenge in WASH. The concept of sustainability was a clear priority for all partners and was ingrained in the vision, approach and strategy of every Alliance. During interviews, and at the workshops, partners consistently highlighted the fact that sustainability approaches underpin all projects and that the emphasis on sustainability contributes to projects becoming lasting investments.

However, one caveat to this is in terms of following up on completed projects. No project assessed had follow-up phases beyond the lifetime of the ‘funding’ of the project.

All partners have sought to apply the different components of FIETS framework. This has not always achieved sustainability in the different components because not all components are applied in the same communities. The decision to concentrate partner activities was an essential one. Even in Tamale, Kajiado and the three Southwestern districts of Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat, there are many gaps to complete fulfilment of the FIETS cycle. Despite the emphasis given to sustainability, Table 6 shows that it remains the lowest performing of the OECD-DAC criteria.

A common challenge to the sustainability of water schemes was intermittent supply from municipal water services. Greater attention to this endemic developing country challenge is needed by the Alliance if it is to seriously address service sustainability. The prominent challenges to the sustainability of sanitation projects were, post ODF follow-up and maintenance of ODF environments, standards in latrine construction and more.

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1. For example benchmarking report cards in Bangalore (the home of citizen’s report cards) took many years before they had an impact.
widespread management of faecal sludge. The central challenge to hygiene behaviour change is sustaining it and turning hygiene behaviour change into good hygiene habits that are passed on between generations.

The most challenging areas for sustainability are financial and institutional, the areas in which NGOs are traditionally weakest. But there were positive trends in these areas as well: Alliance partners have increased engagement with local governments, supplementing partners’ generally strong support to communities. This recognizes that local authority support is vital to long-term service sustainability. DWA partners are also increasing support local private sector actors to provide WASH products and services.

At the outset of the Programme there was some tension between NGOs who subsidize toilets and those who don’t. All partners have now accepted the case for sustainable financial approaches, and many are involved in stimulating sanitation financing, such as by encouraging micro-lenders. Interestingly the lessons from financing sanitation have impacted on water projects and there is more emphasis on household payments for water that cover the real costs of maintenance. Table 7 summarises the specific risks for sustainability in the three country case studies.

3.8 Theory of Change
The overall DWA ToC was generally not fully understood and had been developed later on in the Program: partners did not explain nor plan their work within the framework of the ToC. Country ToC were sometimes used as a benchmark for monitoring, but few partners are updating or reviewing their ToC. The training they had received on the ToC had not been sufficiently clear. Some of the confusion is simply in the unfamiliar language of the ToC.

In all countries partners were more comfortable with the specific pathways of change. Many felt these helped clarify the specific objectives and strategic turning points in the development of projects if they were to be successful. Some partners expressed the view that they would like to re-visit the ToC work, but build it up from specific pathways from the bottom up, and use language that is relevant for alliance members and county governments equally and so it can more fully integrate with FIETS (see recommendations).

Table 7
Risks for sustainability of the WASH services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Natural disasters</td>
<td>• Poor reliability/intermittent supply</td>
<td>• Water and sanitation programme not integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changes in local government representatives and the loss of public relation capital</td>
<td>• Inappropriate technology (i.e. too short rain gutter)</td>
<td>• Need to focus more on the financial and institutional sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Risks of investment leading to slum eviction and raising of house rent</td>
<td>• Component rather than integrated approach (i.e. latrine construction without discussion faecal sludge management)</td>
<td>• Design of sanitation and hygiene sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political instability</td>
<td>• Institutional instability</td>
<td>• Appropriateness of CLTS for pastoralist communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustaining behaviour change</td>
<td>• Time for interventions too short</td>
<td>• Imbalance in WAK (closely tied to AMREF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intermittent supply and poor maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial support for WAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inadequate budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td>• M&amp;E and quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of capacity of local authorities and inadequate incentives for private sector engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Country Case Study Reports (CSRs)
4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The clear overarching message from the three country case-studies, each led by independent local experts, is that the DWA Alliance, which draws local NGOs together into a country alliance, is making a contribution that is far more impactful than the sum of all the individual NGOs working separately.

DWA has created active and well-coordinated Programmes in the three countries. These Programmes are creating an impact on the ground, and are the source of several promising innovations, testing them out in real conditions. The Programme has enabled growth by the partners, leveraged inputs from many stakeholders and elicited a positive response from government and communities.

The concept of sustainability was a clear priority for all partners and was ingrained in the vision, approach and strategy of every Alliance. The vision of tackling the many dimensions to sustainability in a holistic manner in specific locations has helped Alliance partners, local governments and communities see the interconnectedness of water, sanitation and hygiene to finance, institutions, the environment, technology and society. Sustainability is the Holy Grail in international development and is never fully achieved. There continue to be gaps and not every service can be said ever to be truly sustainable. But the Alliance has been part of changing mind-sets and showing that new approaches are possible.

How one moves from the intensity of focus in a few communities in a district/county to national scale remains unclear and the Alliance is not yet in a position to achieve significant replication. It has sought to influence policy and there have been some useful but isolated contributions. Addressing the challenge of scale and developing efficient ways of influence the major investors and agencies might be a focus in the next phase of the Alliance’s work.

The DWA Theory of Change has not been fully understood by many partners and seems rather an abstract construct. Implicit in the theory are assumptions about actions to be taken by the state, some of which have not been undertaken. The more detailed pathways of change developed for specific interventions have been more successful. These pathways need to be used as living documents, updated and the monitoring system should reflect the key steps in the pathway.

The family of approaches used by partners is impressive. The application of the Diamond model has helped in the difficult area of helping build the capacity of local authorities whilst increasing engagement of the private sector. The Alliances work on sanitation credit is an important step forward in making sanitation more sustainable. Engaging with municipal water service providers to try and assure a more reliable source of water supply is a future focus area. Indeed a focus on urban water, sanitation and waste, including faecal sludge management is an important growth area.

There has been some important work in terms of strengthening monitoring systems and how results are captured, but there are some concerns about whether there is double counting, whether some of the intermediate outcomes are being captured and whether all the relevant indicators have been addressed. Poor results and a lack of quality by some implementers undermine the ‘brand’ of the alliance. The unit cost analysis needs to be more transparent.

Each of the Alliances is moving towards greater autonomy and local accountability, a positive and more sustainable move for the Alliance as a whole. There are risks in too sudden a growth, in greatly increasing the numbers of partners and without a secure financial base. A measured staged approach to growth should be considered.
## 4.2 Synthesis of main validation conclusions

Table 8 presents a summary of the conclusions to the main validation questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Validation Questions</th>
<th>Overall ranking</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 To what extent have the applied approaches contributed to sustainable WASH services? | Varied but generally positive contribution | • Gaps remain  
• Many projects are experimental |
| 2 What are the conditions that have contributed to sustainability? | Many more changes needed, especially financial | • Partner accept focus on sustainability  
• Growing credibility of the alliance  
• Growing engagement with government  
• Greater openness to other sources of finance |
| 3 What are the risks for the sustainability of the WASH services? | Long-term challenge requiring fundamental reforms | • Projects are short-term  
• Limited public sector finance |
| 4 What are the main contributing approaches? | N/A | • Context-specific  
• See analysis of approaches |
| 5 While applying the approaches, is the expected change happening? Or is there a reason to adapt our Theory of Change? | | • Approach needs more and longer term inputs  
• Increased leverage for policy changes and widespread adoption  
• Simplify TOC, focus on FIETS, develop specific pathways to change |
4.3 Recommendations
Table 9 below presents the detailed recommendation per country case study.

The main recommendations that emerge from across these country studies are:

1. Increase quality control
   Roll out quality control processes in every Alliance to retain DWA’s brand value; apply performance criteria to maintain a place in the partnership.

2. Strategic building of country alliances
   Encourage decentralization and a modest and staged in-country expansion, responding to demand, but retaining brand value and the ability to deliver FIETS principles in concentrated locations.

3. Transitional phase
   to balance control/quality and support autonomy/country responsiveness, introduce a transitional phase, whereby Country Alliances need to meet performance criteria to gain autonomy. The criteria for autonomy should include: good governance, retaining focus, keeping overheads low, expansion only on a sound financial base and having quality control processes in place.

4. Strategy for scale and influencing policy
   Country alliances should identify ways to bring quality proposals to scale (e.g. leveraging policy, replication in other localities or both). Country alliances should consciously identify more influential allies, such as UNICEF and the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program. Increase the analysis, lobbying and advocacy of key lessons learnt from projects.

5. Integration in government plans
   Integrate Alliance activities into local government plans to get official ownership of approaches that work. Increases chance of approaches being sustained after projects close.

6. Regularly update of pathways to change
   Repeat training and dialogue on the ToC, to make assumptions more explicit, to update specific pathways of change and integrated pathways into monitoring systems.

7. Maintain knowledge focus
   Continue to invest in quality documentation of project outcomes and sharing of knowledge, both within the partnership and to key national stakeholders.

8. DWA to continue financial support to country alliances, whilst requiring greater leverage
   Building on the first phase, DWA should seek ways to continue to finance the core operations of country alliances whilst setting incentives for leveraging other sources of finance, including from formal partnerships with governments

9. Focus on FIETS categories rather than the seven approaches
   FIETS provides an easily-understand framework. The seven approaches are less well-defined and add a level of complexity to the TOC. Adopt FIETS categories as the organizing principles of country alliance plans and place less emphasis on the “approaches”.
R1. The TOC should be revised – each of the five specific pathways of change requires a specific descriptive narrative to explain assumptions, risks and strategic steps and linkages between boxes. The pathways should incorporate key actions to turn FIETS from a theoretical construct into practical steps.

R1. The local coordinating/influencing/sharing forum for the WASH sector as created by GWA should continue to be supported and replicated in other regions.

R1. The formal separation of WAK from AMREF and development of a timed plan for completion over the medium terms to ensure that risks to separating can be mitigated. An initial step would be to develop more detailed processes and practices on governance, implementation and membership.

R2. A detailed and transparent approach to developing unit costs should be developed and costs added to the strategy in the causal pathways.

R2. Greater emphasis should be placed on advocacy and empowerment rather than service delivery in order to better engage stakeholders.

R2. The Alliance should integrate partner activates as an alliance with county development plans.

R3. BWA partners should develop specific strategies to promote the solutions and business ideas it has developed that are ready for scale up.

R3. Greater focus should be given to sharing outcomes, impact and learning with the stakeholders in a systematic way to embed these activities within country systems. Furthermore, programme findings and innovations should be bought to the attention of national policy makers and other districts and regions.

R3. Maintain the strong knowledge and learning focus amongst alliance partners and consider this as an ‘offering’ to non-alliance partners as a mechanism to generate income and maintain technical and institutional sustainability. The DWA and WAK should consider how to formalise exchange processes that in turn should be ground in terms of alliance theory of change.

R4. Special efforts should be made to strengthen the risk perceptions of all concerned including the community groups and help them adopt necessary risk reduction measures wherever possible.

R4. With the increase in latrine construction, an increased attention is needed on developing effective approaches to Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) in rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

R4. The secretariat should focus on quality assurance procedures to ensure partners are delivering robust results cost-effectively.

R5. In any future phase, BWA should map out the main investors (public/private) and develop a conscious strategy for increasing BWA’s influence.

R5. Improved sanitation service delivery using the diamond model should be scaled-up. Promotion of sanitation credits, especially in urban areas where it offers a high solution to a key national problem should also be scaled-up.

R5. To maintain the strong focus on sustainability – ensure all alliance members have this mainstreamed in their approach and work with individual organisations to integrate language and use of FIETS in a meaningful way for implementation. Furthermore, to assess how to have an M&E cycle which is developed with and transferred to the public sector.

R6. BWA should strengthen its policy on gender equality and its partners should undertake project gender analyses so that interventions can also include social empowerment dimensions.

R6. The TOC should be simplified and context specific individual pathways for each main programme change component should be developed. Partner reporting should also be linked to the pathways.

R6. To revisit the TOC training and to conceptualise more in terms of the theory for action for individual projects and theory of change for the alliance. In addition, to revisit the DWA 7 approaches in the context of need and priority in selected geographies, being more explicit upfront on how they will be used.

R7. BWA/DWA should undertake a study of the opportunities that lie ahead as well as the costs and risks, including a full mapping of other WASH networks, so that it can take informed decisions and develop appropriate solutions. Failure to do so, could risk its current achievements.

R7. The programme should address the shortcomings in water service delivery that undermine project sustainability.

R7. Urgent priority is needed to increase fundraising as an alliance and to ‘wean’ some organisations off alliance dependency.

**Table 9**

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Annex 1: Bibliography


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Annex 2: Research Questions

0.0 Introduction/General Questions

0.1 What has been your involvement with DWA (BWA;GWA;WAK)?
   Probe: What project do you work on?
   Probe: What is your role?
   Probe: What does the project do?

0.2 What DWA approaches are you aware of?

0.3 Which of the DWA approaches, really stand out to you and why?
   Prompt: Provide a list of approaches (if country specific then only those relating to those in country)

0.4 Are there any differences between working as an Alliance (collective) and working as an individual NGO?
   Probe: If so, what is it? / If not, why not?

0.5 Are there any constraining factors in working as an Alliance as opposed to working as an individual NGO?

0.6 What percentage of your current portfolio is with DWA? (specifically asked of the Alliance Implementing Partner)

1.0 To what extent have the applied approaches contributed to sustainable WASH services?

1.1 What does sustainability mean for you?

1.2 What are the key approaches that have contributed to sustainable (in what way sustainable) WASH services?
   Prompt: Provide a schematic of the various approaches being applied by DWA - discuss
   Prompt: Provide a schematic of the Theory of Change - discuss
   Prompt: Provide a schematic of FIETS - discuss

1.3 Are you aware of any examples of catalytic impact?
   Prompt: For example where the specific DWA approaches are now being applied in other projects or programmes?

1.4 To what extent are you replicating the activities under DWA funding in other funded projects and programmes?
   Probe: Do you have anything to do with this, i.e. is this a consequence of you applying the approaches within programmes of other funding?

1.5 To what extent have any of the DWA approaches been adopted by national/country level policy or promoted in any strategic planning?

2.0 What are the conditions that have contributed to the sustainability?

2.1 Can you give an example where sustainability of an intervention is evident, 5 years (or as long after completion as possible) following completion.

2.2 What was it specifically about the DWA project that has contributed to the sustainability?

2.3 What factors outside of the project do you feel have contributed to the sustainability?
   Prompt: Political will; community motivation;............
3.0 What are the risks for the sustainability of the WASH services?

3.1 Are risks associated with the sustainability of the project/programme assessed?
   *Probe: Are risk matrices available for the project/programmes?*

3.2 What are the top 5 risks in terms of those posing the greatest risk to sustainability?

3.3 What are the top 5 risks in terms of likelihood of occurring?

3.4 Have any risks (not necessarily those stated under 3.2 or 3.3 above) materialised during the course of the project/programme?
   *Probe: If yes, which ones and how were they mitigated?*

3.5 Are any of the approaches more susceptible than another to risk and why?
   *Probe: What are the risks?*

4.0 What are the main contributing (to what? Sustainability or the programme portfolio?) approaches?

4.1 (Considering the country programme) What would you say are the main contributing approaches to the DWA programme in (country X)?

5.0 While applying the approaches, is the expected change happening? Or is there a reason to adapt our Theory of Change?

5.1 Can you please provide clear examples where an approach applied has led to expected change.
   *Prompt: Provide a schematic of the Theory of Change - discuss*

5.2 Can you please provide clear examples where an approach applied has not led to any expected change?

5.3 Can you please provide clear examples where an approach applied has not led to the level of change expected.

5.4 Are there any particular aspects of the ToC that you feel could be improved in the case of (country X)?

6.0 Other areas/questions to consider

6.1 How is the Alliance organised?

6.2 How does this differ other implementors?

6.3 Is there a clear Theory of Change?

6.4 How do you think DWA projects are managed?

6.5 Is this better or worse than others you know of?
   *Probe: Why do you say that?*
### Annex 3: Interview/Consultation list

#### 3A. Team Leader interviews/consultations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Institution</th>
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</tr>
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#### 3B. Case Study Team interviews/consultations

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<tr>
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<td>Annex 1 – List of Interviewees</td>
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</table>
Annex 4: Acronyms

BWA  Bangladesh WASH Alliance
CLTS  Community Led Total Sanitation
DGIS  Directorate-General for International Cooperation
DWA  Dutch WASH Alliance
FSM  Faecal Sludge Management
FIETS  Financial, Institutional, Environmental, Technical and Social Sustainability
GWA  Ghana WASH Alliance
MTE  Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO  Non-governmental Organisation
ToC  Theory of Change
ToR  Terms of Reference
WAK  WASH Alliance Kenya
WASH  Water, Sanitation and Hygiene