

Expression of Interest: Review of the WASH Reference Group

Terms of Reference

Context

In 2007, a group of agencies comprising NGOs and academic institutions involved in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and the domestic water industry, established the WASH Reference Group (WRG). The WRG aimed to:

- a) give WASH greater priority within AusAID and the Australian government;
- b) increase the quantity and quality of spend on WASH;
- c) improve the quality of WASH implementation through sharing knowledge and learning; and
- d) increase public awareness and support for action to address the global WASH crisis.

Since its inception, WRG members have worked together on a range of influencing and Community of Practice activities, including regular dialogue with DFAT on ending the global WASH crisis, advocacy initiatives related to Australia's WASH investments and leadership opportunities, and a series of learning days for sharing knowledge and experience.

The current membership comprises 46 individuals from a range of domestic and international NGOs, academic institutions and sector stakeholders.

The work of the WRG has been guided by a series of Terms of Reference, setting out both long and medium term aims, as well as defining ways of working for the group. A survey of the membership, and case study on partnerships developed by WRG member Plan International Australia, both completed in 2012 helped set the agenda for the current medium term aims for the period 2015-2018.

The current Terms of Reference for the WRG (see Attachment) sets out an ambitious long-term aim of improving Australia's response to the global WASH crisis, with more specific medium-term aims to influence:

- a) the design and quality of WASH investments by the Australian Government, and
- b) domestic and regional plans to implement initiatives in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 6¹.

As the end of 2018 approaches, and the group turns a decade old, the WRG recognises the clear need for a robust, independent external review of its achievements, membership and ways of working in order to understand its relevance and effectiveness within the Australian aid and development sector, and position the group to capitalise on its strengths and the changing landscape.

Review purpose

The purpose of this review is to:

- a) evaluate the effectiveness of the WRG's ways of working in supporting advocacy on WASH and learning amongst its membership;

¹ Goal 6 focuses on ensuring access to water and sanitation for all, with targets 6.1 and 6.2 being of particular relevance to the WRG. Target 6.1 is to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030. Target 6.2 is to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation by 2030, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

- b) assess how the WRG is viewed by its members and other sector stakeholders in order to better understand how it can engage and influence relevant stakeholders; and
- c) make recommendations for the future of the WRG to support its relevance and effectiveness in the changing political, economic and development landscape.

Key Questions

The following draft evaluation questions will be reviewed and finalised with the evaluation team, including the Steering Committee, as part of the inception process:

- What the key strengths / niche role do stakeholders believe the WRG fulfils?
 - How could this be further developed or deepened to increase the WRG effectiveness?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current participation and leadership of WRG members?
 - What factors enable / restrict how the WRG functions in terms of communications methods, opportunities for engagement in advocacy and learning initiatives?
- How appropriate is the membership base of the WRG with respect to advocacy and learning priorities?
 - What options could be considered for expanding the membership base to:
 - include private sector actors (such as ARUP, GHD and Coffey)
 - coordinate joint initiatives with similar bodies (such as Campaign for Australian Aid, AWP and Water for Women Interest Groups)

A detailed evaluation plan will be developed by the evaluation team in consultation with the evaluation Steering Committee through the inception phase, setting out how data will be collected and analysed for each evaluation question.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The review will be managed by WaterAid, on behalf of the WRG Executive Committee. The wider Executive Committee will form a Steering Committee to provide oversight and significant support throughout the process, particularly regarding finalisation of the inception and final evaluation reports, as well as the management response.

Evaluator / Evaluation team qualifications:

For this assignment the WRG seeks a skilled evaluator / small evaluation team with specific experience and knowledge of:

- Evaluation – particularly methods for qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation
- Advocacy – particularly in relation to evaluating advocacy initiatives and the strength of evidence in contributing to change
- Networks, coalitions and Communities of Practice – particularly in relation to effective and appropriate structures / mechanisms for fostering shared learning and coordinated advocacy

Deliverables and timelines:

The WRG expect to appoint the evaluator / evaluation team in November 2018, with the assignment timeframe running through to February 2019, subject to negotiation with the successful consultant(s).

A detailed evaluation plan will be developed and agreed through the inception phase, and form part of the inception plan. A draft report will be shared with WRG members for feedback that should be considered when developing the final report. The final report must clearly set out the method, limitations, findings and conclusions from the evaluation. All recommendations emerging through the process must be discussed and agreed through a participatory process with the evaluation Steering Committee.

A WRG Learning Day to be held in early 2019 will be a key opportunity to present findings and conclusions in the final report with members and stakeholders. The Evaluator / Evaluation Team will be required to attend this meeting, and to present the outcomes of the review to WRG stakeholders. This will involve travel to Canberra / Melbourne / Sydney for a 2 to 3-hour event.

EOI process

Prospective consultants are requested to submit a short EOI comprising: (i) CVs for all proposed team members; (ii) a budget based on approximately 15-person days of work; and (iii) a short covering email addressing qualifications and experience that make you suitable to undertake the evaluation.

The deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest is Friday, 23rd November. When submitting EOIs, please include reference to “WRG review” in your email subject title. Submissions should be made to WaterAid Australia via recruitment@wateraid.org.au. Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.