



**Serving the Water and Sanitation Sector:
Resource centre experiences, developments
and future trends**

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Preface

This publication summarises the concepts developed and lessons learnt through the STREAM project in the period from mid 1998 to mid 2001. This publication could not have been made without the efforts of the organisations and persons that took part in the STREAM project that resulted in the Streams of Knowledge initiative and the establishment of a global coalition of resource centres. As these persons and organisations are many, and it is not possible to mention all, we simply thank all those who contributed to the process and continue to share our commitment to the Streams of Knowledge approach to knowledge sharing and joint co-operation. We also hope that this publication will serve them in their efforts to carry the process forward by establishing and strengthening resource centre networks in as many regions and countries as possible so that our joint effort will have the desired impact.

Thanks to the financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate General for International Co-operation, the STREAM project has provided a limited number of resource centres with the opportunity to learn, to share and to determine a way forward. Considerable momentum was gained in the process. Contributions from participating resource centres, their donors and governments show that there is increasing recognition of the potential of resource centres to help improve the performance of the water and sanitation sector and achieve Vision 21. The moral support of the secretariat of the WSSCC has also been an important factor in achieving this.

But much remains to be done. This publication is an example of the dynamic character of the STREAM project and the process of building the global coalition and developing regional initiatives to establish resource centre networks. The first attempts to develop a synthesis of concepts and lessons learnt date from the last quarter of 1999. The publication was nearly finalised on several occasions before we realised that insights and knowledge had changed so much that the text was out of date. This phenomenon continues, but we feel it is now time to give back what we have received even though we recognise that this publication may be outdated as soon as it appears. For instance, as this publication was being finalised it was realised more strongly than before that the significance of the Streams of Knowledge initiative goes beyond the drinking water and sanitation sub-sector, and that there are opportunities to cross sub-sector boundaries by connecting to a wider group of resource centres that are strategically positioned and deal with other sub-sectors as well. This was illustrated by confirmation of IWMI's interest in and support to the Streams of Knowledge initiative, in particular in Africa. We hope nevertheless that it will be a source of inspiration for resource centres and others that share their interest to make Streams of Knowledge a reality and contribute towards the aims of Vision 21 on hygiene, effective sanitation and safe water for all.

The authors



Introduction

In a complex and challenging world people need access to a collective information and knowledge base that can help them to find the best way forward, and prevent them from making the same mistakes that others have made. Sharing knowledge about experiences from the past makes it easier to devise strategies for the future. It also helps stakeholders to play their roles more effectively and to create the collective commitment to face the challenges of the coming decades.

This publication will focus on resource centres (RCs). By providing improved access to knowledge RCs will create the conditions for enabling change in the water and sanitation sector. The aim of this publication is to assist in understanding the notion of a resource centre and how best resource centres could achieve their potential.

This document has been produced to provide all those involved and/or interested in resource centres with the most recent information regarding the development of resource centres within the framework of the STREAM project.

The first chapter describes some of the basic concepts and highlights the major constraints for generating and sharing knowledge.

Chapter two is devoted to understanding the patterns of development and characteristics of resource centres and describes some typical features of resource centres and their role in knowledge generation and sharing.

The third chapter concentrates on how resource centres can be strengthened through diagnosing their potential and utilising tools developed for the purpose of strengthening individual centres. The tools described were developed by the resource centres themselves, based on an understanding of their strengths and limitations, and on how resource centres work with a cross section of stakeholders from the water and sanitation sector. There is also some discussion on how individual resource centres can be strengthened.

The fourth and final chapter is concerned with the building of the global coalition of resource centres. More specifically, how resource centres can work together through the global Streams of Knowledge Coalition is addressed.



Chapter 1: The STREAM approach to knowledge sharing

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to document and interpret the outputs of a number of activities based on the STREAM project and draw generic conclusions where relevant. We hope that such an analysis would be useful primarily for staff of participating resource centres and other prospective or potential resource centres who are interested in strengthening themselves. In addition, other sector actors and stakeholders who are prospective clients of resource centre services will also find this a useful document in terms of comprehending the key role that sector resource centres can play in capacity building.

The first part of this chapter will review what the STREAM project entails in terms of resource centres, lessons learnt, and the main issues regarding resource centres. It will focus on some of the emerging ideas on knowledge sharing. The chapter will end with an overview of some of the main issues for which resource centres can provide solutions.

1.2 The STREAM project

The Resource Centre Processes and Experiences Project (now commonly referred to as the STREAM Project) was originally proposed and approved against the background of a changing institutional setting in the water and sanitation sector and the recognised need to develop sector capacity through the mechanism of resource centres as recommended during a Ministerial Conference on Drinking Water and Environmental Sanitation (Noordwijk, 1994).

Since the development of the original project proposal, a number of important developments have taken place in the water and sanitation sector, which have influenced the outputs of the project. One such event was the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) meeting in 1997 which agreed on regionalising its activities, thereby placing greater emphasis on information sharing and capacity building. This offers important challenges for sectoral and cross-sectoral resource centres, as does the rapidly increasing use of the Internet as an information exchange tool.

One should keep in mind also that there is a global trend towards decentralisation and the involvement of the private sector. Autonomous public and private service providers for urban water supply and sanitation are gaining much more importance. This increases the potential role of resource centres in building capacity to deal with these issues at the local level. Moreover, the links between drinking water and sanitation, integrated water resources management and other sectors such as environment and agriculture, as advocated by the Global Water Partnership and the World Water Vision 2000 exercise, pose challenges to resource centres requiring special skills that can be developed through

capacity building efforts supported by the STREAM project. Finally, the gradual shift from direct project support to sector programmes encourages national governments and sector institutions to exert direct control on funds, thereby influencing the environment in which sector resource centres operate.

These trends imply that resource centres have to find strategic positions in their own markets. However, in an environment where information and research do not have high priority, this presents a considerable challenge in terms of innovation and marketing of products and services. Mobilising resources in order to support certain functions which are not necessarily marketable at cost covering rates in the immediate future appears to become increasingly difficult.

STudy on REsources And Management project (STREAM) is therefore a process-oriented research for action project. This on-going project focuses on strengthening resource centres to fulfil their role as capacity builders in the water and sanitation sector. Initially, a total of nine resource centres from different parts of the world formed a core group (the Sounding Board Group) for this research. In June 1999, this core group held an international workshop entitled "Towards an enhanced role of resource centres in capacity building" in Delft, The Netherlands. Its objective was to gather a large number of international specialists and experts from various resource centres and focus on the findings of studies and background papers from the STREAM project so far¹.

Subsequently, since this first international workshop, STREAM has developed from being simply a project to become a global process covering key regions of the world. As a result, STREAM aims to strengthen resource centres and their networks. The STREAM Project has been designed to follow a flexible approach which implies that changes in the project implementation may take place as the project unfolds in response to new developments and lessons learnt. The STREAM Project resulted in the establishment of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition of Resource Centres that will ensure the follow-up of the project by supporting resource centre development and networking in various regions of the world.

¹ The process which was launched through a preliminary workshop in June 1999 in Delft was the forerunner to a series of regional workshops, rapid scan exercises and an electronic conference over an extended period of 7 weeks, not to mention the number of meetings of the core group of participating centres. This has resulted in a large volume of information which requires to be sorted and processed if it is to serve a useful purpose. The current paper attempts to do so, keeping in mind that the process is a dynamic one and that resource centres are poorly understood entities whose role in capacity building within the sector can be dominated only with a clearer understanding of the entity itself. *Toward an enhanced role of resource centres for capacity building in the water and sanitation sector*, Summary of the International workshop, 14-18 June 1999, Delft, The Netherlands.

Box 1: Creating an enabling environment for change: improving access to knowledge

The essential problem faced by the sector is not in the end availability of financial resources or coverage or even capacity building as expounded in the most recent papers on the subject. It boils down to access to the right information and knowledge, available at even the most distant outpost of human civilization at the right time. If institutional reformists in Vietnam knew what worked and what did not with river basin agencies in Australia, they might be more critical when adopting external solutions proposed to them. Knowing that effective participatory tools have been developed and tested in India for application in water and sanitation reform may help practitioners in Africa to improve access to services without having to re-invent the methods. In short, if knowledge can be made available and easily accessible, sector actors and stakeholders will select what they require from the menu, and use it in the way they see fit. As sector actors and stakeholders become more informed, a demand is created for better services and products, and this in turn creates the enabling environment for change.

Source: Sounding Board Group, 2000.

Based on this background information we will now focus on the second theme in this chapter which is the importance of knowledge sharing and networking within the context of this project.

1.3 Sharing knowledge

There is a need to share knowledge so as to make progress. This has been the fundamental premise in Vision 21 (refer to Box 2) which STREAM has adopted as well, and which focuses on the essential need to have people's initiative and management of their own quality of life, at the centre of planning and action. This requires a bottom-up approach starting from the assumption that people know their own water and sanitation requirements, and have good ideas as to how best to achieve them. It requires that planning starts at the level of households and neighbourhoods, working up from there to community and higher levels. It requires that people make informed decisions and for this they need to know what works and what does not. This requires access to a collective memory bank and knowledge base which is what a resource centre in the water and sanitation sector tries to provide.

Box 2: Vision 21 – the shared vision

A clean and healthy world: a world in which every person has safe and adequate water and sanitation in a hygienic environment.

Four components comprise the vision:

- Building on people's energy and creativity at all levels, requiring empowerment and building the capacity of people in households and communities to take action, and applying technologies that respond to actual needs.
- Holistic approach, acknowledging hygiene, water and sanitation as a human right, and relating it to human development, the elimination of poverty, environmental sustainability and integrated management of water resources.
- Committed and compassionate leadership and good governance, changing long accustomed roles leading to new responsibilities of authorities and institutions to support households and communities in the management of their hygiene, water and sanitation and in being accountable to users as clients.
- Synergy among partners, encouraging shared commitment among users, politicians and professionals; requiring professionals within the water and sanitation sector to combine technical expertise with the sectors of health, education, environment, community development and food.

Source: Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, 2000

1.4 Defining knowledge sharing

To arrive at a clearer understanding of what exactly knowledge sharing means to sector actors and stakeholders including experts working in the sector, an electronic conference was held on this specific topic. The focus was placed on the role of resource centres in knowledge sharing, how this process can be improved and how to manage knowledge better so that it is available to those who need it most. Background papers and a set of leading questions prepared the ground for this exchange. The electronic conference raised a large number of interesting issues, as shown in the selection presented below. These issues include: generating knowledge, making knowledge useful, networks for knowledge sharing, and effectiveness of knowledge sharing via the Internet. These points are presented here, with an interpretation of what this could mean for resource centres and the Streams of Knowledge Coalition.

• Generating knowledge – processes and partnerships

How do resource centres generate knowledge? In the ideal situation, a fully operational, well-endowed resource centre would have the necessary critical mass of services, activities and human resources, to generate knowledge. As an example, the research they do - perhaps in collaboration with universities and research centres - would be relevant to sector needs and by capitalising on these experiences through publications and training, builds up the capacity of sector professionals. Participating in consultancy and advisory services keeps the resource centre abreast of the practical problems arising in the sector and enhances their research. A documentation centre capitalises all this information and makes it available to others through a good information management system. Resource centres evolve and change over time in response to the demands of their clients, keeping the long-term sector needs in focus at all times.

The reality for less well-endowed resource centres in developing countries is different. They would be evolving within their own particular environment and trying to be dynamic and responsive to demands in their own area. At best, they would have some mechanisms in place (antennas) to assess the demand. They usually have limited resources in terms of both finance and expertise and are forced to limit their activities. As such, a typical resource centre may be doing a little research in some areas of importance to their context, and be more specialised in training as a way to improve the sector skills while at the same time generating finances. They may not have a good documentation or information management system.

For such centres the importance of resource sharing and networking becomes evident. One way of resource sharing is to enter into synergistic partnerships with other resource centres that have a different set of expertise and skills, which are complementary to theirs. For instance, linking up with a resource centre with better research skills will allow them to undertake studies in areas important to their context but where in-house expertise is lacking. Synergies can be established through these partnerships which go beyond simple networking for information exchange. Such arrangements can be between two less well-known centres that pool their resources, or may be a twinning arrangement with a well-endowed 'big brother' centre. A special type of partnership and understanding is required, and mutual trust and transparency of operation between the two centres in such a deal is essential. For more long-term partnerships, a form of 'merger' is possible whereby each centre maintains its essential independence but the advantages of a merger can be enjoyed without inconvenience.

- **Making knowledge useful**

The usefulness of knowledge can be estimated by the extent to which any new knowledge product (a technology or a process) is utilised. There are some basic conditions to make knowledge useful and relevant.

- **Applicability** in local situations (particularly in the case of knowledge produced in a context other than its end use situation). This requires that global technical knowledge be linked and adapted to the local knowledge base for which a key element is participation by the people who will use this knowledge.
- **Packaging** for easy use.
- **Accessibility** - reaching the people who may need the knowledge and use it. This seems to be a problem in developing countries where knowledge is more easily accessible for those who hold financial and/or political power. This raises the issue of equitability; within organisations (intra-organisational) and between organisations (inter-organisational). To resolve the intra-organisational problem requires that the organisations using the knowledge have to be more transparent. Resource centres can only attempt to resolve the inter-organisational problem by mechanisms that make knowledge more freely available in all senses of the term. The reality of equity is determined by external economic and social issues and the idea is linked to free education; the sustainability of free knowledge must be considered in three dimensions: managerial, social and technological.

- **Networks for knowledge sharing**

Networking is a vague term. Professional circles or others engaged in social network related activities ascribe different meanings to it, ranging from a ‘formal and regular exchange of information among members working in a specific field and using specific media’ to an ‘exchange of visiting cards’ and ‘contacting people in social gatherings’. To clarify what type of network could be built through the joint efforts of resource centres, several models were reviewed and a decentralised network model chosen.

The starting point for organizing the network of resource centres in the water and sanitation sector is that it should add value and that all members should get a benefit out of it. The network is meant to enhance organised interaction between members with a common interest, who are committed, and who look for an added value to their activities. All members should know the possibilities and limitations, rights and obligations.

A prerequisite for getting the added value out of networking is choosing the right partners. In making this choice, not only a common field of interest plays an important role. Relating to equal partners and developing with them a relationship based on mutual interest, trust, collaboration and a common agenda will help obtain the benefits aimed at. Here, collaboration is a key element: on the one hand, benefiting from membership of a network is an intrinsic right of members; on the other hand, membership also implies a contribution to collaboration and commitment. Meeting these prerequisites fulfils the interest for networking more than any formal contractual agreements could achieve.

Networking may become more complicated when it involves partners of a varied nature such as resource centres, external support agencies, central government, local associations, private sector companies and community-based organisations. Although active in the same field, these organisations have different roles and different interests. To achieve the benefits one expects, networking among such different entities may require more than the conditions mentioned above. It will require different strategies and different levels of communication- openness for different ‘cultures’, and transparency in the definition of aspirations, priorities and goals.

The key condition of success is that members recognise the value of the network and identify themselves with it, and are prepared to commit the time and resources required to maintain it.

Box 3: Why network?

- Avoid duplication of efforts by sharing knowledge
- Ensure complementarity of efforts
- Enhance opportunities for collaboration on projects and understanding of common issues and themes
- Increase possibilities for mutual learning experiences
- Enhance accessibility to knowledge, which allows better access for those who have fewer resources and living in ‘knowledge-drought’ conditions
- Benefit from common marketing
- Achieve lobbying and advocacy

- **Effectiveness of knowledge sharing via the Internet**

The Internet provides an exciting mechanism for knowledge sharing but how effective is it? This was another key question that was addressed in the electronic conference on knowledge sharing.

In the developing world, although information technology is fast taking a hold in the daily fabric of life, we cannot overlook the fact that these are poor countries, where often only the rich can afford to use the Internet. In addition, there is still a widespread lack of skills and facilities, and even when these are available, telephone connections are slow and Internet connections are sometimes expensive. In this context it should be mentioned that the inequity of the Internet was clearly demonstrated by the pattern of participation in the electronic conference. Most of the participants from the South were employees of international organisations or university researchers. No community level potential beneficiaries participated actively. Therefore, the dangers of concentrating efforts predominantly on Internet and the electronic communication media as the universal means of communications, to the detriment of other modes, are evident. Some groups inevitably are marginalized and knowledge sharing is not universal or equitable.

An additional concern is the Internet information on the web, which in itself can be quite disconcerting and intimidating, not to mention the lack of quality control which compounds the situation. This implies a role for resource centres as a clearing house and quality controller of information. However, a word of caution is necessary about the danger of quality control becoming synonymous with censorship, particularly if resource centres are to select and process information. It is suggested that beyond a certain level of preliminary sorting (which in itself would require substantial resources) users themselves should sort out the grain from the chaff.

1.5 Knowledge sharing in the water and sanitation sector: Issues cited by STREAM partners

At the commencement of the STREAM Project, a number of 'literature reviews' were commissioned from relevant partner organisations in an attempt – among other objectives - to identify the key sector issues to be addressed, the gaps between support needs and services offered by resource centres, and the products to be developed. Regional workshops of actual and potential members of the STREAM network were also organised in Latin America, Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa and South East Asia, with the objective of identifying key sector issues.

Issues in the sector varied somewhat in relation to the regions studied. Inevitably, this is a reflection of the external socio-cultural environment in which the resource centres operate. However there are similarities which include:

- Lack of a learning approach in sector actors and resource centre staff and poor horizontal interaction with users and other stakeholders.
- Need for communities, which are still not sufficiently involved or empowered, to play an active role.

- Need for a systemic approach to water resource management which could lead to an integrated and holistic approach. This in turn influences the availability of water for, and the provision of services to, domestic water supply.
- Lack of attention regarding environmental sanitation which lags behind water supply and hygiene promotion. All of these are insufficiently addressed within the sector.
- Need to address gender and poverty linkages in relation to access to water and sanitation services.
- Call for financing of both capital investments and operation and maintenance of water and sanitation, which remains an issue.
- Need for quality research on sector issues, and quality training programmes for improving the quality and skills of human resources within the sector.

1.6 Emerging ideas on knowledge sharing and the development of resource centres

Finally, some emerging ideas on knowledge sharing and the development of resource centres are worth mentioning. These ideas were generated during the electronic conference and refined later. Some of them could be used eventually to improve the Streams of Knowledge Coalition:

- The idea of resource centres as organisations for ‘bridging the gap’ between research, knowledge and practice is to be fully explored.
- ‘Cascade models’ of research linked to appropriate dissemination pathways as a model to improve effectiveness of resource centres in knowledge generation and sharing. The term cascade is used to denote movement of knowledge from one operational level to another.
- Similarly a networking model for enhancing accessibility to knowledge through ‘levels or orders of resource centres’. First-order resource centres are at the highest level and these are linked to lower order resource centres for knowledge sharing and exchange.
- ‘Circles and cycles’ of learning to be identified. This phrase tries to capture the idea of exchange and mutual learning between different levels.
- Two-way information flow and adopting pro-poor strategies when sharing information.
- Thinking integrated and acting sectoral.
- Promoting research which is market-based as a means of achieving solvency. This means providing real services to real clients, which is the key to successfully attracting financing. However, most financial support to providers of public services and goods is still largely dependent on those groups supporting public objectives.
- ‘Electronic Bulletin Board’ to flag important and current information.
- Resource centres to develop ‘antennas or feelers’ for assessing demand.

1.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has focused on the importance of sharing knowledge. It has provided some insight into some of the main sector issues and emerging ideas on knowledge sharing. The following chapter will now focus on the important features that make a successful resource centre.

Chapter 2: Resource Centres – concepts and trends

2.1 Introduction

Much effort has been used towards understanding the term knowledge sharing, and the concept of resource centre. The organisations participating in the various exercises of the project represented a cross section of actors and stakeholders from the water and sanitation sector ranging from government ministries, departments and public sector organisations providing services, to universities, higher education schools, training institutes and information centres. This list also includes NGOs working in the sector, research institutes, semi-government and private consultancy firms, consortiums, networks of NGO's and even local collectivities and co-operatives with the specific objective of improving water and sanitation services².

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with the term 'resource centre' and all that this entails. There is a strong focus placed on the concept of a resource centre and the key characteristics that constitute a resource centre; the last section of the chapter considers some of the typical features found in resource centres.

2.2 Diverse perceptions of a resource centre

In April 1999 the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre conducted a participatory study which brought out the various perceptions of what constitutes a resource centre involving 11 such bodies. The conclusions, as shown in Box 4, reflect the fact that there was no unified perception of what a resource centre entails. In addition, the study highlighted that there was no standard definition of a resource centre.

² Note that this definition of the various stakeholders in the WATSAN sector derives from regional rapid scanning exercises of resource centres undertaken within Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, and East Africa, and Regional workshops in West, Eastern, and Southern Africa.

Box 4: What constitutes a resource centre?

IWSD proposed that a resource centre is a 'Body' which provides services to the sector. If they are statutory they perform public functions which revolve around political developments and in general this renders them less flexible and more anchored in routine. If they are non-statutory they are more penetrative and participatory and therefore they are very interactive and responsive to change. A second type of classification centres around mandates and core business. It was suggested that the resource centre had a predominant focus, which could belong to one of the following categories: Problem solving through applied research (technical and non technical), influencing policy change through advocacy, facilitating and creating an enabling environment as with the external support agencies (ESAs), developing skills through training, and human resource development through academia.

CINARA proposed a definition of a resource centre as an organisation having great flexibility, neutrality and transparency, which could be depended upon to promote, enable and catalyze the process of strengthening local capacities. To achieve this purpose, CINARA further identified the following key areas: education (through universities, training centres), information management (through libraries, documentation centres), and research and development. CINARA's perception was that each of these different types of organisations was a resource centre serving a particular purpose or mandate within the sector.

PCWS

"In the Philippine context a community is a resource centre considering that support and information systems are generated from the various traditions and cultural contexts. Even a family or an individual may be considered a resource centre".

It further qualifies for the purposes of this study that the term resource centre refers to non-government organisations providing various services and linkages as a support to a cause. Whilst they have multiple roles they are primarily concerned with disseminating and popularizing knowledge. Different types of resource centres could be classified according to their functional role: research and documentation, education and training, advocacy, project management and technical services, and information management.

NETWAS' perception for categorizing resource centres was in terms of funding sources and support to the organisation: government supported, NGO/private sector supported, supported by international funding. It focused its discussion on the ITN concept, which aims to promote needed improvements in the sector through training, information dissemination and research. Some examples of resource centres described were NGO's (some having multi-sectoral activities), networks, and university affiliated resource centers.

pS-EAU's perception signals the importance of the regional dimension for resource centres and the creation of multiple institutional links through partnerships and networks. Flexibility, which permits change and evolution in response to sector demands, is another key requirement. The examples cited are both NGO type structures and semi-government supported structures. These structures start as projects which were put in place to respond to certain needs of the sector (objectives of the project) and then evolve into a relevant structure which can respond to current requirements. All resource centres cited have extensive networks and utilize these through partnerships to access other capabilities not necessarily available within their own organisation.

SKAT sees the primary focus of a resource centre as providing access to relevant information. SKAT typifies resource centres through their functional role and objectives. The functions commonly cited as being part of a resource centre are research, training, information dissemination, documentation, consultancy and backstopping, though not all these functions are carried out by all the resource centres cited.

Source: Raschid-Sally, L . and Bastemeijer, T. 1999. Challenges to resource centres in their role as capacity builders.

2.3 Defining resource centres

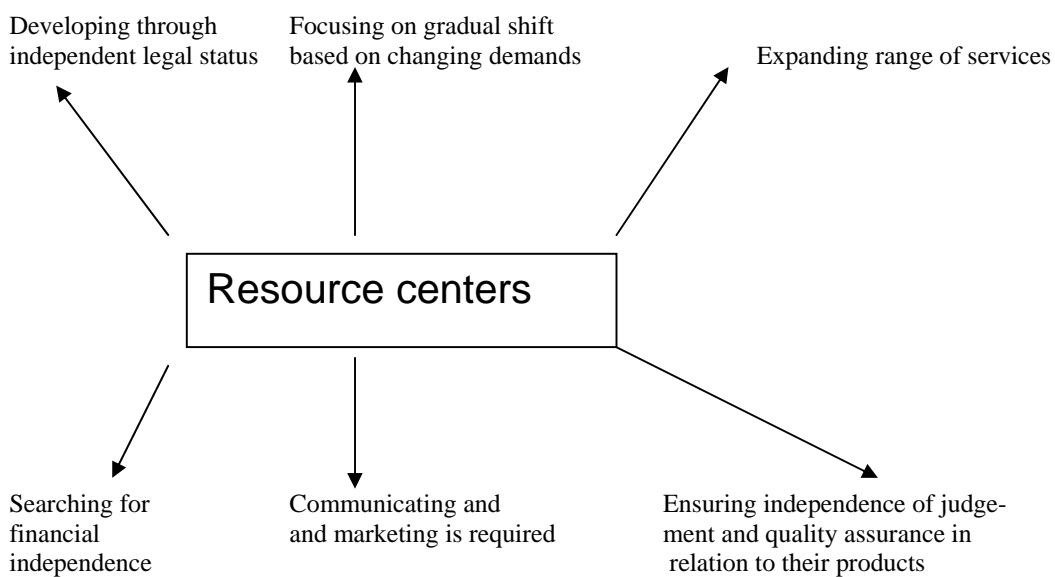
The first question which should arise at this point is whether there is a need for a universal or unified definition to make resource centres more functional? In finding a response to this question it might help to remember that often more progress is made if one moves past ‘identifying definitions’ and judges on the basis of merits or demerits of a resource centre. This supposes that the resource centre has contributed over the years to strengthening capacities in the water and sanitation sector. The question which should follow, is whether there is a need for some type of minimum requirements of functionality and operability? More specifically, should a resource centre be subject to some minimum requirements to be classified and be able to operate/function as such?

This specific issue was addressed through one of the work groups of the STREAM workshop held in June 1999. The conclusion drawn reflected that rather than (re)searching a universal definition, the resource centre concept should be further refined and tools be developed for diagnosing the potential of a resource centre and for strengthening it.

2.4 Key characteristics of resource centres

In refining the resource centre concept the findings from the follow-up actions to the workshop revealed that most resource centres showed some common key characteristics linked to different phases of their growth and development. This has been illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1: Common features among resource centres



- ***Searching for independent legal status***

The initial 11 participating resource centres in the STREAM process revealed a range of legal status. They represent a cross section of centres established between the period 1968 (being the oldest) to 1990 (being the youngest). Out of the 11 resource centres a total of two continued to operate reasonably well without independent legal status. Only one of the 11 had had independent status right from its inception; the others achieved legal status along the way³.

Centres which were independent noted that obtaining an independent status made them effective especially in terms of more financial, operational and organisational flexibility. As one resource centre expressed it:

“...having an independent organisation which can operate neutrally in a transparent manner, is fundamental to facilitating and catalysing processes within the sector”.
(TREND Group, 2000)

If we examine more closely the development pattern of resource centres in developing country contexts, we realise that in the preliminary phases of establishment, a quasi-government image or at least full government backing or support (morally if not financially) may be necessary to fulfil their mission. For instance, during the initial year that TREND was developing, national leadership and a sense of national ownership had been critical in ensuring its identity and institutional sustainability. Maintaining close links with sector actors and stakeholders and in particular the government is also a key element. In the case of SKAT it is now moving from a stakeholder company status to a foundation status.

³ It should be noted that in general, many resource centres gain legal status after a number of years in the field. These types of organisation can vary from quasi-government agencies, to non-profit foundations with well-ordered management structures, to associations, and shareholding company structures. Many of these types of resource centres started off with an initial affiliation to a university or government institution under a specific project.

Table 1: Profile of Resource Centres (as at 2000)

	Origin of resource centre	Objective	Legal status	Sectoral focus
CINARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1981 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of life and establish sustainable human development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO but also research and development institute of the Universidad del Valle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water, basic sanitation and water resources conservation
PCWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1990 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of progressive and health communities through WATSAN services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATSAN, integrated water resources
NETWAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1986 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the living conditions of the people in Eastern Africa through capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and environmental sanitation
SKAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1978 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise sustainable solutions which empower target groups to achieve self-reliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholder company⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sectoral rural and urban infrastructure
PSEAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate international co-operation at local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sectoral mainly WATSAN- 20% of budget in migrants sector and water for agriculture
IPD-AOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1977 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the living conditions of populations in West African countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sectoral in rural development
IWEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1973 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the improvement of water and environmental services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of the technical university of Tampere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, environmental management and water resources
IWSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1988 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the achievement of sustainable development of water and waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATSAN focus
SEUF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1989 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote sustainable socio-economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply and sanitation
TREND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1989 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of life and establish sustainable human development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATSAN in urban and small town areas
PRONET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1994 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on poverty reduction, ecological balance, gender equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community WATSAN, basic education and poverty reduction
NWRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1979 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building and skills development for WATSAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water resources, sanitation and environmental management
GAMWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1997 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on all aspects of WATSAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sectoral with mandate that includes health, education
SEUF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1987 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote socio-economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply and environmental sanitation
CFPAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1994 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus as a training centre for WATSAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training centre linked to the National Directorate of Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sanitation

Source: Streams of Knowledge, 2001a.

⁴ Note that SKAT by October 2001 is moving back to a 'foundation' status. Refer to bibliography for case study material.

- ***Shift in focus dictated by changing demands in the sector***

Resource centres are created to meet a felt need or fill a gap in the sector. As the needs of the sector change, so does the focus of both activities and subject areas of resource centres. For example, many of the present resource centres in Africa (IWSD, CFPAS, NETWAS, CREPA, TREND, PRONET) gave much emphasis to human resource development in the past through organised training programmes, and to providing documentation and information services, but have gone on to include advisory services and research as the sector in Africa changed and the requirements grew. In the case of ITN centres, which focused initially on training, more emphasis has now been placed on action research, documentation and business advisory services. Another example is CINARA, which started off as a research centre for appropriate technologies and soon went into training, and widened its subject area to include community processes (in the water and sanitation sector). A final example is IRC which started as a reference centre for community water supply and now includes management aspects and application of integrated water resources and sanitation management as focus areas of intervention.

Therefore, we see that resource centres' shift in focus is clearly based on changing demands in the sector in relation to both subject areas and services. To continue being at the cutting edge of the demands in the market, resource centres need to react quickly based on a sound yet flexible organisational structure which emphasises innovative thinking.

- ***Expanding range of services necessitating a critical mass***

The expanding range of capacity building requires a broadening in the scope of activities within a resource centre. Over the past 20 years there has been a change from engineering-oriented approaches focusing mainly on the technical aspects of water supply and sanitation to multidisciplinary holistic approaches focusing on integrating technical, social, management and institutional concerns in the sector. This has required a change in the structure and functioning of many resource centres, to incorporate multi-disciplinarity of functions and inter-disciplinarity of actions.

Case studies demonstrate, however, that smaller institutions can only respond to demand in a few subject areas and provide only limited expertise. Consequently they cannot easily play a broader support role and cannot adapt to new demands without external support. In other words a critical mass is required to be able to function optimally as a resource centre. Critical mass may be described in terms of human resources (professional and non-professional), capacities and skills of staff (multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary), services/functions, subject areas, facilities, or financial resources. Critical mass requires a certain minimum or critical amount of each of these factors (this list is non-exhaustive) which is essential for successful operation and continued effectiveness. This can be achieved through in-house expansion or through well motivated partnerships.

- **Searching for financial independence**

Somewhere along the growth curve of resource centres, after the preliminary injection of financing from donors has run its course, a dilemma emerges. They have to reconcile the roles of generating funds through acting as consultancy firms in the sector pursuing market opportunities, with that of a pro-active resource centre addressing long-term sector needs. The result is that in their run for survival they forget their mission.

To overcome this problem three conditions are necessary:

1. That resource centres have a *strategic focus*, which relates to the purpose and values of an organisation and which helps it to find its niche. Clear strategic or business planning and continuous self-assessment will allow a resource centre to stay on top of the situation.
2. That there is *recognition within the sector* of the role of resource centres as *pro-active knowledge systems* addressing also the long-term sector needs which are not necessarily income generating. Mechanisms need to be put in place to cater for these needs. Key stakeholders must recognise that these centres are not always financially sustainable and they must be convinced of the need to contribute funding for activities and tasks addressing long-term sector needs.
3. That there are *diverse sources of financing*. Funding for resource centre activities can be obtained through: a) traditional sources, such as donors, international funding agencies and governments, b) from sale of products – services and trademarks, or c) from sponsoring. Funding has emerged as a critical issue for resource centres and new models based on partnerships with private sector organisations need to be explored. The latter has become a more common approach in recent years.

- **Creating conditions for better communication and marketing**

As the centre expands and critical mass is established, the ad hoc communication methods employed until then break down and more formal mechanisms need to be put in place. This is essential for two-way exchange of ideas and to ensure transparency in decision-making, not only within the resource centre but also for the benefit of stakeholders and partners. Marketing the resource centre's image and its products and services also becomes important at this point because financial viability depends on this.

- **Ensuring independence of judgement and quality assurance**

The first step in successfully instigating any form of reform or change is in being recognised as an unbiased centre.⁵ The quality of the outputs and services produced by a resource centre is also instrumental in the way a resource centre is perceived. Resource centres are in the business of providing knowledge-intensive services, and they are responsible for ensuring the quality of the knowledge produced. They do this by putting in place mechanisms for both external validation (peer review) and internal validation (self criticism).

⁵ For example, in the TRANSCOL project, which was a joint learning project involving government organisations and regional structures in the Valle region of Colombia, and local communities, CINARA was accepted by both the agencies and the communities as an unbiased and independent facilitator in the process (IRC, 1997).

2.5 Other typical features of resource centres

This section focuses on some of the other features characterising resource centres. In addition to being centres of excellence within the sector, they also need to be pro-active and act as the sector memory to remain at the forefront of the market.

- **Centres of excellence**

An implicit expectation of the sector vis-à-vis resource centres is that they function as centres of excellence. A key ingredient of excellence is to be innovative. This is achieved through adopting new organisational models that incorporate learning loops and reflect holistic principles. From the evaluation report of TREND Ghana in 1996 comes the quote “.....a centre of excellence - there is no other group (which approaches) the same level of knowledge, experience, and close contact with donors and major stakeholders”.

- **Being pro-active**

Being pro-active allows resource centres to anticipate and respond to change. This is a quality that puts resource centres at the cutting edge of responding to sector needs. In an ideal world, resource centres would, through the use of appropriate diagnostic and market survey tools, be able to anticipate future immediate and long-term requirements of the sector and new approaches for improving the situation within the sector. It is the pro-active nature of resource centres that allows them to identify issues for advocacy purposes. The role that resource centres are playing in exploring ways to contribute to Vision 21 and in the implementation of the Framework for Action is one example of applying this approach.

“Having a multitude and variety of concerns in the delivery of water supply and sanitation services, resource centres play a vital role. They can influence and even enhance the development of the sector. They look into the future and foresee trends and directions. They anticipate change and help in managing it”.

Source: ITN Philippines, 1999.

- **Sector memory**

Acquiring and managing knowledge on the sector makes resource centres the memory bank for sector developments. They are thus in the position of being the key player in analysing the sector needs.

A knowledge base is a dynamic system in which different activities interact internally and with the outside to produce knowledge. The different activities within resource centres that interact in this manner are: research, training policy, advice, consultancy services, documentation and dissemination. In a simplified process of producing knowledge, data from whatever source when correctly analysed, interpreted and packaged, becomes useful information. Those who use it can acquire knowledge and, with experience, a reflective attitude and a learning approach, wisdom may follow. Resource centres focus on opportunities to generate knowledge. With access to research

results from various sources, resource centres are able to identify gaps in knowledge and therefore generate the questions to motivate the next stage of research. Their advisory and consultancy work contributes to keeping them at the cutting edge of practical experience. With knowledge generation in mind, the criterion used in the choice of consultancy work is that it provides a learning experience for the centre. Research results and experience from advisory and consultancy services contribute to design of training programs so that sector actors are kept informed of the latest developments, which enables them to make informed decisions.

2.6 Finding their niche in the sector: diverse roles of resource centres

In this last section, the diverse roles of a resource centre are discussed. These roles include being a facilitator, creating synergies, and providing advocacy on important sector issues. The following section describes each one of these roles in some detail.

Facilitation – is analogous to being at the meeting point or intersection of different sector stakeholders, actors and partners. A facilitator is a mediator of discussions who stimulates the participants to express their views/ideas and structures them. Given the complex nature of the problems and the decisions in the sector and the multitude of actors and stakeholders, there is a critical need for facilitating organisations. Part of the process of facilitation involves being non-directive, and creating a learning environment where a resource centre no longer plays the role of expert or teacher but rather establishes a horizontal contact in which the actors are challenged to use their creativity to identify problems and possible solutions and take decisions accordingly.

Creating synergies – Synergies are established when the sum of the parts exceeds the whole and the impact of a partnership goes beyond a simple linear output and produces exponential results. Linking the right organisations can achieve this and pursuing this goal actively is one mechanism for resource centres to have a lasting impact on the sector. Synergies can be created between two or more resource centres working for their mutual benefit through sharing of skills and expertise, or they can be created between a multitude of different organisations within the sector to achieve a stated water and sanitation objective. pSEau, for instance, is a ‘network resource centre’ which does not exist outside of its network.

pSEau was established in response to a need for collaboration and consultation between different actors and stakeholders in the water sector in France. These stakeholders represented NGOs, local community groups, research centres, water professionals, public sector agencies and ministries, engaged in development cooperation in the water sector. The network was subsequently enlarged to accommodate partners, stakeholders and resource networks from the South. It is presently an informal network, whose strength lies in its membership.

Source: pSEau, 1999.

Advocacy –Advocacy focuses on raising awareness about sector issues to help obtain commitment of decision-makers to a specific area. Advocating for change takes place at different levels and through different platforms, and resource centres (depending on their geographic domain of action) can catalyse this movement. For example, a group of resource centres and networks, including IRC, CINARA, GARNET, WEDC and WaterAid, participated in the Water and Sanitation Think Tank initiative of the World Bank focusing on promoting new insights and advocating ideas on key themes in rural water and sanitation.

At a regional and local level a number of examples of advocacy from resource centres can be cited. In Africa (CREPA – Burkina Faso, TREND - Ghana, NETWAS - Kenya, IWSD - Zimbabwe), Asia (PCWS – Philippines, SEUF – India), and Latin America (CINARA – Colombia) have lobbied for community participation in decision-making and made great progress in getting this concept accepted and building management and problem solving capacities within communities. The Gender Alliance, initiated by IRC with the active participation of other resource centres in water, is the end result of successful lobbying by resource centres for mainstreaming gender issues into water resource management. Two other examples are introducing hygiene promotion in water supply programmes, and school health education, made possible through successful collaboration between resource centres and international agencies like WHO and UNICEF.

2.7 Concluding remarks

In the preceding sections an attempt has been made to understand resource centres by focusing on the development processes that different types of resource centres have undergone, the roles they play and the responsibilities they shoulder within the sector. This chapter has reflected the important features that make a successful resource centre. In the following chapter we will focus on how resource centres can be strengthened.

Chapter 3: Playing their role better – strengthening resource centres

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how resource centres are being strengthened to play their role better. The first section discusses issues and constraints that resource centres are currently facing. A section follows on how to assist resource centres through providing them with relevant tools in a toolbox format to overcome these limitations. The background to the development of the toolbox is described and the tools within the toolbox are explained. Each of the 12 tools is then described separately to give the reader an understanding of their use.

3.2 Issues and constraints faced by STREAM resource centres

When the Streams of Knowledge Coalition (see Chapter 4) launched its ‘Rapid Regional Scans of Resource Centres’ (CREPA-TREND, 2000) to identify centres that could be encouraged to join reciprocal alliances to strengthen their hand, it was realised that many of the resource centres scanned subscribed only minimally to the concepts outlined in the previous chapter. Subsequently, workshops in the different regions of the Coalition brought up a number of issues and constraints that resource centres face in their operations, as described in the following box.

Box 5: Issues and constraints to operation

- Maintaining a balance between dealing with sector needs and providing consultancy services
- Balancing the types of services offered by resource centres depending on the status of the WS&S sector in the country
- Balancing the types of expertise within a centre: engineering/technical aspects with non-engineering /soft aspects. Introducing multi-disciplinarity and gender balance
- Obtaining recognition as partners in the sector
- Competitive bidding for projects puts resource centres at a disadvantage: improving marketing skills and imposing selectivity in the choice of projects
- Lack of financial, material and human resources
- Lack of core funds to cover non-income generating services of resource centres—getting donor commitment
- Poor follow-up and monitoring systems for centre and individual projects
- Improving management control functions in resource centres
- Insufficient skills in using information technology, research, marketing of products
- Ineffective or inadequate quality control within resource centre
- Fundraising capabilities low and lack of transparency and skills in financial management
- Communication difficulties between resource centres from different regions limit exchange of experiences
- Poor communication and information exchange within resource centres
- Spreading skills thinly over a large number of small projects for financial gain, which limits timely capitalisation of experiences
- Difficulty in developing new training and information products, and tailoring these to specific target groups.

Source: Various case studies- refer to bibliography

Box 5 identifies a need to strengthen potential resource centres by assisting them to focus on some of these major issues.

3.3 Conception and development of tools to assist resource centres

The idea of developing management and development tools for strengthening resource centres was first discussed as early as 1998 when the initial steps were taken to implement the STREAM Project. Since then, different partners in the STREAM Project have taken the lead in the development of some relevant tools. The first areas identified for which tools would be necessary were: self-assessment; managerial, organisational and institutional strengthening; impact assessment; quality assurance and electronic information services⁶. Later, gender tools were added.

It was agreed that Streams of Knowledge Sounding Board Group members would concentrate not only on the objectives and the methodology but would also take steps towards testing the tools within resource centres willing to participate in the process. The task was distributed among some of the STREAM Sounding Board Group members: CINARA, IRC, IWSD, NETWAS and SKAT. Over a period of one year the various tools were developed and some were trial tested.

In April 2001, IRC organised and co-ordinated a Toolbox workshop. The purpose of the Toolbox workshop was to arrive at a coherent set of tools and a strategy to market them widely among water and sanitation resource centres in the various regions. Participants who had actually been involved in developing the tools, had the opportunity to discuss the tools in groups and in plenary sessions. They were also able to have first hand information from IRC staff who had tested some tools and could provide recommendations for improvement. A link between the tools and the strategy for their implementation was established and the set of tools was reorganised in a coherent sequence as a toolbox.

The tools are now better known and appreciated by Streams of Knowledge network partners and an effective information package for their marketing will be prepared and translated into Spanish and French. The Streams of Knowledge members are furthermore in a better position to facilitate the use of all the tools developed because of the workshop.

⁶ It should be noted that the applicability of the various tools corresponds to different stages of development of a resource centre. These four stages or phases include:

- **Primary support** - where the resource centre with the support of a 'stronger big brother', having identified its strengths and weaknesses, sets about changing things within the organisation.
- **Disengagement** - when the centre through its self-improvement has achieved a level of competence such that a 'big brother' who has supported the endeavour is able to gradually move out.
- **Maturity** - when the resource centre becomes a fully autonomous centre capable of playing the big brother role to another potential centre.
- **Assessment** - When a resource centre is capable of self-assessment to review critically its progress and in turn assesses the impacts that it has had on the sector.

3.4 The Streams of Knowledge Toolbox

The Streams of Knowledge Toolbox comprises a set of 12 tools meant for use by water and sanitation resource centres willing to participate in a process of further improving their performance and their partnerships.

The 12 tools are named after the purposes they serve via:

1. Diagnostic study
2. Understanding the resource centre concept
3. Assessing resource centre potential
4. Gender scan
5. Consolidating resource centres
6. Improving electronic information services
7. Evaluating effectiveness of resource centres and their partners
8. Self-assessment
9. Improving management and control functions
10. Quality assurance
11. Impact assessment
12. Joint action planning and learning

Each one of the tools is presented in the Toolbox according to a standard outline: a brief presentation, its target, when and how to use it, how the tool was developed, its conceptual framework and the reference used as a basis for its preparation (see Box 6). The tools are designed to be helpful instruments that do not require extensive budgets for their application and, most important, that result in a learning process. The tools can be used in sequence or separately, depending on the level of advancement of the resource centre and the objectives they want to achieve.

Elements of the toolbox, if not its entire contents, will also provide useful pointers to other sector organisations who wish to strengthen their capacities.

Most of the tools are to be used in participatory workshops, focus group discussions or meetings. A main facilitator, linked to the Streams of Knowledge Regional Alliances, will guide the activities assisted by a member of the organisation itself.

Each tool is presented individually in the following sections.

3.4.1 Diagnostic Study

The diagnostic study is the first step an organisation takes to engage itself in the strengthening process. The study describes the organisation and its specific features, and serves to indicate whether the centre already has some of the features that are common to resource centres active in the water and sanitation sector. The study follows a standard outline to allow comparisons and facilitate formulation of a common information base. The preparation of the diagnostic study by the centres also helps each centre understand their main characteristics and reflect on their potentialities and weaknesses. It is a good starting point for a process of organisational strengthening. The resulting organisation profile is meant to be used firstly to evaluate a centre's readiness to enter the Coalition at

a targeted membership level and secondly, to be used as a basis for planning the next strengthening steps offered by other tools in the toolbox.

Box 6 Typical outline presentation of a tool: Understanding the resource centre concept

<p>What this tool is all about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the concept of resource centre for water and sanitation, at local, regional and international level • Getting interested in joining the Streams of Knowledge coalition
<p>For whom it is meant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual organisations that build sector capacity, or are sector knowledge bases or already existing centres of excellence, and have expressed their interest and commitment to becoming resource centres in the Streams of Knowledge coalition or regional alliances
<p>When to use it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participating organisation has already expressed their willingness and commitment by having prepared the diagnostic study • Depending on the circumstances, this tool can be used right before and even in the same week as tool 3: <i>Assessing the potential of a resource centre</i>
<p>How to use it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a workshop for around 15 staff of the organisation; specially designed for the purpose; facilitated by an experienced facilitator, member of the Streams of Knowledge coalition – preferably of the alliance secretariat in the region • If necessary, a resource person member of the coalition will be present to discuss conceptual issues with the participants • One or two facilitators from the organisation will assist. They must be familiar with the concept of a Streams of Knowledge resource centre
<p>Expected result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resource centre type and mission is defined • Characteristics of the centre are made clearer, even for the centre themselves
<p>How it was developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by Guillaume Patricot of IRC, initially as a module of a more comprehensive tool meant to strengthen resource centres and their partners, later formalised into an independent tool
<p>It's conceptual framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streams of Knowledge concept of resource centre • IOM – Integrated Organisation Model • The organisational framework: the sustainability cluster
<p>Reference base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allaoui, S. (1999). <i>A Synthesis of 11 Case Studies</i>, (Paper presented at the International workshop on RC development processes and experiences, Delft, 14-18 June 1999). • Bastemeijer, T., Streams of Knowledge (2001). <i>The Global Coalition of Resource Centres in the Water and Sanitation Sector</i> IRC-STREAM document • McIntyre, P. (2000). <i>Streams of Knowledge : the role of water and sanitation resource centres in closing the gap on unmet needs</i> . Delft, The Netherlands, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. Available at: http://www.irc.nl/pdf/stream/booklet.pdf • MDF (1999). <i>Inventory of analysis instruments for local governance.....</i> • Fowler, Alan et al. (1995). <i>Participatory Self Assessment of NGO Capacity</i>. INTRAC, United Kingdom, Occasional Papers Series Number 10

Source: Streams of Knowledge Foundation, 2001a.

3.4.2 Understanding the Resource Centre Concept

Understanding the resource centre concept is a general introductory tool that will help those who go through the exercise to understand the added value of a network and the general framework guiding the Streams of Knowledge Coalition and the Regional Alliances. It describes the need for knowledge sharing as an integral part of capacity building. It outlines the requirements to become a resource centre in the Regional Alliances of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition. It provides an understanding of the 'Water for People' Vision and the need for community-oriented approaches while operating a gradual shift towards integrated water resources management. Through workshops and plenary discussions, the tool highlights other key characteristics of a centre and includes an identification of the type of resource centre the organisation is or could become, and areas for improvement and organisational strengthening that refer to the criteria for a Streams of Knowledge resource centre. Applying the tool should result in a favourable internal environment for change. Its main outcome is that management and staff understand the concepts promoted by the Streams of Knowledge Coalition.

3.4.3 Assessing Resource Centres' Potential

The assessment stage, through interviews and interactive workshops, is designed to assess those issues that are normally difficult to assess, concerning the potential performance and changes to be effected within organisations before they are incorporated into the Regional Alliances of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition. The tool can be applied once the staff of the organisation concerned have understood the concept of a resource centre, and the organisation has taken the first steps towards applying resource centre principles. The assessment may result in a decision about progress made in this direction and lead to a step-wise strategy for a process of strengthening the organisation. The outcome will provide an insight into the potential partner needs to become an effective member of the coalition.

3.4.4 The Gender Scan

The Gender Scan guideline was developed as a tool for resource centres to better understand themselves and to address their strategic issues to improve their performance on gender-sensitive practices. It seeks to raise questions and put issues on the organisational agenda for discussion to enhance the transformation of the rhetoric on gender to practice in reality. This is based on the premise that the extent to which any organisation is willing and able to promote a gender-sensitive approach in the context of its work, is to a considerable extent dependent on gender-sensitive practices within the organisation itself. It can set off a process of internal change with regard to gender mainstreaming, that means ensuring that gender-sensitive practice becomes routine in all aspects of the organisation's work rather than confined to the work of particular staff or to small and specific project interventions. This will help to improve the quality of its activities, services and products. The techniques used are questionnaire surveys and interviews with staff of the resource centre.

3.4.5 Consolidating Resource Centres

The tool Consolidating Resource Centres deals with identifying and improving the internal factors that affect the functioning of resource centres. It contains the following

objectives to be met: be perceived as a centre of excellence; function within the WS&S sector as a memory bank or knowledge base; and have financial and administrative autonomy. This tool can be used to assist resource centres to formulate detailed action plans in areas where weaknesses have been identified.

3.4.6 Improving Electronic Information Services

The guidelines in the Electronic Information Services tool may serve the development of electronic information services for individual resource centres (Oosterveen, 2000). However, their value will increase if they are being used in a workshop in which several resource centres participate. Such a workshop demands three main capacities of the facilitator(s): knowledge and experience in the strategic development of (electronic) information services, knowledge and experience with basic Internet tools, didactic skills and experience with the facilitation of workshops. The workshop design is a mix of training and practice. It includes development of a profile of the organisation, defining a communication policy, establishing the potential of the electronic media, Internet use in the organisation, management of electronic information, criteria for good web sites, web site design, use of other electronic media and action planning.

3.4.7 Evaluating Effectiveness of Resource Centres and Their Partners

In evaluating the effectiveness of resource centres and their partners the focus is placed on the external factors and actors that affect the ability of resource centres in securing and increasing their foothold and impact on water supply and sanitation and integrated water resource management. It is meant for resource centres wishing to scan their environment to measure demand for their services, and who wish to establish effective strategic partnerships. It is about developing better partnerships and stronger networks to increase the effectiveness of resource centres in their efforts to build capacities in the sector. For maximum effectiveness the tool is used with mixed groups of participants, where a few potential resource centre staff are present with a few of their partners with whom they wish to work more effectively. It incorporates processes for evaluating markets and resource centre environments such as strategic sector analysis, niche management, impact assessment, and partnership development. This is the only tool in the Toolbox where other stakeholders and actors besides the (potential) resource centres participate, as the methodology is based on the premise that resource centres will invite various actual and possible (partner) organisations or clients to the workshop.

3.4.8 Self-Assessment Guide

The self-assessment guide is applicable to resource centres in the water and sanitation sector. Its aim is to provide an indication of the extent to which organisations function like a Streams of Knowledge resource centre. The tool introduces a methodology of self-evaluation for resource centres which is based on the Balanced Score Card (BSC) methodology. It is a multidimensional tool that describes, implements, and administers a strategy, affecting all levels of organisation because it links the objectives, the vision and the measurement with the global strategy of the company. Integration of management indicators with the results facilitates self-evaluation. The management indicators have been developed to reflect the five perspectives of a resource centre's performance:

financial, clients, key processes, learning and growth, and administration. They allow resource centres to determine their current level and on the basis of this analysis propose further improvements. A step-wise multi-criteria analysis based on a framework for self-assessment is included. However, this tool can be useful only to resource centres which have all the basic systems in place and have a well-organised management cycle.

3.4.9 Improving Management and Control Functions

This tool is designed for potential resource centres that do not have effective management and control systems in place but have identified issues and potentials for strengthening their management control functions. The tool will provide them with the means for improving the quality of their services, and increasing their ability to contribute to the effectiveness of the knowledge sharing and capacity building network. It starts by presenting the characteristics of sustainable systems or organisations, using the classical models of management cycles. It then introduces to the participants some other creative ways of looking at the organisation structure, such as the ‘holographic organisation model’ with double loop learning cycles, which are more specifically applicable to resource centres and link up to earlier tools in the toolbox. The outcome is an action programme for management development and quality improvement.

3.4.10 Quality Monitoring Guidelines

The quality monitoring guidelines help organisations to regularly improve their ability to deliver quality services and products, assuring that they meet the clients’ – partners, stakeholders – needs and requirements. The tool proposes to apply principles of continual organisational improvement (ISO 9000) and gives examples of how to tailor quality management guidelines to the specific situations of resource centres. It presents examples of process diagrams and accompanying formats to be used to monitor the steps in service delivery.

3.4.11 Impact Assessment

The impact assessment guide is meant for resource centres that are reasonably well established and deliver a number of products and services. Assessing the impacts of resource centre activities and products on the sector is by far the most ambitious of the tools envisaged. Quantifying impacts is difficult because impacts cannot always be linked directly to the actions undertaken. Impacts in the sector may be due to the combined effect of many different interventions of which those of the resource centre are just one. The resource centre, through individual projects and programmes, has an impact on the specific beneficiaries and target groups. These would be the specific impacts. In addition, through their research, advocacy, knowledge sharing, advisory role, institutional capacity building, etc., resource centres would have a wider, more global impact on the sector that is not quantifiable through specific projects or targets, but which would be reflected through the general health of the sector. Identifying indicators that quantify these benefits is not simple.

In this tool, training, research, advisory, documentation and other products and services of a resource centre are examined in the light of their direct or indirect influence on

changes occurring at policy, organisation and community levels. The tool is complementary to the quality assurance tool in the sense that it verifies if the service is delivered as defined, and if this has the required effect (i.e. is the information used). At the other end, the results of impact assessment (or effects of products and service delivery) can provide useful input to taking quality assurance measures, and provide information for self-assessment.

3.4.12 Joint Action-Planning and Learning

Recognising that providing advocacy and capacity building support to the sector is more and more a matter of co-operation, efforts have been gradually made to strengthen networks of resource centres. This is the purpose of this last tool: to contribute to more effective networks, and to make sure that their strategies use the strength of the various partners. It presents a guideline for joint strategic action-planning and network development for regional and national alliances of resource centres. Important here is effective capacity building, institutional strengthening and human resources management. This would reflect the desired state after going through all the earlier stages. The approach used favours the development of well-working partnerships, i.e. those of equal standing, where all the organisations involved strengthen themselves.

3.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has focused on some of the fundamental aspects of how the resource centres are being strengthened through the development of tools to assist them in serving their objectives and playing their role better. In the following chapter emphasis will be placed on how individual resource centres can establish synergies through the development of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition of Resource Centres.

Chapter 4: Moving forward: building a Global Coalition of Resource Centres

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give an insight into the structure and functioning of the Global Coalition of Resource Centres and how it can contribute towards achieving Vision 21. In the first part, an overview of what is meant by the Global Coalition is given and the structures constituting the Global Coalition are described. This is followed by the mission of the Coalition, its objectives and the code of conduct. The Global Coalition is then placed within a larger framework in connection with Regional Alliances of resource centres that are emerging. The issue of fundraising is addressed as well as how to evaluate and gain donor interest. Finally the strategic aims of the Coalition for the following three to five years are discussed.

4.2 Building the Global Coalition of Resource Centres

The Streams of Knowledge Coalition of Resource Centres in the Water and Sanitation sector was launched during the 2nd World Water Forum. After the successful launch it was decided to give the Coalition legal status. The purpose of obtaining legal recognition of the Coalition was to ensure transparency of decision-making partners, giving equal status to all partners, and to make fundraising possible and plausible. Two types of legal models were explored: the association model and the foundation model. It was decided that the foundation model was more applicable. According to the statutes, powers of decision could be vested with the Coalition partners, while the Management Board could retain overall responsibility for financial decisions, policy formulation, and representation of the Coalition/Foundation⁷.

In the process of obtaining legal status for the Global Coalition, members of a first Management Board have been nominated, and Coalition partners have signed a memorandum of commitment that formalises the partnership and commits the partner organisations to building the Global Coalition, and to strengthening the Regional Alliances. During the first meeting of partners in February 2001, elements for the strategy for the coming five years were identified jointly.

To briefly recap its origins, the STREAM Project was conceived as a vehicle to strengthen resource centres to play a role in capacity building in the sector and, with the dawning of Vision 21, to embrace its principles. At a meeting in Delft, the Netherlands, in June 1999, the Project brought together some leading resource centres from across the

⁷ Report of the Sounding Board Group meeting, Cali, Colombia, October 2000

world and they agreed to form a Global Coalition of Resource Centres to build this movement world-wide, through international collaboration and through regional networks. A core group (then known as the Sounding Board Group-SBG) was formed to take this work forward and, on the occasion of the World Water Forum in March 2000, launched the Coalition.

Under the guidance of this core group, the STREAM Project has evolved from being simply a project into a global process covering several regions of the world. It is structured to be democratic and transparent, and the partner organisations remain the real decision-makers in this process. An important objective of the Coalition is to build and strengthen Regional Alliances, as is discussed later in the chapter.

Based on an analysis of sector needs, the Coalition is developing core programmes on priority themes or combinations of themes. Through these programmes the Coalition will develop a profile and professional image (a 'brand'). These programmes need careful planning to ensure that the Coalition creates its niche successfully.

Box 7: Global strategic elements

The Global Coalition shall develop strength by its unity on the one hand and by its diversity (in subject focus, types of services offered, and of geographical spread) on the other. The Coalition shall encourage collaboration between member organisations to maximise availability of services and materials in the three working languages of the Coalition namely: English, French and Spanish. Individual member resource centre strategic plans will include the following elements:

- Support capacity building by acting as facilitators
- Form a self-sustaining network for synergies
- Develop sustained partnerships
- Adopt a demand-responsive approach
- Adopt a pro-active approach
- Facilitate access to information
- Act as a knowledge base and collective memory bank
- Act as a centre of excellence
- Be innovative
- Apply integrated water resource management principles in the water and sanitation subsector
- Mainstream gender issues and apply gender and equity principles

Source: Streams of Knowledge, 2001b.

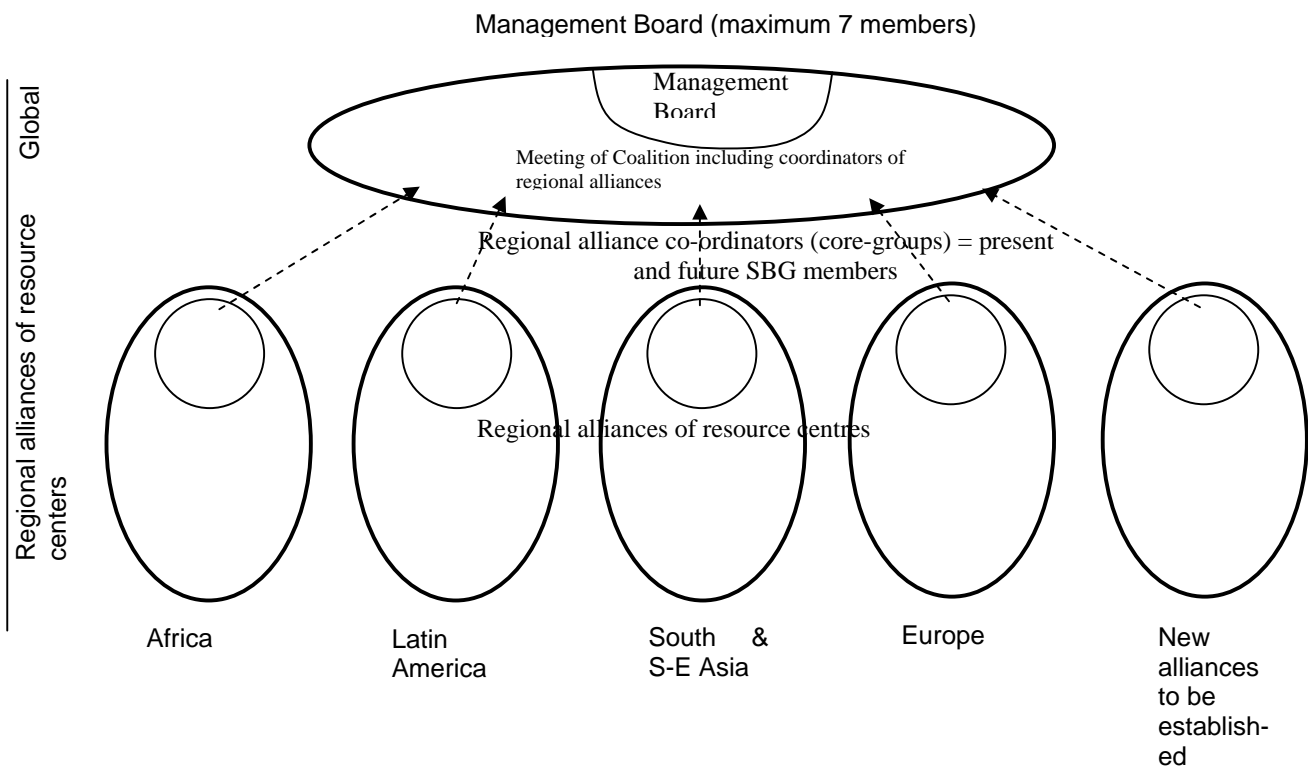
4.3 Structure of the Streams of Knowledge Foundation

The initiative to establish Streams of Knowledge as a Foundation was the result of the momentum generated by the original Project (which was managed by IRC) and the support it has received from the participating resource centres. After legal registration of the Foundation, the Meeting of Partners will formally replace the Sounding Board Group. It will henceforth be a body composed of the members (Organisations) of the Coalition.

In addition, there will also be a Management Board composed of persons appointed by the Meeting of Partners. The Foundation will appoint an Executive Secretary who will for the time being be a senior staff member of the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre.

As IRC is hosting the Executive Secretariat of the Coalition, it will offer logistical support to the functioning of the Secretariat, enabling it to remain small. The Executive Secretary will co-ordinate the programme but direct responsibility for specific programme components may be delegated to specific Coalition members. The Foundation will sign an agreement with IRC and with other partners to designate roles and responsibilities. With time as the network grows and the number of activities increases, it is anticipated that the Secretariat will have to be expanded to a small team including a fundraiser and a project officer.

Figure 2: Structure of the Streams of Knowledge Foundation



Source: Adapted from SBG Report. October, 2000.

The Foundation represents the most flexible and adequate legal arrangement under Dutch law, which will respond to the needs of the Coalition. The official name chosen is: the Streams of Knowledge Foundation. It is composed of three bodies (Management board; Advisory Board; Meeting of Partners or Coalition Meeting), whose roles and attributes can be determined more clearly by the first Management Board and which can evolve over time.

The Management Board (MB) is composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven persons. To start with, the Management Board is composed of four members. These members are nominated for an initial period of three years with only one re-election for another four-year term. Two of the four members retire after a two-year duration.

An Advisory Board will be created which supports and advises the Management Board. Its composition is left open.

The Meeting of Partners (the organisations that form the Global Coalition of Resource Centres) replaces the Sounding Board group. The Meeting of Partners is meant to include a number of RCs from different regions, reflecting the global character of the Coalition. In the Meeting of Partners or the Global Coalition, members would be institutions, not persons. The Meeting of Partners can be given the power to appoint or dismiss some or all of the Management Board members.

4.4 Mission of the Global Coalition

The mission of the Global Coalition of Resource Centres is to ensure equitable access to, and enhance use of, information and knowledge and to facilitate informed decision-making, capacity building and action learning, thereby helping to close the gap on unmet needs.

The added value of a coalition is that it can act as a forum for sharing of information and expertise, and actively encourage discussion of issues of mutual concern among member organisations. A coalition has the following advantages:

- International representation and leadership
- Synergy of action
- Improved advocacy
- Collective marketing
- Solidarity

A coalition also ensures that members maintain quality of products and services by subscribing to core values and standards.

Box 9: Principles of the mission

The mission is rooted in the following principles:

- Achieving equitable knowledge sharing and access to information
- Focusing knowledge where it can help to build capacities
- Learning from and with others inside and outside the Streams of Knowledge network
- Using and promoting participatory methods with the aim to serve the interests of the poor segments of the global community and enhance gender equity
- Sharing and jointly maintaining a sector memory and knowledge base and making these accessible to community-based and intermediary organisations
- Ensuring global access to quality information using the Internet
- Encouraging and assisting people and organisations to access and use this information
- Crossing language and geographical barriers
- Providing good quality professional services that combine the above elements

Source: Streams of Knowledge. 2001c.

4.5 Objectives of the Coalition

There are a number of objectives that the Global Coalition has set up for itself. These include:

- To provide leadership to a global network of resource centres in the water supply and sanitation sector.
- To represent internationally the network of small and larger resource centres, established in different parts of the world, and operating in the water and sanitation sector.
- To provide guidance for the development of tools and methods to improve the management of member organisations, increase their effectiveness and their impact in the water and sanitation sector.
- To advocate for the vital role of resource centres in support of capacity building in the water and sanitation sector.
- To promote the principles guiding the behaviour of resource centres in the performance of services to clients.
- To enhance the image of resource centres through the maintenance of high standards of competence and professional performance.
- To improve the marketing of services and products offered by resource centres.
- To raise funds to help community-based organisations and local support institutions in developing countries to gain access to and learn to use sector information and knowledge, and assist them to connect to the Internet.
- To raise funds for action learning and knowledge transfer programmes to make people benefit from their own as well as other experiences.

4.6 Code of Conduct

A code of conduct expresses the principles fundamental to the behaviour of Streams of Knowledge Resource Centres and their staff, thereby inspiring client confidence in the services and products of resource centres.

Box 10: Code of conduct

We shall promote equal opportunities for women and men irrespective of their age, status, income, culture or religion in dialogue and decision-making as an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, policies and programmes. We shall neither offer nor accept remuneration of any kind that in perception or in effect seeks to affect our independent judgement. At all times, we shall uphold the dignity, standing and reputation of the Coalition of Resource Centers. We are ready to comply with the auditing procedures established by our Coalition.

Source: Streams of Knowledge, 2001c.

The code of conduct of the Streams of Knowledge is based on the following ideals:

- **Responsibility to society**

Resource centres accept the responsibility to assist people in developing countries in achieving a good quality of life, which is centred around the provision of safe and adequate water and sanitation, and a hygienic environment. At all times, they shall seek long-term solutions to address fundamental issues and needs, and so contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

- **Independent judgement**

Resource centres shall adopt an objective, unbiased and independent judgement in the provision of services to clients. They shall encourage informed decision-making in the performance of services.

- **Partnership approach**

Resource centres shall endeavour to work in partnership, favouring joint co-operation and mutual support among the members of the Coalition. They shall seek synergies with individuals, institutions and private enterprises which share the same principles.

- **Competence**

Resource centres shall maintain knowledge and skills at the forefront of developments in the sector, and apply due skill, care and diligence in providing services. Each member of the Coalition shall strive to position itself as a centre of excellence in its area of specialisation. The management of resource centres will ensure that centre staff have adequate time and resources to upgrade their skills. Resource centres shall perform services only when competent to perform them.

- **Accountability and transparency**

Resource centres shall neither offer nor accept remuneration of any kind that in perception or in effect seeks to affect their independent judgement. At all times, they shall uphold the dignity, standing and reputation of the Coalition of Resource Centres. Each individual member organisation shall comply with the auditing procedures established by the Coalition of Resource Centres.

4.7 Framework for networking and forming Regional Alliances

A key concern of the Global Coalition is to provide support to evolving Regional Alliances. The following section describes the type of Regional Alliance which currently exists.

4.7.1 Regional Alliances

Regional Alliances are the mechanism that the Coalition/Foundation will use to get closer to grassroots organisations. Regional Alliances based on networks will each include a range of countries, sufficiently diverse to include a variety of experiences but similar enough to make joint work possible. The Regional Alliances each have a facilitating core group. Several regions have been demarcated: West and Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Latin America, South and South-East Asia, and Europe. It should be noted that efforts are on-going in North Africa.

The success of the Streams of Knowledge network depends on the existence of a committed core group who share a mission, and on a dynamic secretariat. However, given the variety of conditions and organisations in different parts of the world, the Management Board decided to decentralise the secretariat's activities with a view to establishing regional sub-networks. The potential advantages of the resulting decentralised network structure are several:

- Greater flexibility in decision-making and operation and adaptability;
- Greater commitment of network members in different regions;
- Greater compatibility of languages and cultures for higher effectiveness;
- Lower costs of communication.

Regional Alliances recognised and supported by the Global Coalition will have an autonomous status and operation guidelines but their members share the mission and objectives of the Global Coalition. Regional Alliances aim to reach out and interact with national networks and with local institutions that play intermediary capacity building and advocacy roles. Each Alliance will determine criteria for membership with a view to maximising the effectiveness of resource centres in achieving their mission in the respective regions.

The process leading to establishing the Coalition has succeeded in raising the profile of resource centres in the sector. The rather open definition adopted for resource centres has invited much interest from a large number of diverse actors and stakeholders from the sector who wish to join the Alliance as members and benefit from it.

In formalising Regional Alliances it becomes critical to be clear about what characteristics qualify an organisation to become a regular partner. The ideas presented here make a distinction between organisations which are sector resource centres and those which are the sector actors and stakeholders. Sector actors and stakeholders have roles to play within the sector that are distinct and different from those of resource centres. Including them calls for larger networks which serve the wider purpose of knowledge sharing with a membership representing the future clients and beneficiaries of resource centres.

4.7.2 Financing the Coalition

Having determined the importance of fundraising for the life of the Coalition and associated resource centres, it was decided that a fundraising strategy should be commissioned through professional consultants. By means of a questionnaire, interviews and discussions with key members of the Coalition, several issues and challenges were identified on the basis of which marketing aims and fundraising objectives were set.

Based on this report it became clear that a fund raising strategy should primarily be driven by an assessment of potential funding sources. It showed that research concerning needs and motivations had to be done. A portfolio of projects and activities should be developed, while creating a profile about the people and institutions that matter in the sector.

In addition to existing bilateral and multilateral funding sources, trusts and foundations can become a main source of funding. Existing partners, contacts, and corporate enterprises can contribute through donations but also through making expertise available or allowing the use of their network. Partnerships can be established at global, regional and national levels with public and private sector involvement. To ensure coherence, the Coalition can take a leadership role in fundraising and develop global programmes that could include capacity building at regional and national levels.

The Box 11 indicates some of the main successes and challenges of the existing fundraising activities in the Streams of Knowledge Coalition.

Box 11: Challenges to fundraising by resource centres

- Diversity of organisations with different cultures, histories and evolutions.
- Organisation and accountability choices - deciding who does what and where.
- Need to balance local flexibility with benefits of globally co-ordinated approaches.
- Need to find equitable start-up and revenue funding.
- Challenge to develop fundraising expertise (internal).
- Limited number of skilled international fundraisers available (external).
- Challenge of fundraising for the coalition v. building the fundraising capacity of the resource centres.
- Need to create powerful fundraising communications to convey overarching need with wide ranging and complex cause(s) and inter-related issue(s).
- Challenge of demonstrating direct outputs from funding inputs. Funders rarely simply give to organisations or funds and even more rarely to individual recipients as opposed to organisations.

Source: Burnett Associates, 2000.

Fundraising also consists of research activities (identifying needs and potential), as well as negotiations and capacity-building of skills at different levels. The fundraising researcher and negotiator are not necessarily the same person.

4.7.3 Guidelines for evaluating donor interest and project portfolios

Finally, in addition to developing a fundraising strategy, the members of the Coalition also focused on a set of guidelines which could be used to convince donors of the value of their ‘investments’. These guidelines include the following:

- **Effective measurement** of social impact in terms of local outputs and global outcomes.
- **Leverage of investment** - for every \$100 invested, how much can it help encourage other funders to invest more?
- **Influence** - will the funder perceive the Coalition as a leader in the sector?
- **Involvement or personal contacts** - most high value donations will be made to organisations or individuals who have already built a relationship of trust. High value donors often value being involved in an advisory capacity prior to being asked to invest. This allows them to gain an insight and evaluate risk.
- **Ease of engagement** - high value funders will aspire to find one central contact that can act as their key contact and advisor on water projects at a global and local level. There are few truly global organisations currently operating in this area. If Streams of Knowledge can provide this contact they will gain support that others are unable to secure.
- **Local relevance** - corporate multinationals and trusts with regional criteria will be looking to invest in projects which fit their exact geographical locations of operation. Companies will often wish to involve staff locally directly in visiting or supporting the project at a local level.

Besides the above set of guidelines which STREAM could use to evaluate the likely interest of donors, the members of the Coalition have also focused on developing a

Project Portfolio document which identifies a series of projects from existing and planned activities, with measurable inputs and outputs. The Project Portfolio document is put together in such a way that projects are grouped and ‘packaged’ into thematic programmes which may be of interest to funders. This type of document is a means for promoting the Coalition to potential funders in easily communicable terms before entering into detailed discussions about securing funding. This also gives the opportunity for funders to be able to choose from a number of selective topics, while still maintaining the continuity and direction of a specific theme. Funders may either fund a specific project or an entire programme.

4.8 Strategic aims for the coming years

The strategic aims of the Streams of Knowledge Global Coalition for the coming three to five years can be summarised as follows:

- **Making the Coalition a truly global one**

At this stage the Coalition includes partners from various continents. The aim is to widen the membership of the Global Coalition to include more regions in the world. Future members may come from Eastern Europe, the newly independent states, small island states, and the Mediterranean and Northern African regions. European resource centres will be encouraged to co-operate effectively to support resource centres and networks in the South.

- **Establishing viable Regional Alliances and national networks**

Various regional initiatives have already been launched. Building a strong functional network to scale up the operations of resource centres is essential to make a real difference to people in significant numbers. So, within a few years, Streams of Knowledge will show its presence and have demonstrated its concrete impact at the grassroots level in as many countries as possible. In each of these countries there will be at least one resource centre that will be a member of a regional Streams of Knowledge Alliance that will also be acting as a Streams of Knowledge focal point for that country.

The Regional Alliances of resource centres will work within a wider network of water and sanitation sector actors. Depending on the context and priorities in each of the regions, these other actors will be given active roles in support of the Streams of Knowledge initiative. Such actors may for instance become members of Advisory Boards. This will help to avoid duplication of efforts and make it possible for resource centres to use their comparative advantage to do work that others cannot or will not do.

- **Strengthening potential or upcoming resource centres**

Members of the Global Coalition will help strengthen existing and potential resource centres. The Coalition will form a group of facilitators who will provide organisational strengthening advice and support on a demand driven basis. This means that the organisations concerned will share the costs of the support provided. The facilitators will

use and further improve the various tools that have been developed under the first phase of the STREAM project.

- **Developing programmes and products with a ‘Streams of Knowledge’ seal of quality (brand name)**

Identification and development of good products and programmes under a brand name will show the added value of the Coalition and the benefits for the members of the Coalition. Existing products such as training courses by members of the Coalition may be selected or adapted to comply with the quality criteria underlying a brand.

These products and programmes will focus on key areas that relate to putting Vision 21 to action. Hence, the Streams of Knowledge Foundation will position itself as an important partner of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. A key condition for success is that communications and language gaps are bridged for instance by staff exchange, language courses and by using capacities for translation that exist in various countries. Electronic information links and a common knowledge base will be fully established among the members of the Global Coalition, and to a lesser degree among the regional networks.

- **Developing a clear identity and diversifying the funding base**

The Streams of Knowledge Foundation should develop a clear identity and financial autonomy allowing it to operate independently. It will seek to demonstrate and communicate its added value. Fundraising research will be carried out to identify potential strategic partners. Sensible promotion and relationship marketing will be at the core of a fundraising operation to be planned as one of the main activities of the Streams of Knowledge Foundation. The total of revenue flows established after three years should make the Streams of Knowledge Coalition self-sustaining, and enable it to provide seed money for certain projects or activities undertaken by Regional Alliances.

4.9 Concluding remarks

The Streams of Knowledge Global Coalition is one of the key stakeholders in assisting and serving the water and sanitation sector. In this chapter a detailed overview of how the Global Coalition works in practice has been described in some detail. This chapter has focused on explaining the various dynamics that take place in the Global Coalition as well as its potential in the future.

5. Epilogue

The Streams of Knowledge initiative is an ongoing dynamic process and therefore has no end in the context of this document. It has evolved over time and is still evolving. It is a learning process for the participating centres, who for the first time have tried to work together at the global level to achieve a greater goal. It is hoped that the lessons learnt from this exercise will help other resource centres to understand their roles and responsibilities better and to avoid the pitfalls that these initiating resource centres have faced.

In many ways this has been a process of self-evaluation and understanding by the resource centres themselves. This has not been the type of project where an external agency has analysed, interpreted and provided recommendations for the resource centres to act upon; rather it has been a painful process that the resource centres have undergone, sometimes singly sometimes together, to get to where they are.

Developing a set of tools for use by resource centres is a case in point. This was an activity which was recognised as essential by all the resource centres who felt that weaknesses within their organisations had to be addressed and their skills improved. To this end the type of tools required were identified and each participating centre volunteered to develop one or more tools. They were developed initially as individual resource centres using their own personal experiences but keeping the general picture in mind. The tools were then reviewed for clarity and coherence within each tool but also in relation to the other tools, and put together in a comprehensive toolbox which should hopefully respond to a felt need. The task is not ended, however. As more resource centres use the Toolbox, they will identify other tools which need to be developed and added to the existing kit.

Even while this paper is being written, new activities are coming on-stream; this paper is therefore incomplete and always will be. But what is important is that the information it contains can be used by resource centres globally to gain a better understanding of themselves and the sector environment in which they operate.

List of Acronyms

AMREF	African Medical Research and Education Foundation
CFPAS	Centro de Formação Profissional de Aguas y Saneamento
CINARA	Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Agua Potable, Saneamiento Básico y Conservación del Recurso Hídrico
CREPA	Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement
GARNET	Global Applied Research Network
GAMWORKS	Gambian Agency for the Management of Public Works
IPD-AOS	Institut Pan-Africain pour le développement- Afrique de l'Ouest/Sahel
IRC	IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre
ITN	International Training Network
IWEE	Institute of Water and Environmental Engineering (TuT)
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
IWSD	Institute of Water and Sanitation Development
NCWSTI	National Community Water and Sanitation Training Institute
NEDA	Netherlands Development Assistance
NETWAS	Network for Water and Sanitation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NWRI	National Water Resources Institute
PCWS	Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation
PRONET	PRONET resource centre
pS-Eau	Programme Solidarité Eau
RCs	Resource Centres
SEUF	Socio -Economic Unit Foundation
SKAT	Fachstelle der schweizerischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit für Technologie-Management (Swiss Centre for Development Co-operation in Technology and Management)
STREAM	Study on Resources and Management
TREND	Training, Research and Networking for Development
WS&S	Water supply and sanitation
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
TuT	Tampere University of Technology

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