

**Sanitation and Water for All (SWA):  
Preparing for the future**

**SWA Progress Review**

**Final Report**

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## Acknowledgements

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## Glossary

AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
AQUAFED	International Federation of Private Water Operators
BPD	Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CPTT	Country Processes Task Team
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DGIS	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FANSA	Freshwater Action Network
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GLAAS	Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water
GF4A	Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply
GMTT	Global Monitoring Task Team
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GWP	Global Water Partnership
HLCD	High Level Commitments Dialogue
HLM	High Level Meeting
IHP+	International Health Partnership
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Center
JMP	Joint Monitoring Program
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRI	National Planning for Results Initiative
RBM	Roll Back Malaria
SACOSAN	South Asian Conference on Sanitation
SC	Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SE4All	Sustainable Energy for All
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMM	Sector Ministers Meeting
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
UN	United Nations
UNC	University of North Carolina
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WatSan	Water and Sanitation
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WSA	Water and Sanitation for Africa
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

## Executive Summary

Since its inception in 2009, the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Partnership has established itself as an important global brand for universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation. It has two key outcomes: to ensure improvement in the targeting and impact of resources for sustainable sanitation and drinking water; and to strengthen the mutual accountability of governments and development partners. To achieve these aims SWA centers its activities around three priority areas: increased political prioritization for the WASH sector; promotion of a strong evidence base for improved decision-making with convergence around global monitoring frameworks for WASH; and support for strong national WASH frameworks.

With around 90 partners drawn from country constituencies, donor agencies and multilaterals, academia and civil society, SWA engages in an ongoing High Level Commitments Dialogue (HLCD) and a biennial High Level Meeting (HLM) of global decision-makers with a focus on key water and sanitation issues. As a result of these activities, SWA is viewed as an increasingly important convening mechanism that enables the WASH sector to position itself among development priorities.

As it moves into a more mature phase of its development, SWA now needs to ensure that its structure and systems are fit for purpose, and that it is well-positioned to play a role in the post-2015 development agenda. This progress review aims to assist SWA with this transition process by providing recommendations for how it can best achieve its overall mission going forwards. In order to do this the review team has explored SWA's efficiency, effectiveness and impact in relation to three key areas: vision and purpose, strategy and governance arrangements.

### Vision and purpose

Whilst SWA's vision is clear, a central finding of this review is that growing expectations of SWA and contextual shifts in the global architecture around WASH, including the move from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as changes in the aid landscape, should be reflected more strategically within the Partnership. These changes are likely to influence the leverage points for SWA to have greatest impact, and have implications for the development of more robust country policy frameworks, investment plans, and ways of supporting the building of capacity. The SDGs in particular, with their emphasis on universal coverage, require the WASH sector to operate in a substantially more joined up manner. SWA has a clear role in facilitating that integration and coordination. The overarching framing of SWA thus needs to be revisited with a decision made about its precise focus and scope. With form following function, agreement on SWA's purpose should also inform a clearer strategy and appropriate governance arrangements.

In order to assist conversations about SWA's future direction, further exploration of a range of different partnership types and their modalities is recommended as a good starting point. Global partnerships such as SWA can be used to fulfill a variety of functions (to set standards and ensure accountability, to transfer resources, to provide alignment and coordination, advocacy or knowledge exchange functions). While they may deliver on a number of these, most global partnerships will have one main organizing function that then shapes participation and the expected contribution of partners, the governance modalities, the role of a secretariat function, etc. It is the review team's sense that this overarching function has not been agreed and clearly articulated within SWA and, as a result, the mechanics and incentives for partners to contribute are not sufficiently aligned or fit for purpose.

One potential key role, for which there was clear appetite across the wide range of interviewees consulted for the review, is for SWA to foster cross-country learning on practical solutions to overcome the challenges of service delivery in specific contexts. To do this, skills

and modalities are required within SWA that cluster countries, extract learning, and then package, structure and facilitate sharing between countries. Whether this is sufficiently ambitious for the partnership as a primary function, or could provide a transition space leading to a more ambitious positioning in the coming years, is a debate that needs to happen within the partnership.

### Strategy

While there is a clear logic to SWA's three core pillars, the review team believes that greater congruence and inter-linkages are needed across these different strands.

#### Increasing political prioritization

Effort in this pillar centers around the biennial High Level Meeting (HLM) and High Level Commitments Dialogues (HLCD). The HLM has gone from strength to strength, well surpassing expectations with ever more senior and varied participation from influential decision-makers. However, while anecdotal evidence suggests that there have been knock-on effects in different countries, closer scrutiny is needed in order to gain a better sense of the impact of the HLM on specific countries and how embedded these processes have become. Furthermore, as a challenge for SWA is around ensuring the alignment and quality of commitments through the HLCD process, the Partnership needs to determine whether it has the "teeth" to hold countries and donors to account for these commitments or to support national actors to monitor this effectively. SWA also needs to reconsider the sequencing of events that allows for commitments from external support partners to align with country priorities. Looking forward then, one would expect that the emphasis on the HLM would shift as other SWA activities, revolving around, for example, country commitments, country learning, and engaging with other sectors, become more targeted and effective. This shift to the country level notwithstanding, strategic discussions around design and participation in future HLMs are necessary to determine how to maintain its impetus.

#### Promoting the development of a strong evidence base

SWA's job is not to become a monitoring agent but rather to support the coordination of different monitoring frameworks that allows for evidence to be used most effectively by those in and outside the WASH sector. In order to do this, SWA works with the UN Water Global Assessment and Analysis of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS) and the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP). While there is increasingly good coordination between SWA, JMP and GLAAS as well as strong data collation and clear presentation of information, there is still work to be done to translate and feed in the data and evidence from this monitoring component to inform national and global levels.

#### Strengthening government led national planning processes

SWA's relationship to countries, beyond the commitments process, needs to be clearer. Ownership of SWA at the national level is critical and should be reflected in two ways: firstly, SWA as a global partnership should be "owned" by countries as expressed through the governance mechanisms and the activities, and secondly and *more importantly*, SWA should support best practice mechanisms for country processes that are then owned and respected by all parties active in the country. As each country will want to engage in different ways, SWA needs to be able to accommodate these differences.

There is near universal agreement that SWA should not focus only on the most off-track countries and, as a global partnership, needs to be more inclusive. To achieve this, SWA partners need to agree on a mechanism by which countries could categorize themselves, possibly on the basis of availability of capacity and resourcing, with emphasis on sharing approaches and understanding what works in different contexts. SWA partners also need to

consider how they should use the multi-stakeholder platform to debate and determine ways to “fix” the global architecture in order to respond to the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Interconnectedness between the pillars

While the component parts of SWA fit together intuitively as a theory of change and make a compelling case for a joined up approach to the problems that the WASH sector is seeking to overcome, further attention is needed to bring together the logic behind, and activities within, each component part or pillar. The ultimate goal for SWA is that country processes work. Thus a key question is whether SWA is the right mechanism to support country processes, and, if so, how it should go about this. With greater clarity on SWA’s overarching purpose, a robust business plan should then be developed that delineates the activities necessary to realize targets, and the resources and timeframes required for their achievement.

### Governance Arrangements

Further clarifying SWA’s purpose will assist in determining what overarching governance structure is most suitable. More emphasis should therefore be placed on debating emerging trends and approaches influencing the sector, particularly as these underlying currents have implications for who needs to be at the table and in what capacity.

### Membership

While SWA’s legitimacy is derived from its broad membership base, membership categories should be integrally linked with the direction that SWA chooses to adopt in the future with a priority on ensuring country engagement. To simplify and streamline SWA’s work, the review team proposes the adoption of two broad membership categories: Countries and External Support Agencies. The Country membership classification could include three sub-categories based on water and sanitation coverage in relation to the availability of (financial) resources and the availability of human capacity (i.e. low availability in each, emerging in resources but low in human capacity, emerging in human capacity but low in resources). External Support Agencies could include Funders, and Learning and Implementation Partners, including representation from local, national or global civil society. These categories would serve as the basis for nominating or electing decision-making representatives to the Steering Committee.

As WASH and aid agendas shift, it is also clear that more players need to be brought into the partnership as members. Potential partners include: a wider selection of countries; non-traditional donors, such as non-DAC and BRIC countries; private sector groups and coalitions; academia; national and local civil society groups; and local government bodies. It is widely recognized that SWA also needs to find ways to engage the World Bank more effectively, particularly with the emerging Global Practice on Water.

Discussion around new members should revolve around the “value proposition” potential partners might derive from being more engaged in SWA and through what kind of mechanisms they should participate. These questions rely upon careful analysis of the incentives for new partners to join SWA. With expansion of SWA, the development of new membership guidelines that include more specific criteria for membership and codes of conduct will also be necessary.

### Decision-Making

#### The Chair and Vice Chair

Having a key politician such as H.E. John A. Kufuor as Chair has enabled SWA to open doors at various levels. The former Ghanaian President and ex-Chair of the African Union has clearly been an important, albeit perhaps less than optimally utilized, asset.

The Vice Chair role, meanwhile, clearly requires greater time dedication and should potentially be a part-time paid post, in essence with the ability to act as an executive head of SWA. As the current Vice Chair comes to the end of his term of office, this seems an opportune time to explore new options and to establish a clearer remit for this position.

### Steering Committee

While the wide representation of the Steering Committee promotes inclusivity, it is clearly too large, complicated, cumbersome and slow. The review team feels that it would be difficult for the Partnership to select a small Executive Committee at this stage and recommend instead a smaller Steering Committee comprised of no more than 17 people with representation from a Vice Chair, the host organization (UNICEF), nine Country representatives (potentially with three members from each country membership category comprised of two government representatives and a civil society representative from each), and six External Support Agency representatives.

The review team proposes that roughly two-thirds of the Steering Committee membership should be elected (excluding the Vice Chair and the host representative), while the remaining members should be nominated or co-opted directly. As a functioning Steering Committee requires both representivity and a range of expertise and skills, direct nominations should ensure that the right representatives are chosen to provide requisite decision-making support and oversight in line with the purpose of the partnership. In all cases representatives should serve a term of two years. Observer status should remain with the proviso that Standing Observers only attend Steering Committee meetings that have agenda items that concern them directly.

The review team feels strongly that the Steering Committee, as SWA's decision-making body, should have a stronger role in decisions around and oversight of financial allocations and staffing in order to effectively fulfill its governance function in driving the partnership. A final key recommendation is that the SWA Governing Document is updated, presented and shared across the Partnership.

### Task Teams

In order to ensure that Task Teams contribute effectively to the work of the Partnership, the review team recommends that a Strategic Oversight Group is established that includes Task Team Chairs, the Vice Chair, a representative from the Steering Committee and a representative from the host organization (UNICEF). This need not be a heavy-handed mechanism. The role of the Strategic Oversight Group would be to make sure that the component parts of the Partnership are speaking to each other sufficiently and ensure that Task Team work is shared regularly. To assist this process, good practice standards for Task Team operation should also be drawn up and adopted.

### Operational and Management Arrangements

#### Hosting in UNICEF

UNICEF is an effective host for SWA. The organization has unparalleled reach and is embedded in the system, particularly at this time of negotiations around the post-2015 agenda. Concerns around SWA "capture" by UNICEF seem generally unfounded as any host institution of a global partnership is likely to influence day-to-day procedures and decision-making.

The risks that UNICEF has taken by hosting the Partnership and putting its credibility on the line generally go unrecognized by SWA partners. UNICEF's brand is closely associated with SWA and works very much in support of the Partnership. However, as the initial benefits of convening power and neutrality as a host have been exploited at the global level, UNICEF's strengths as a partner, particularly in terms of reach and influence, also now need to be

tapped into. With a clear hosting mandate, it is also incumbent upon UNICEF to guarantee appropriate staffing and line management in an increasingly complicated operating environment for SWA; ensure that transparency around budgets, funding and contracting is maintained; and transmit clear signals of SWA's relative independence and brand (which would be further supported by a stronger Steering Committee).

### **Secretariat Structure and Capacity**

The responsibilities of SWA's Secretariat appear to have grown rather organically and opportunistically. While the relationship between UNICEF and WSSCC works well (with WSSCC contributing to the communications aspects of SWA), a business plan based on a revisited purpose and greater clarity around pillars or components would determine the roles, skill sets and areas of expertise the Secretariat should provide vis-à-vis, and as delegated by, the Steering Committee. The Coordinator role is central to reinforcing SWA as a primary hub for WASH globally, particularly as an interlocutor between the WASH sector and other sectors in a post-2015 world. The review team thus proposes that the Coordinator's job description is benchmarked against other similar initiatives. At the same time, while it is recognized and appreciated that senior consultants bring added capacity and expertise to the Secretariat, greater clarity might be needed around their role and contribution to the work of SWA.

### **Value for money**

Further efforts should be made to analyze value for money. As SWA and its operating environment and activities become more complex and sophisticated, it will need to invest more resources in facilitating a "pooled action" approach even if it does not directly pay for the individual actions of SWA members. Basing the Partnership primarily on loosely structured volunteerism should not be considered as a viable way forward. This also suggests that, in addition to UNICEF and WSSCC, SWA might benefit from more formally bringing in other parties to support the Secretariat. This would help to reduce transaction costs and allow for more dynamic and responsive approaches to opportunities as they present themselves.

### **Institutionalization**

The review team believes deeper engagement and a sense of ownership by partners requires greater clarity on SWA's usefulness for their work and an understanding of exactly what is expected of them to achieve SWA's goals. In line with a clearer SWA purpose and strategy, an analysis of actual partner contributions should be carried out in order to understand who is bringing what to the table and how these contributions can be maximized and made fit for purpose. Institutionalizing SWA more effectively into the sector also means ensuring that individual partner representatives are of a senior enough level, or fully supported and mandated, to take action on behalf of their organizations. More systematic efforts and avenues for dynamic exchange among SWA partners and stakeholders at national, regional and global levels will also assist in mainstreaming SWA within the wider development system and in relationship to its potential contribution to the SDGs.

### **Sunsets, Trajectories and Exits**

A conversation about what success looks like for SWA, how partners will get there, as well as how they will know when they have achieved it, is crucial to ensuring that the Partnership works more efficiently and effectively. As well as clarity around expected impact, this will help to ensure that governance and operational arrangements are appropriate for working towards a clear set of goals. Partners will then be able to think about how to expand or narrow down the remit of the Partnership.

There is huge appreciation for the potential of the SWA Partnership and much recognition for what it has already accomplished in terms of advocacy and convening power. As the Partnership moves forward, a core premise of the review is that further facilitated debate needs to happen within SWA to chart the way forward, with attention paid to three key core areas:

- Vision and purpose: What is a realistic yet ambitious contribution from a networked entity like SWA going forward?
- Strategy: How can SWA most effectively put countries at the center of its approach?
- Governance: How can SWA ensure effective and strategic governance while embedding the Partnership's purpose and strategy in partner organizations?

In an increasingly sophisticated landscape, SWA needs to be managed in a flexible way so that it can better respond to opportunities as they arise. With solid leadership from an effective governing body and a Secretariat with sufficient delegated authority and capacity, the review team believes that SWA will be able to forge ahead more confidently and make an important contribution to the achievement of universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

## 1. Assignment summary

### 1.1. Rationale and purpose

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Partnership has grown rapidly since its inception in 2009 and is now keen to consolidate robust, fit-for-purpose systems that demonstrate both credibility and commitment to continuous improvement. The central aim of this review is to strengthen the SWA Partnership with recommendations for how it can better achieve intended outcomes and overall mission. In order to do this an appraisal is provided of how the Partnership is working in the following key areas:

- SWA's strategic direction and relationship to other processes
- Progress towards achieving objectives (Impact)
- Logic and appropriateness of existing activities, operational management and governance arrangements (Effectiveness / Efficiency)

The review seeks to draw out key lessons relevant to each of these areas and provide recommendations on specific ways to help SWA better achieve them. These recommendations are woven across the three categories throughout the document.

The review team has based their enquiry upon a set of two underlying assumptions:

- That partnership effectiveness is based on the degree to which partners (a) contribute to decision-making and (b) deliver on their agreed contribution;
- That the context in which partnerships are operating are dynamic and thereby frequent review is necessary to understand:
  - how the basis of legitimacy changes over time and thereby what shifts or transitions may be necessary,
  - under what circumstances the partnership can claim success (or defeat) and thereby what exit strategies can be put in place, and
  - how mechanisms and practices can be institutionalized and embedded thereby making the partnership unnecessary going forward.

With these assumptions in mind, the team has sought to explore and emphasize:

- The SWA Partnership's strategic direction in relation to the landscape in which it is operating with an assessment of contributions in its three key priority areas.
- Partner incentives and the extent to which the Partnership is "embedded" within and across different partner organizations through an understanding of the risks and benefits of participation.
- Accountability within the Partnership and the extent to which systems and procedures are in place for ensuring that partners deliver on their stated contribution (compliance), that they receive and share information in a timely manner (transparency), and that they are heard (responsiveness).

### 1.2. Methodology

The data used to inform the progress review was gathered from the following sources:

- **SWA document review:** examination of key documents produced by SWA, including annual reports, media notes, governance and planning documents, reviews, rapid assessment notes, newsletters, etc. The review also used the outcomes of the two SWA visioning exercises as 'insider' intelligence for exploring key issues.

- **Broader literature review:** study of relevant documents produced by SWA partners, as well as materials relating to other global partnerships in order to make comparative insights.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** confidential interviews with some 60 stakeholders from the following groups:
  - SWA Partners (including management groups and individuals)
  - Joint Monitoring Program (JMP), Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) and other key players in the global monitoring environment
  - A selection of country representatives from both government, civil society and local UNICEF offices
  - Partners engaged in the SWA National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) country dialogues
  - Wider stakeholders working in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) or development sectors
  - Representatives from other global partnerships
- A range of **less formal conversations** with a wider set of stakeholders in the WASH sector.
- **Attendance at meetings:** the review team were able to study SWA processes in action and talk to participants during the following events:
  - Partnership Meeting, Geneva, November 2013
  - Sector Ministers' Meeting (SMM), Washington, April 2014
  - High Level Meeting (HLM), Washington, April 2014
  - Steering Committee Meetings, Geneva, November 2013 and Washington, April 2014

The information garnered from these different forms of data was triangulated and synthesized to produce this report. The findings were then shared with SWA stakeholders at Stockholm World Water Week 2014 in an open feedback forum and a Steering Committee meeting. The Review team has made every effort to incorporate the feedback into this report.

### 1.2.1. Limitations and Caveats

**1. The review methodology:** The initial intent of the review team was to engage in a participatory and facilitated discussion process aimed at sharing findings as they emerged and testing different assumptions. This approach proved difficult due to timing and sequencing issues. A core premise of the team's work is that further facilitated debate needs to happen within SWA to chart the way forward. This document aims to provide sufficiently triangulated analysis to foster these more strategic discussions.

Consulting numerous stakeholder groups was a key part of the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1). As such, the team sought tangible evidence of impact but many of the findings are largely based on interviewee perceptions. These perceptions have been combined with data from written materials with analysis based on the team's experience and knowledge of both the WASH sector and other global partnerships.

**2. Review scope:** The review team is well aware that SWA, its components parts and its partner organizations are working in an incredibly wide variety of ways to progress commitments towards delivery of WASH in poor communities. Whilst every effort has been made to understand and encapsulate this broad spectrum, the reader will appreciate the limitations of exploring every aspect of how SWA is organized and SWA partner activities in detail. In line with the review team's Terms of Reference this report focuses on aspects of SWA that could be strengthened and potential ways to do so. It does not provide a catalog of achievements, which is left for SWA's more public facing annual reports and brochures. It is

also important to note that since starting the review work the initial tasks requested of the team expanded exponentially, effectively increasing expectations of the assignment well out of proportion to a responsible mandate.

**3. Country level information gaps:** The team did not conduct country visits and was thus unfortunately unable to view processes in action directly and verify impact at this level. To compensate for this gap and triangulate perceptions, efforts were made to interview different stakeholders in a number of countries. Communication challenges limited the quantity and quality of the interview process with country representatives. These impediments were combined with the generic (and common) challenge of ascertaining how far country-level impact or change mentioned by interviewees could actually be attributed to SWA. As a result, the review team was also somewhat constrained in their efforts to conduct a counterfactual analysis that looked at what the impact on global sector performance might be if SWA did not exist.

**4. Comparison with other global partnerships:** With regard to benchmarking against other global partnerships, while this is a useful exercise, the review team found that the relevance of such pointers required a sharper logic of inquiry that could practically only be framed once this review had been completed. Although efforts have been made to derive lessons and recommendations from comparative review, the team believes that SWA needs first and foremost to further refine a spirit and set of objectives for the partnership in order to ensure that such comparisons are meaningful. The review team has aimed to draw out issues relating to appropriate choices in the report.

**5. Style and tone:** The review team would like to stress that, while the tone of parts of the report may appear somewhat critical, the overarching purpose is to strengthen the SWA Partnership and support it to achieve greater impact. From the start there has been a perception by the review team that SWA was seeking permission through the review process to be able make changes that would enable it to forge ahead more confidently. In some ways, this reflects an endemic set of issues over how the Partnership is managed and what it does. Hopefully the review has captured these succinctly in the sections below.

### 1.3. Document structure

This report starts with a brief overview in Chapter 2 of SWA and its origins, aims and achievements to date. Chapter 3 then examines the Partnership's vision, framing and purpose and how this sits within the changing global architecture around WASH. Chapter 4 reflects on the strategy for achieving SWA's purpose with an assessment of each of its three priority areas and the connections between them. Chapter 5 is centered on governance issues relating to membership and decision-making while Chapter 6 looks at operational and management arrangements, including the work of the SWA Secretariat. Chapter 7 looks at some generic issues that the review team believes are important for consideration, including: accountabilities within SWA, institutionalization and embeddedness, and deliberations around scenarios for transition and possible ending. Each chapter captures the main findings on the topic covered; analyses the issues raised; provides key questions for SWA going forward; and then makes recommendations for short-term changes. To develop the topics further, the review team has also made use of some broad relevant findings from other global partnerships. The final section of the report provides overarching conclusions, and a summary of key recommendations

#### 1.3.1. Note to the reader

Most of the views expressed in this report have been carefully aggregated from interview transcripts. To allow for as much objectivity as possible from what has largely been a

qualitative exercise, no views are put forward that were not expressed in some derivation by a wide range of people. The only exception is where an idea or solution (rather than a viewpoint) was put forward by an interviewee. That said, the reader should note that in very few instances were perspectives significantly different. By and large, there was a great degree of congruence between respondents.

Our assumption is that the reader will have some familiarity with SWA, the WASH sector, global relations between relevant players and the development aid landscape.

Key findings have been highlighted in bold and then reflected in recommendations that are underlined in the text and summarized at the end of each section of the document. All major recommendations have been collated in a summary table at the end of the document.

## 2. Brief Background on SWA

### 2.1. Origins

The SWA Partnership emerged from discussions in 2006-7 between the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) regarding the need for better coordination of the global WASH sector. These conversations were conducted against the background of moves to improve aid effectiveness,<sup>1</sup> the publication of the UN Human Development Report (2006) *Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*,<sup>2</sup> and DFID's call for a Global Action Plan on water.<sup>3</sup> The Global Action Plan sought to determine mechanisms to overcome fragmentation in the sector by appealing for "five ones": one annual global monitoring report, one high level global Ministerial Meeting on water, one national plan for water and sanitation at country level, one coordinating body, and one UN lead body to coordinate the activities of UN agencies in water and sanitation under the UNDP country plan.<sup>4</sup>

The concerns shared by DFID and DGIS were strengthened by supporting research and strong endorsement from the INGO WaterAid. A proposal was thus made for a coordinated WASH platform that would forge greater aid effectiveness in "off-track" countries and fragile states experiencing difficulties in achieving MDG safe drinking water and basic sanitation targets.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply (GF4A) was created.<sup>6</sup> Alongside the enhancement of political commitment for sustainable access to sanitation and water, the GF4A also called for improved targeting of external resources to countries in greatest need, and better use of existing resources for national sanitation and water supply plans.

In 2009, the GF4A became Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). This change reflected a desire to create a global partnership model for WASH similar to those that had emerged for health and education.<sup>7</sup> In these cases, coalitions of multiple interest groups had developed advocacy and oversight mechanisms that promoted general progress on policy issues or MDG targets through country pledges and commitments. Decision-makers, including ministers of finance, came together in high-level meetings to discuss how resources might be raised and allocated for these goals. Such a focus was strongly supported by many donor agencies in a shift to improve governance and ensure more sustainable outcomes by moving away from project aid to more joined-up thinking and, in many cases, direct budget support for national country plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)

<http://effectivecooperation.org/files/resources/Paris%20Declaration%20in%20Brief%20ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr\\_2006\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2006_summary_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/human-dev-report06.asp>

<sup>4</sup> Sanitation Policy Background Paper, Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity, DFID Sanitation Reference Group: *Sanitation Policy Paper*, 2007

<sup>5</sup> MDG target 7C calls for halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015 <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/enviro.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/GF4A\\_Flyer\\_18sept09.pdf](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/GF4A_Flyer_18sept09.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> These included the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), now the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the International Health Partnership (IHP) – now IHP+.

## 2.2. SWA at a glance

### 2.2.1. Goals and priorities

SWA has established itself as a global partnership for universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation. It has two key outcomes: to ensure improvement in the targeting and impact of resources for sustainable sanitation and drinking water; and to strengthen the mutual accountability of governments and development partners. Its objectives are centered around three Priority Areas:

1. Increased political prioritization for sustainable sanitation and drinking water
2. Support for effective decision making by providing detailed information and evidence on sanitation and drinking water
3. Support for strong national sanitation and drinking water planning, investment and accountability frameworks

### 2.2.2. Governance arrangements

SWA currently has around 90 partners drawn from country constituencies as well as donor agencies and multilaterals, academia and civil society. The Partnership's management and operational structure includes:

- A Chair and Vice-Chair who provide high-level direction.
- A Steering Committee (SC) with representatives from the different membership constituencies that holds decision-making authority and oversees SWA activities. The SC has a minimum of 14 and maximum of 32 members who are elected for 2-year terms.
- A Secretariat that reports to the SC and carries out specific and defined tasks for SWA activities. The Secretariat is hosted by a partner organization and UNICEF has assumed this role since September 2010.

With regard to finances, a host agency-donor agreement governs funds with global agreements that are negotiated according to Government and UN regulations. Budgets are reviewed and endorsed by the SC. Donors then provide funds to the endorsed budget through either UNICEF or the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Most donors accept the proposal made to the SC as the basis for funding agreements and expenditure reporting is carried out at least annually.

### 2.2.3. Activities

In order to achieve its outcomes and priorities, SWA conducts the following activities:

- An ongoing High Level Commitments Dialogue (HLCD) includes a biennial High Level Meeting (HLM) of global decision-makers with a focus on key water and sanitation issues. Three HLMs have taken place to date (in 2010, 2012 and 2014). The HLMs are convened by UNICEF and hosted by the World Bank. At the 2012 HLM, over 400 commitments were made to address barriers to sustainable sanitation and water services. An additional 379 Commitments were made at the 2014 HLM.<sup>8</sup>
- SWA partner meetings are held biennially to review progress and set future directions. One senior level official delegate per partner organization is encouraged to attend.
- Support is provided to the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Report in an effort to draw attention to, and promote greater

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/commitments#sthash.8mhi22fo.dpuf>

efficiencies around critical WASH issues on the basis of improved evidence-based mechanisms and a clear sense of who is doing what and where.

- Delivery of the National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) and broader country process activities are in place in about 45 countries to promote aid effectiveness principles in the WASH sector, strengthen national leadership and planning, and document and share good practice in improving the effectiveness of aid and domestic resources.

#### **2.2.4. Key achievements**

SWA's key achievement is the creation of an increasingly recognized, referenced and sought after brand. The Partnership is widely perceived as a valuable global platform for the sector with a growing membership base (90+ partners), significant potential and no clear global competition.

Positive attributes highlighted by interviewees include its concerted efforts to promote coordination and collaboration in the sector, and its ability to bring together a wide range of different sector players due to its multi-actor partnership nature. The High Level Meeting (HLM) is a unique and increasingly important convening mechanism that attracts and galvanizes high level players, particularly ministers of finance, and gives the WASH sector a clear positioning among development priorities.

The High Level Meetings have gone from strength to strength culminating for the moment in the recent meeting co-convened by UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, an obvious coup for the sector. Whilst it is difficult to put a clear value on this activity, the HLM promotes coherence in the sector (often hidden to those within it) and attempts to convey relatively simple messages to outside audiences that often get lost otherwise. Through its communication efforts, SWA has also been able to capably capture technical aspects for non-technical audiences in a professional and meaningful way.

### 3. Vision and purpose

Whilst the vision of Sanitation and Water for All is clear, a central finding of this review is that growing expectations and a changing context require clarification of SWA's purpose. The team's premise is that form should follow function and that agreement on SWA's purpose will inform clear strategy and appropriate governance arrangements.

#### 3.1. Overarching goals and expected outcomes

SWA's main aim is to ensure universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation. In order to achieve this, the partnership seeks to:<sup>9</sup>

1. Support high level processes around development financing strategies and frameworks which are broader than ODA,
2. Focus on achieving universal access to sanitation and water services with improvement in the targeting and impact of resources to ensure sustainability,
3. Support the development of strong and robust national processes and real compacts between stakeholder groups,
4. Engage and communicate between global-regional-local levels and between regions on issues that strengthen service delivery, and
5. Support a process of mutual accountability between governments and development partners.

#### 3.2. Brief overview of the changing context

To achieve the goals outlined above, SWA seeks to engage different actors with a particular focus on government players and, in these initial years, an emphasis on ministries of finance. However, the move from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and subsequent changes in the aid landscape **require attention by SWA. Such contextual shifts in the global architecture around WASH are likely to influence the leverage points in different contexts and have implications for the development of more robust country policy frameworks and the building of capacity.**<sup>10</sup>

WASH is central to the post-2015 development agenda. Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is situated as Goal 6 in the recent draft of 17 SDGs.<sup>11</sup> The proposed goal clearly positions WASH within a broader water agenda that includes water resources, wastewater management and issues of water quality.<sup>12</sup> In many ways, this outcome requires the WASH sector to find ways to work more externally with other sectors. For many, the perception is of a WASH sector that has, over the years, focused most of its energies internally, debating the merits of different approaches to resolve the lack of access to sanitation and water in poor communities. There is increasing recognition, however, that service provision in poor communities cannot be seen in a vacuum. The WASH sector requires support and commitment from other influential forces, most of which operate well beyond the control of WASH sector professionals.

Whilst dialogue and debate has increasingly been occurring across different stakeholder groups within the water sector (public sector, civil society, donors, private sector, academia, etc.), a stumbling block for the sector has been its inability to forge coherent arguments that engage the housing sector, the health sector, the education sector, those focused on land, and importantly, the finance sector. With SWA as a clear example, this is changing with more

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<sup>9</sup> Based on / adapted from materials from SWA Steering Committee - Visioning day, 30th April 2013.

<sup>10</sup> See Sitali & Revell de Waal (March 2014)

<sup>11</sup> <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1801stissueswater.pdf>

joined up efforts of various groups active in the sector but, in the context of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, there is still much work to be done.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, efforts to reach universal access will require a quantum leap in the way the sector is organized, how stakeholders work together within it, how it innovates and institutionalizes solutions that work, and then how it reaches out to work with others outside the sector.

With regard to development finance and the aid landscape, it is clear that ODA will remain critical and a conversation in many countries is still very much warranted about how best to implement the aid effectiveness agenda. That said, for most countries, government / sector finances are becoming increasingly more complex. New donors and different kinds of investors are emerging who are willing to finance infrastructure on terms that are far more acceptable to recipient governments, at least in the short term. This is challenging the influence of traditional donors (DFID, DGIS, USAID, etc.). At the same time, various themes are emerging from these more traditional donors that are certainly mutually compatible but perhaps not yet completely aligned like rights based approaches, the sustainability of projects with an emphasis on Life Cycle Costing,<sup>14</sup> Results-Based Financing<sup>15</sup> and decentralization and subsidiarity.

Many countries, often in efforts to reduce aid dependence, are also now focused on drawing more deeply on mobilizing domestic resources, primarily through improved collection of tariff and tax revenues. In this scenario, donor finance is proposed for those sectors that cannot easily generate their own resources, with domestic resource mobilization and ODA working together to promote greater accountability of national governments to both citizens and donors.<sup>16</sup> While more research is necessary to fully understand this trend, calls for further mobilizing domestic resources are likely to require support for strong country policy frameworks and the building of capacity.<sup>17</sup>

A further contextual consideration is the emerging shift in, and reorganization of, the World Bank. With President Kim's clear emphasis on poverty alleviation and the more systematic collection and use of global knowledge towards that end, the World Bank's projected role and contribution is expected to change. How quickly the culture of the Bank will take to align with these changes remains to be seen but this revised emphasis includes clear agreement that collective support for countries is critical to achievement of the SDGs and to overcome equity gaps between the rich and poor.

### Review findings

There was uniform agreement among interviewees that SWA needs to remain focused on improving access to WASH services in poor communities. Many, however, think that against a background of wider political agendas and the setting of the SDGs, SWA should provide an active platform that engages or coordinates engagement with wider water and development issues.

With regard to the aid landscape, a large number of interviewees suggested that SWA's general focus on the donor-recipient dynamic was useful but limited. Several suggested that

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<sup>13</sup> WaterAid usefully highlights... the WASH sector's lack of influence particularly around budget processes in comparison with their counterparts in health and education with "an impact on the priority accorded to the sector and its ability to obtain resources... See WaterAid (November 2011).

<sup>14</sup> <http://green.harvard.edu/topics/green-buildings/life-cycle-costing>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rbhealth.org/resource/new-way-finance-health-worlds-less-developed-nations-results-based-financing-can-get-20>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/6FD41B9BB6628328C1257CD300556010?OpenDocument>

<sup>17</sup> <http://devinit.org/policy-briefings/aid-domestic-resource-mobilisation-much/>

this was an old-fashioned way of viewing the issues at hand and needs to shift as a function of changing donor modalities, new entrants investing in infrastructure under different rules, and, most importantly, shifting in-country allocations to infrastructure and services. Some suggested that the focus on donor-country government alignment distracted the focus away from the real issue whereby countries need to be accountable to their own people. Others suggested that, whilst once incredibly important, the focus should be less on “how many miles of pipeline you are going to dig” but on how external agencies are going to support the enabling of in-country counterparts to get on and do the work. This is a function of increasing in-country resources and capacity. Many felt that countries are starting to see the need to finance more in sectors that could pay for themselves in other ways than through government borrowing and with less reliance on overseas assistance, for example via more in-country delivery, private sector spend, greater household spend, etc. Reflecting the views of a number of interviewees, one respondent stated that SWA involves “the right people but perhaps in the wrong conversation.”

Organizationally, although it was understood that using donor contributions in country more effectively forms an appropriate entry point, a number of interviewees suggested that the Northern/donor dominance and lack of ownership and voice of target countries makes SWA insufficiently rooted. Some interviewees suggested that the context is challenging for SWA given fragmented vested interests (that for many institutions perhaps strategically revolve around staking a claim that leads to profile and/or funding opportunities) and the sense that “all organizations need to do everything.” These factors may be preventing SWA from most effectively playing a coordinating role, fostering learning or offering broadly agreed solutions to WASH challenges. Thus the overarching advocacy is strong but with apparently limited practical effect; the data can be aggregated but perhaps without sufficient detail to know what to invest in; and the country processes work proves extremely challenging (with limited resources) to find patterns that recommend a clear and agreed approach. In this context, some questioned whether SWA was ambitious enough whilst others suggested that SWA was too ambitious given the partnership’s current resources and capacity (as opposed to the combined resources of the partners individually).

#### **Moving forwards: Analysis and pointers**

The initial framing of SWA was clearly around engaging off-track countries that were not likely to meet the MDG targets. More recently, however, the focus appears to have shifted to those without basic access more generally. **While the vision is clear and will reflect the emerging Sustainable Development Goals, the review team recommends that the overarching framing of SWA needs to be revisited with a decision made about its precise focus and scope.** At the moment, SWA is rooted in a rather unequivocal set of advocacy messages about the need to ensure that people have access to safe sanitation and clean water. Through SWA, the sector does speak with one voice in general terms about this challenge. What has yet to occur, however, is consensus within the sector of the primary vehicles to achieve access that underpins this overarching advocacy. Accepting the nuances of specific contexts, the challenge is that there is no predominant paradigm or set of solutions that fully galvanizes the sector at this point in time.

Whilst it is not clear how SWA in its present format might provide an overarching platform that engages with wider water and development, SWA could and probably should in the future clearly play a focal point role for other parts of the water sector or wider development issues. SWA’s efforts to engage in the aid effectiveness agenda may be instructive here and should be reviewed more systematically. (Guidance can also be derived from other global partnerships as to how they liaise with and seek to influence other sectors.) While admittedly perhaps a couple of years off, SWA could become the “go-to” grouping on WASH. This, however, will require investments in time and energy to build coherence beyond a focus that is primarily on

engaging with ministers of finance. Sub-messages for how other sectors can engage with and need the WASH sector would also need to be clearer.

The review team was keen to identify an organization / stakeholder landscape mapping that would help position SWA in the WASH landscape. As this was not forthcoming, the review team recommends that SWA should undertake a light mapping exercise to look at who does what in the WASH sector, how and with what kinds of resources, etc. This would assist in identifying the gaps that SWA could fill and then who is best placed to contribute what resources and capacity to SWA's purpose.

This may more clearly frame SWA efforts towards a coordination function, if that is what is ultimately determined as SWA's key purpose. Whilst there are organizations who contribute to each component part, the SWA partnership lacks any clear competition from other institutions in the sector who could deliver on this same integrated and coordinating approach. Whilst some components are clearly stronger than others, SWA's proposed role is thus unique in the sanitation and water service delivery sector(s). At present, SWA is the closest that the WASH sub-sector of water has to a central hub such as that played by WHO in the health sector or UNESCO for education. However, because the water sector remains fragmented, a coalition is needed that forges the linkages within it between "big water" and WASH.

With regard to the aid landscape, the reviewers are not development finance experts and putting greater clarity on this issue is beyond the scope of the assignment. Thereby the team can only reiterate what appears to be a sensible set of conclusions drawn by a wide range of respondents from across different geographic locations, stakeholder groups and levels of seniority. In this respect, **a key message is that the donor-recipient conversation is too simplistic.** While aid is clearly important, new agendas and new entrants distract from a focus on SWA's commitments processes. The more complex world needs to be reflected in initiatives like SWA. As reinforced by Sitali and Ravell de Waal (2014), while work to improve aid effectiveness at country level is still very relevant and necessary for WASH sector stakeholders, this needs to be developed within an overarching partnership-driven process that incorporates aid effectiveness standards, milestones or indicators more clearly within the context of country systems reform – thus putting countries more at the center of SWA.

Again in view of these shifts, the review team recommends that the framing and purpose of the SWA Partnership should be revisited with dialogue among partners about what kind of partnership it should be. Global partnerships generally take on different spirits, require different capacity and resourcing, and derive legitimacy differently based on their purpose or function. Thus, in order to move forwards, partners will need to ascertain what kind of partnership there is appetite for and then determine what the implications of these decisions might be. In order to assist this process, a series of broad typologies and questions are offered below.

## Lessons from other global partnerships

### Partnership Typologies

Global partnerships generally take on different spirits, require different capacity and resourcing, and derive legitimacy differently based on their purpose or function. Some broad groupings include:

**Verification-based partnerships** focus on accountability, usually through standard and regulation/policy setting, and then certify compliance, e.g. the **Forest Stewardship Council** that certifies timber,<sup>18</sup> the **Marine Stewardship Council**<sup>19</sup> that provides standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability, or the **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)**<sup>20</sup> which uses an EITI Standard for countries to provide full disclosure of taxes and other payments made by oil, gas and mining companies to governments. These payments are disclosed in an annual report that is made publically available. The overarching spirit of such partnerships is that of conflict resolution and ensuring accountability through lengthy multi-stakeholder technical negotiations around what is feasible yet ambitious. Such partnerships need agreed mechanisms that allow for compliance to be measured in order for “labels” and the partnership brand to be applied.

**Resource transfer partnerships** make funding or other resources available to local or national projects and programs through grants, products, equipment or logistical support, e.g. the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) Alliance**<sup>21</sup> which offers funding for vaccines and health system strengthening support, and the **Global Fund**<sup>22</sup> which provides funding for health programs to fight AIDS, TB and malaria in more than 140 countries. As well as dissemination of knowledge and best practices in education, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**<sup>23</sup> also provides funds for the development and implementation of education plans in developing countries. The overarching spirit of such partnerships is that of offering recognition and reward to those projects, initiatives, organizations that meet set requirements of potential or previous achievement. Clarity around procedures for applying, nominating and awarding are critical as are the specific criteria on which basis awards are provided.

**Alignment and coordination partnerships** bring partners together to ensure alignment and coherence around an issue, and avoidance of duplication, e.g. the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation** which builds on a range of activities to enhance development co-operation, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action of 2008. Such partnerships are predicated on having a neutral and trusted convener and an inclusive platform with willing participants who see a clear benefit of being involved and even jointly owning the initiative. The coordination function is based on a comprehensive mapping of who is doing what that can be harnessed under different circumstances and then significant efforts to share information.

**Advocacy partnerships** highlight and draw attention to a specific issue or challenge. Examples include the **IHP+** partnership which seeks to mobilize national governments, development agencies, civil society and others to support a single, country-led national health strategy, and the **Roll Back Malaria (RBM)**<sup>24</sup> partnership which mobilizes action and resources, and builds consensus and cooperation, in the global fight against malaria. The key attributes of such partnerships are the consensus based nature of their messaging and that all members live up to or meet the codes of conduct / expected practices in line with messages advocated. In some cases, this challenge can result in lowest common denominator messaging as a trade off for inclusivity. Such partnerships need to have clear procedures for removing members that do not meet these expectations, lest the reputation of the partnership be damaged.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://ic.fsc.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.msc.org/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://eiti.org/eiti>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.gavialliance.org/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.globalpartnership.org/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/>

**Knowledge exchange partnerships** generate and share learning and innovation around particular themes, often with a view to finding new solutions for different challenges. An example is **Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation (BPD)**<sup>25</sup> which sought to strengthen cross-sector partnerships for the improvement of safe water and sanitation service delivery in un-served and poorly served communities. Such partnerships are based around efforts to facilitate dialogue between different stakeholder groups around emerging issues and solutions. Their spirit tends to be inclusive, progressive and exploratory.

**Implementing partnerships** put programs and projects in place through activities on the ground. Although most likely to be a localized partnership, a global partnership that is structured for this is the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)**<sup>26</sup> which works through country teams to implement a framework that improves the quality and effectiveness of agricultural sector programs. Clarity around roles and responsibilities yet flexibility to adapt to emerging contextual factors proves critical for such partnerships.

**Having reflected on the various types of partnerships described above, the review team’s sense is that there is a lack of clarity and a number of approaches have been melded together.** For example, whilst a commitments process has been put in place, there is not much desire at present from SWA partners to be a “naming and shaming” partnership that places clear expectations on partners and then takes action when expected contributions or commitments are not delivered. Whilst efforts have increasingly been placed on designing a more robust commitments process (discussed in more detail in the following chapter), efforts to validate that such commitments have or have not been met proves challenging for the partnership.

Adopting a coordination or advocacy partnership may most accurately reflect the current modus operandi for SWA. However, coordination requires a willingness to be coordinated based on the perceived benefits – potentially absent at a practical level from various partners sat around the table. An advocacy focus requires a disparate group of partners to act as a unified force, rallying around a set of messages (that ultimately need to go beyond how water and sanitation are important in their contribution to wider development goals). Different donor modalities and government interfaces also require partner organizations to draw attention to their own contribution to WASH as opposed to the blurred branding that emerges from more joined up approaches with other institutions. (In essence, there is an understated competition in the sector for primacy of voice, ideas and contribution. In all cases, partners must be able to claim or take credit for their contributions so as to be able to galvanize or satisfy their own constituencies and funders.) As for a knowledge exchange function, there might be some perceived competition between SWA and research/learning institutes but perhaps SWA’s function is more about exchanging knowledge with those outside the sector?

A second issue is the extent to which the SWA Partnership is or can be partner-led. This raises questions about how far the partnership is balancing North-South interests and whether countries are situated at the center of its work and how far SWA is embedded within different partner organizations. While more shall be discussed about this issue in later sections of the report, there are clear implications for the positioning of and requirements from a relatively strong Secretariat vis-à-vis partners as a result of what the partnership decides to do.

While discussion around options for SWA’s direction must be undertaken by partners, the review team notes that **many of the conversations revolved around SWA’s success as a convener and enthusiasm around shared learning.** If funding for different countries is not

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.bpdws.org/web/w/www\\_1\\_en.aspx](http://www.bpdws.org/web/w/www_1_en.aspx)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.nepad-caadp.net/>

necessarily forthcoming directly from SWA, the key incentive for them to engage, apart from profiling their progress, is to see SWA foster cross-country learning that offers real solutions to overcome the challenges of service delivery in specific contexts. To do this, skills and modalities are required within SWA that cluster countries, extract learning, and then package, structure and facilitate sharing between countries. Section 5.1 on Membership suggests that, as a result, SWA should have an inclusive approach that accommodates an expanding membership base.

#### Key questions

- What is the agreed spirit of the SWA partnership in relation to its intended purpose? Who bears what risks? What is the overarching appetite for risk?
- Depending on the above, which partners are needed to make this kind of partnership work?
- Where does legitimacy come from early in the Partnership and where might it come from as the Partnership develops?

#### **Vision and Purpose Summary of Recommendations**

- **The overarching framing of SWA should be revisited with a decision made about its precise focus and scope.**
- **SWA partners should undertake a mapping exercise to reflect who does what in the WASH sector, how and with what kinds of resources, etc.**

## 4. Strategy

### 4.1. Pillars of activity

At present, SWA combines the approaches of a number of other global partnerships in different sectors by seeking to raise attention through advocacy platforms for its set of key priority issues. It does this by creating a mechanism to foster accountability through country and donor commitments, seeking to bolster these processes with supporting information that is meant to both show and spur on progress, and then linking to core country processes to meet these commitments. There is a clear logic to this set of approaches. That said, the practice proves more challenging and, should SWA continue in this vein, a greater congruence and inter-linkages across the three pillars is needed.

The three Priority Areas are:

1. **Increasing political prioritization** for sustainable sanitation and drinking water through high-level advocacy that raises the visibility of the sector, leverages private sector resources and improves financing.
2. **Promoting the development of a strong evidence base** to ensure convergence around global frameworks to strengthen monitoring systems, increase transparency and improve decision-making.
3. **Strengthening country processes** through investment and accountability frameworks that assist strong national sanitation and drinking water planning with effective decentralization of services, increased coordination and the building of institutional and human capacity.

Each of these pillars is discussed in detail below with analysis of: overarching purpose, organization and resourcing, key achievements and sustainability of impact.

#### 4.1.1. Increasing political prioritization

A key element of SWA's focus is on increasing political prioritization to ensure that those without WASH services can gain access. The emphasis is thereby on increasing the visibility of the sector through high-level advocacy that is then meant to translate into increased resource allocations and greater coordination at the national level. Effort in this pillar centers around a biennial High Level Meeting (HLM) that brings together ministers of finance and ministers of water in Washington to focus on key water and sanitation issues. Three HLMs have taken place to date – in 2010, 2012 and 2014. It should also be noted that the HLM is not a standalone event but is the culmination of a series of High Level Commitments Dialogues (HLCD) in a wide range of countries that then determines national commitments aimed at enhanced investments and increased coordination in the WASH sector.

Convened by UNICEF and hosted by the World Bank, the HLM has gone from strength to strength, well surpassing expectations with ever more senior and varied participation from influential decision-makers. The contributions of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and World Bank President Jim Kim, and the presence of some 20 ministers of finance at the most recent HLM have suggested that WASH is a sector whose time has come.

#### Review findings

SWA's endeavors in this area are generally rated highly by all with most agreeing that this is where SWA adds most value. Along with the accompanying Sector Ministers Meeting (SMM), the HLM is generally viewed as "the" apex of the Partnership. Specific opportunities for greater sharing amongst participants, particularly among Ministry staff, were viewed very highly in the 2014 meeting.

However, it is worth noting that several interviewees questioned whether the commitments were in line with priorities emerging out of national processes. Some also suggested that the commitments process was taken less seriously by South Asian countries as SWA was still perceived as a predominantly African (rather than global) initiative.

### **Moving forward: Analysis and pointers**

Although the HLM has clearly contributed to visibility at the global level, the review team has not been able to understand systematically how the meeting provides takeaway messages and guidance that then shape external responses from non-WASH audiences, or country level processes or country spend. It has been difficult to ascertain whether the commitments made are more than just a recounting of activities and investments in which the countries are already engaged. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there have been knock-on effects at the international level and in different countries. For example, more emphasis on water and sanitation and a specific call for a stand-alone sanitation goal in the SDGs appears to have been triggered by the 2014 HLM. In Nigeria, the HLM of 2012 triggered a Presidential Water Summit held in February 2013. This was followed by requests at the State level for similar water summits. Whilst no further SWA support was needed or requested from the Government of Nigeria, providing that trigger at the national level is a useful indicator of impact for SWA. However, **closer scrutiny is needed in order to gain a better sense of the impact of the HLM on specific countries with a central focus on determining how embedded these processes have become.**

Solid efforts have been made for commitments to become SMARTer<sup>27</sup> in the most recent round of dialogues, with recognition that fewer more practical and more precise commitments will have the greatest impact on country processes. That said, a challenge for SWA is around ensuring the alignment and quality of these commitments.

As per the discussion in the previous chapter about the purpose of SWA, **the partnership needs to determine whether it has the “teeth” to play a monitoring role or to support national actors (like an NGO coalition) to fulfill this function.** Without this, the commitments process could become less meaningful without the ability to hold government and donors to account for providing evidence for progress on commitments. A process “with teeth” would suggest that there would be some kind of sanctions or penalty or cost for not delivering. As discussed elsewhere in this document, the spirit of, and participation needed, for a partnership around advocacy is quite different to that of a partnership that acts as a “verification agent” by validating commitments and potentially “naming and shaming”. At present, and in line with feedback from a number of interviewees, **there appears at present to be greater appetite for and comfort in advocacy positioning that may be the “path of least resistance”.**

SWA’s legitimacy is at present very much framed around the HLM and the ability of the conveners to bring high level participation from a range of countries. Looking forward a few years, **one would expect that the emphasis on this meeting would gradually reduce as other SWA activities become more targeted and effective.** Thus if the framing is maintained as at present around the three pillars, one would expect that SWA’s legitimacy would be based on its impact at the national level and its ability to translate successes in a few countries to impact in others. Sustaining momentum around the HLM (without ensuring parallel progress in other components or aspects of the partnership) seems somewhat unlikely unless further emphasis can be placed on sharing what works in different contexts.

This analysis in no way seeks to denigrate the huge success that was the 2014 HLM, the diplomatic maneuverings to organize the event, and the importance (for WASH practitioners

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<sup>27</sup> Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic and Time-bound

and policymakers) of the political and strategic platform that it provides. On the contrary, if there is agreement that HLMs should continue, then efforts are required to institutionalize it in senior decision-makers' calendars as an event that cannot be missed. To do this, **the review team recommends that strategic discussions around design and participation in future HLMs need to be had soonest to determine how to maintain its impetus.** In this regard, future HLMs could focus on specific themes and/or be augmented by, or more connected to, regional processes and convening rather than continue with what might seem to external audiences as "polite, somewhat repetitive global messaging about the importance of WASH".

With regard to the commitments processes, while they clearly provide a mechanism for getting governments engaged, these need to be unequivocally and carefully aligned to national strategies and priority setting processes. To be most meaningful as a global forum, commitments processes should be sequenced so that those offering external support can align and respond rather than operate in what appears to be a more disjointed catchall process. SWA should be encouraged not to view commitments in terms of quantity (400 in one round, 379 in another) but rather focus on the quality, alignment and potential for responsiveness from external partners.

#### Key questions

- Should the HLM be the primary vehicle for the partnership going forward?
- How can SWA better live up to its name – Sanitation and Water for All? Who thereby needs to be included in the partnership?
- How can governments be held to account for commitments made?
- How can we verify that messages are getting out to the wider world?

#### 4.1.2. Promoting the development of a strong evidence base

The aim of this pillar is to trigger attention to and promote greater efficiencies around critical WASH issues on the basis of improved evidence-based mechanisms and a clear sense of who is doing what and where. To do this, SWA draws on a relationship with two key global monitoring instruments: primarily the UN Water Global Assessment and Analysis of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS), implemented by WHO, but also the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP).<sup>28</sup> SWA's job is not to become a monitoring agent but rather to support the coordination of different monitoring frameworks that allows for evidence to best be used by those in and outside the sector.

#### Review findings

The reader should note that this is not a review of GLAAS<sup>29</sup> per se and that a more comprehensive look at how the Joint Monitoring Program (JMP), GLAAS and other monitoring instruments fit together in the sector is beyond the remit of this report / assessment. That said, SWA's connection and contribution to the global monitoring landscape as a key

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<sup>28</sup> <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/priority-areas/evidence-based-decisionmaking#sthash.8f4mReoN.dpuf>

<sup>29</sup> The GLAAS is a UN-Water initiative implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO). The objective of UN-Water GLAAS is to provide policy makers at all levels with a reliable, easily accessible, comprehensive and global analysis of the evidence to make informed decisions in sanitation and drinking water. UN-Water GLAAS highlights where efforts stagnate in achieving the water MDG. It also highlights the post-2015 challenges that need to be addressed by the United Nations system to collectively support its Member States.

component of SWA's approach is one of the subjects that generated the most disparity of views and confusion amongst interviewees. According to many, SWA's actual achievements in this area are quite mixed and have been somewhat slow to emerge. While the WASH sector's complex monitoring landscape is "calling out for harmonization," in reality more and more efforts are framed around governments and their national partners determining what specific information they need for national monitoring systems.

Thus while GLAAS is collecting data and reporting on it, a number of interviewees questioned: whether it was useful for SWA to encourage national governments to spend time contributing to a parallel "externally driven" global advocacy framing of WASH ("as a public relations exercise"); whether it provided enough guidance for "investment choices"; and whether it could have any chance of overcoming the inherent competition between systems and frameworks used by different institutions in the sector, including SWA members. Several interviewees noted that variation within and between countries makes the statistics rather irrelevant for implementers who, unless working somewhere new and using GLAAS in an initial context mapping exercise, suggested that they would get their figures locally.

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The overarching goal of this pillar is that through SWA a more holistic picture can be framed of where progress is being made and how SWA commitments fit into this bigger picture. However, greater clarity is certainly needed around these linkages, particularly if SWA takes on a more dynamic role in translating information into learning around key messages (this possibility will be discussed further below). At the national level, whilst monitoring processes are often quite weak, SWA's commitment processes, as noted elsewhere in this report, have not necessarily dovetailed with national priorities. Thus the monitoring of *SWA commitments* is bound to reveal a lack of progress that may not reflect what is really going on in the sector.

The review team noted increasingly good coordination between SWA, JMP and GLAAS as well as strong data collation and clear presentation of information. However, how much SWA, or indeed GLAAS, are influencing external actors (as to what they support and how) remains unclear and should be pursued further. In fact, whilst it was claimed that donors are using this information to shape their own global strategies, no concrete evidence came forward of this during the interviews or literature scan. Nor was there any indication that the information was influencing donor strategies at the national level. This aspect requires further review.

Apart from loosely monitoring SWA commitments, as discussed above, an actual deeper monitoring function is not seen as a role for SWA as a partnership, even if it does support standardization where possible and the leveraging of assistance where needed. Whether JMP, GLAAS or indeed SWA offer a capacity building function for national governments around monitoring might be a conversation worth having, but this should be conducted in the context of Joint Sector Reviews, WSP's Country Status Overviews as well as World Bank and other support.

How this will all fit into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SWA's ability to influence (through clear evidence of progress, need and commitments) the negotiations on water and related goals remains to be seen. By most accounts, although a number of SWA members have been heavily engaged, SWA as a partnership does not appear to have played a particularly high profile role in the post-2015 discussions. To this end, and more generally around data collection and analysis, working more closely with research and learning partners seems a logical requirement but these organizations will not be able to devote time and effort for this without dedicated resources or, at the very least, coverage of expenses.

Thus, with regard to how the SWA pieces fit together, **there is still work to be done to translate the data and evidence from the monitoring component into what needs to be done**

**at the national and global levels.** Recent efforts such as the TrackFin initiative<sup>30</sup> may be instrumental in this regard.

#### Key questions

- How can data and evidence be translated into what needs to be done at national and global levels?
- How can SWA's commitment processes be better linked to, and informed by, national priorities? (Are countries creating their own monitoring systems?)
- How can SWA use data to influence external actors?
- Where and how can opportunities for peer-to-peer learning be expanded? Is data the starting point for this?

#### 4.1.3. Strengthening government led national planning processes

The premise of this component is that SWA provides a platform that, with the engagement of ministries of finance, is able to foster multilateral spaces for dialogue and negotiation between national and international actors in order to develop and enhance national development plans. Through this process, gaps are identified and commitments made for progressing access to WASH services. SWA is meant to then find ways to leverage support and expertise to deliver on, and then monitor, progress on these commitments. A key vehicle for this is the National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) which is intended to operate as a platform for government and development partners to: promote aid effectiveness principles in the WASH sector, coordinate SWA partner expertise to strengthen national leadership and planning, and document and share good practice in improving effectiveness of aid and domestic resources.<sup>31</sup> The NPRI is supported by the Country Processes Task Team (CPTT), which works to strengthen national planning processes and avenues for service delivery in off-track countries.

The overarching view is that such an approach should not only provide confidence for funders but, more importantly, foster a more nationally driven planning process with more effective relationships in country as well as more mutually accountable relationships between national governments and donors.

#### Review findings

There was near universal appreciation from government officials contacted during the review for SWA's valuable global push as a trigger for national level action on WASH. Many respondents also spoke of the important role that SWA had played, or could play, in assisting dialogue and negotiation between national and external actors, thus enhancing national development plans.

A number of people felt that the SWA partnership has yet to really demonstrate proof of concept on this component of its work and much of this appreciation is for the "potential" of SWA rather than actual contributions or impact to date. Many acknowledged the SWA contribution to and achievement of the Liberia Compact, for example, but felt that how this and similar efforts in other countries have translated into impact on the ground remains to be seen and not been sufficiently analyzed).

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<sup>30</sup> See [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/glaas/TrackFin\\_Guidance\\_Document\\_2014.pdf](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/glaas/TrackFin_Guidance_Document_2014.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/priority-areas/country-processes/national-planning-for-results-initiative-npri>

Generally speaking, many governments initially saw SWA (and this component in particular) as a new and direct funding stream that they could tap into rather than a process that could provide confidence to “investors”. This perception, reinforced by a task group study that recommended consideration of a pooled fund for developing viable sector programs in countries most off-track for MDG targets,<sup>32</sup> has taken some time to dispel (and still persists in some quarters). Some noted that the idea of “pooled action” as opposed to pooled funding has perhaps yet to prove sufficiently compelling for some governments while also being challenging as a rallying point for supporting institutions.

With regard to SWA’s emphasis on fostering greater mutual accountability between national governments and donors, interestingly, even among “more traditional donors”, there did not appear to be consistency on approach and emphasis, with some defining a schism most notably between “results-based” donors and “rights-based” donors. Many interviewees noted that **SWA as a global partnership lacks the mandate, the tools and the resources to realistically make a contribution in this way and at this level of supporting national coordination**. Some interviewees also noted that donors and others are slowly waking up to the fact that, in countries like Ethiopia, the government is financing most of the rural water sector themselves. At the same time, it was noted that in other countries, the primary investors in infrastructure may no longer be the traditional sources, but new funders who may be less restricted at present by the aid effectiveness agenda. Several countries also suggested that the commitments process has not been sufficiently linked into national planning processes. Measuring commitments thus poses a rather disappointing prospect, showing a lack of progress on SWA commitments when in fact progress has been made in other areas.

#### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The component or pillar of SWA focusing on strengthening country processes was the most difficult to assess for the review team. A number of elements make this component attractive at first glance but challenging when it comes to determining SWA’s actual activities and impact in this area. In fact, the review team, without visits to meet directly with country officials and focal points, was unable to go beyond anecdotal evidence to identify clearly SWA’s contribution at this level.

The initial focus of this component (in fact for SWA as a whole) was on off-track countries. Over the last few years, however, perhaps in an effort to be inclusive, or in recognition of how difficult and protracted it is to actually make progress in off-track countries through a global mechanism, this emphasis has become somewhat diluted.

Some countries like Ethiopia, Madagascar and Paraguay, and to some degree Sierra Leone have certainly used or benefited from the SWA approach to generate profile. However, each offers different lessons: Ethiopia has, by all accounts, a thriving multi-stakeholder platform that has been active since before SWA was created; Sierra Leone has an increasingly strong NGO network that the government is engaging with in a monitoring capacity around public sector commitments; in the challenging post-coup context of Madagascar, with donors not dealing directly with government officials, SWA’s impetus may have been useful in supporting an existing partner-based WASH platform; while in Paraguay SWA is regarded as a useful complement to other initiatives on water and sanitation with the opening of possibilities for cross-country links across and with multilateral bodies. These examples suggest that SWA’s international connections and institutional basis means that the Partnership has something to offer where government sees a clear advantage, and where civil society has the capacity and capability to monitor what government is doing.

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<sup>32</sup> Aid Effectiveness and Financing Modalities Working Group (April 2010)

Mutual accountability between national governments and donors, meanwhile, needs to be clearly positioned in the context of the changing aid architecture and new donors. Here, SWA has a difficult landscape to navigate as this will require a focus on how adherence to agreed principles of alignment and harmonization might be measured against agreed practice and performance measures for the sector.<sup>33</sup> Part of the issue is whether SWA as a partnership has developed or agreed on the architecture and then a set of tools to: (1) analyze where the bottlenecks are, and then (2) determine which external players would be best placed in each country to work with national leaders to translate this analysis into a development or investment plan in specific contexts.

**The review team believes that ownership at the national level is critical and should be reflected in two ways: firstly, SWA should be “owned” by countries and secondly and *more importantly*, SWA should support best practice mechanisms for country processes that are then owned and respected by all parties active in the country.** As each country will undoubtedly want to engage in different ways, SWA’s task is to be able to accommodate these differences. It also needs to be understood that ultimately SWA presents only one of a number of mechanisms and relationships, and countries (or different departments or agencies within a country) may strategically play one mechanism off against another.

**Whilst there is near universal agreement that SWA should not focus only on the most off-track countries and, as a global partnership, needs to be more inclusive by living up to its name of Sanitation and Water for All, SWA needs to agree on a mechanism by which countries could categorize themselves.** As a key issue for many countries is not a lack of financial resources per se but a lack of capacity and/or a lack of coordination, one suggestion<sup>34</sup> was that low coverage would be used as the basis for entry, with countries positioning themselves based on capacity and resourcing along the following lines:

- Category 1 would be countries that have very limited capacity or resourcing.
- Category 2 would be countries that have capacity but no resourcing (with the presumption that a solid strategy would then bring resources).
- Category 3 would include countries that have resourcing but no capacity (with the subsequent question then of how best to invest).

With regard to what SWA actually does, again a set of tools and resources would be required to determine how to best support a country in moving from point A to point B or from point C to point D.<sup>35</sup> **Countries would benefit from and appreciate mutual peer-to-peer learning from all along the spectrum.** This was clearly demonstrated by the enthusiastic exchanges at the Sector Ministers Meeting held in Washington (April 2014) across all the countries attending. Indonesia was unequivocal, for example, in suggesting that its eastern regions have more in common with certain African settings than with the more affluent western part of the country. In this case, rather than resourcing, and in line with the categories outlined above, it is the **prospect of sharing approaches and understanding what works (and how to convey that to decision-makers) that is important.**

If peer-to-peer exchanges are a clear draw for Indonesia (and presumably other middle income countries) to engage in SWA, this suggests a function geared towards national officials that may be more practical and achievable in the near term than the focus of the NPRI and CPTT at present. It also suggests that **SWA (through its partner organizations) needs to better understand the “political economy” of change at the national level in different countries.** As

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<sup>33</sup> Sitali & Revell de Waal (2014)

<sup>34</sup> Onda, K., et al. (2014)

<sup>35</sup> The framing in Sitali and Revell de Waal (2014) around a continuum of Emergency to Desired organizing characteristics would also be instructive here.

one interviewee put it, “At the end of the day, you want one minister to say something and then another minister to stand up and say “how did you do that?””

Were SWA to continue to **focus on sharpening SMART commitments, this should be combined with a bottlenecks analysis that would help all actors to determine how they engage in a process that embeds country dialogues and commitments into national planning, monitoring and reporting cycles.** Again this requires committed ownership from influential country-level partners. As noted elsewhere in this document, it remains to be seen whether SWA is sufficiently using the data analysis and the research partners effectively to support this component of SWA’s efforts, in part by understanding how donors are supporting national priorities.

One of the earlier ideas put forward was that SWA could be constituted as a global recourse mechanism where countries could appeal for support to bring parties together to dialogue a way forward. As well as how this might be different from the Joint Sector Review process, this suggestion also brings forward a number of questions about the kinds of capacity that SWA would need to do this (as a partnership rather than an institution) and whether countries would be likely to use this kind of mechanism in reality. How would such a mechanism work in practice? Who would SWA deliver this support through? And how would SWA grapple with the more fundamental issues of civil service reform, budget reform, regulatory strengthening, etc. over which the WASH sector has limited control but which hamper progress in the sector? This implies that **SWA needs to be engaging with a wide range of actors well beyond the ministries of finance and should be seeking to leverage the World Bank perhaps more heavily in this process.**

With regard to national planning, further analysis of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) model (see Global Partnership section below) would be helpful as it presents an approach that is held up by national governments as coherent and productive. This may also be useful in **ensuring that technical people from the ministries are more deeply involved in SWA** (“they never get invited to the party in Washington” was a phrase commonly heard in one guise or another). Another area is to focus on making certain that technical staff are sufficiently familiar with how government systems work, particularly with regard to budgeting processes.

Given the analysis above, a key question that has emerged throughout this review is **if and how SWA should engage at the national level versus being solely operational at a global level,** using the multi-stakeholder platform to debate and determine ways to “fix” the global architecture. Whether it could and should legitimately do this without practical connections at national level would be a key consideration. In relation to this, **the creation of greater engagement at the regional level is also worthy of specific exploration, perhaps through the development of more effective links with the SAN meetings (AfricaSan, SacoSan, etc.).**

#### Key questions

- How best can country dialogues and commitment processes be embedded into national planning, monitoring and reporting cycles?
- How can impact on specific countries be more accurately assessed? And then replicated?
- How should categories of countries be structured to allow for greater coherence across response and support mechanisms within SWA?
- How can greater engagement and streamlining be encouraged at regional level?

## 4.2. Interconnectedness / Linkages between the pillars

By all accounts the component parts of SWA fit together intuitively as a theory of change and make a compelling case for a joined up approach to the problems that the WASH sector is seeking to overcome. In practice, however, **further attention needs to be paid to bring together the logic behind and activities within each component part or pillar.** With greater clarity on SWA's overarching purpose, the review team recommends that a robust business plan should then be developed that delineates the activities necessary to achieve targets, and the resources and timeframes required for their achievement. Given a greater understanding of the challenges of delivering on each component part, these deliberations can now be framed in a more realistic way.

The ultimate goal for SWA should be to ensure that country processes work. A focus on country commitments without concerted validation efforts and practical support to ensure these are delivered will inevitably create frustration. **Thus a key question is whether SWA is the right mechanism to support country processes, and, if so, how it should go about this.**

As noted in various forms by different interviewees, often rather bluntly, it is “far easier in a relative sense to convene a meeting and increasingly manageable to gather and present helpful data than to engage in the lengthy and convoluted processes needed to develop, influence and improve country processes.” Until SWA determines a way to meaningfully contribute to this last component, the other pillars of SWA's work will become less effective. A key challenge here is around aspects of timing and sequencing and how different components speak to and mutually support each other.

Again this is not to say that SWA's emphasis to date has not been correct for the purposes of growing and framing the partnership. Galvanizing the UN Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and the President of the World Bank have been huge achievements. Going forward, however, **the proportion of effort and nature of contribution across the three component parts needs to be reconsidered.**

### Key questions

- Can momentum around the HLM be sustained without parallel progress in other components of the partnership?
- Does the SWA partnership have “teeth” to play a commitments monitoring role or how should it support national actors to fulfill this function?
- What is a realistic contribution from the SWA partnership in terms of progressing country processes?

Can the partnership offer quality assured, individualized capacity-building support?

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Strategic connections

Whatever the partnership function, strategic coherence around a common agenda is a key condition for the success of global partnerships.<sup>36</sup> Ensuring that all activities are mutually reinforcing across a “multi-layered backbone structure” that fully integrates global, regional and local levels appears to be central to this. The global agenda must crucially translate to local contexts and ensure local ownership by

<sup>36</sup> Patscheke et al. (2014). This study looks at six global partnerships (Roll Back Malaria (RBM), Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

*“putting a stake in the ground to define the goals and metrics used to evaluate progress and to design a process for learning from the data that is collected.”* As partners tend to focus on geographical areas in which the problems they are addressing are most severe, global partnerships also need to ensure that there is readiness for change at national level, that national “issue” champions are in place to promote activities, and that there are adequate financial resources to assist change.

Along with the more advocacy-oriented global partnerships that SWA members appear to favor for comparative purposes, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) perhaps offers useful lessons for SWA in terms of coherence across priority areas. CAADP’s aim is to “eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture” for which African Governments commit to the targets of: achieving 6 percent annual growth in agricultural productivity by 2015 and increasing the allocation of national budgets directed to the agricultural sector to at least 10 percent. CAADP has four key pillars: Sustainable Land and Water Management, Market Access, Food Supply and Hunger, and Agricultural Research. Each pillar has a different leader and various programs that work to achieve CAADP’s goals through country-level processes with three core elements: “stock-taking,” whereby relevant stakeholders analyze current and previous agricultural conditions, especially as they relate to the pillar issues; “roundtable discussions,” in which a wide range of actors work together and sign a CAADP compact with consensually identified priorities and a roadmap to implement the country’s strategy for agricultural development; and the development of a country investment plan to put the compact into effect by defining stakeholder roles, estimating costs of implementing activities, and identifying sources of funding. Country-level activities are replicated on a regional basis, with each of Africa’s Regional Economic Communities undertaking stocktaking processes and executing compacts and investment plans for agricultural development priorities across their member states. Stakeholders are also supported by the CAADP-Africa Forum of non-state-actors who review the CAADP progress, and the Partnership Platform, which is a more formal body for CAADP implementers to coordinate responsibilities.

### **SWA Strategy Summary of main recommendations**

- **Create greater congruence and inter-linkages should be promoted across the three priority areas.**
- **Commitments processes should be sequenced so that those offering external support can align and respond in a more structured manner.**
- **Strategic discussions on the viability, design and participation in future HLMs should be continued.**
- **Agreement should be reached on a mechanism by which countries can categorize themselves to determine what kind of support they need or how they want to engage with SWA.**
- **A roadmap should be developed with clear processes for the SWA partnership to assist different countries in achieving universal access within own contexts.**
- **Robust peer-to-peer learning systems should be established.**

## 5. Governance Arrangements

The review team believes that **further clarifying SWA's purpose will assist in determining what overarching governance structure is most suitable**. As highlighted above, **more emphasis should be placed on debating emerging trends and approaches influencing the sector, particularly as these underlying currents have implications for two key areas of governance: membership and decision-making**. This would also enable more effective strategic comparisons and learning on appropriate governance mechanisms to be derived from other global partnerships. For example, and in line with the different functions outlined above, if SWA chooses to become a certification agent by placing key emphasis on a more technical role of validating the delivery of commitments, then this suggests that certain structures would be appropriate to explore. If the appetite is more iterative and supportive to country processes, this suggests that more coordinating mechanisms would be suitable. If the focus is on sharing learning on what has worked in the sector, then this suggests more network-oriented approaches.

Whatever function is chosen for SWA, it is important to understand that, in contrast to hierarchical and centralized structures, partnerships have horizontal accountabilities in which independent entities work together to achieve a common goal, but can also pursue their own individual goals separately. This requires **systems for decision-making that balance flexibility with control**. Getting this balance right, as one interviewee rightly observed, is something of an art as it relies as much on creative energy as on managerial and administrative skills. Furthermore, safeguards are also required to ensure that those making central decisions do not use (or are not perceived to be using) collaborative initiatives to push their direct interests and individual goals forward.

### Review Findings

As SWA's function is not as clear as it could be, much discussion around procedures and form has remained inconclusive and, as mentioned by many interviewees, somewhat frustrating in its circularity. Although SWA positions itself as a platform and is recognized by many as such,<sup>37</sup> interviewees also variously described it as an institution, organization, slogan, network and movement - sometimes using these terms interchangeably.

There is general agreement that current **governance arrangements in SWA need to be made more efficient and effective**. Most are of the opinion that the overarching governance structure has been "over-engineered and has become too complicated, cumbersome and slow" which, in consequence, limits full partner engagement. Many interviewees stressed that there is a need to move away from being reactive to being proactive. While acknowledging that speedier decision-making processes need to be balanced with assurances about collective endeavor and sufficiently representative engagement, most agreed that a more energetic core group is vital for pushing things forward more rapidly. Central to this is a flexible executive framework and governance tools that promote more dynamic ways of working.

Although concerns about SWA's structure and decision-making processes have been flagged for some time, particularly in relation to the work of the Steering Committee, and documents have been compiled to explore how improvements might be made,<sup>38</sup> to date no action has been taken to address these issues. Various reasons were given for this impasse: while accepting that UNICEF's hosting of the SWA Secretariat has many benefits (see section 5.1 below), some signaled this arrangement as an impediment to promoting change. A number of other interviewees noted that a sense of "lethargy" may be due to the fact that partner

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<sup>37</sup>The SWA website clearly defines SWA as a platform, see: <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/about>

<sup>38</sup> See for example SWA, Executive Function of the SWA Steering Committee (draft) February 25, 2013

representatives are insufficiently challenged and lack the motivation to make important structural changes due to the comfort factor that comes from familiarity between individuals who have worked together for so long.

This also appears to have contributed to a perception that the institutions involved in SWA may not want to openly challenge one another in terms of the appropriateness and effectiveness of their contribution to the sector, and to SWA and its principles. Some interviewees observed that, for a host of structural reasons, in particular around donor funding requirements and donors' "pet initiatives", organizations in the sector generally express a strong need to be "doing everything" from implementation to research to advocacy. While there is collegiality between individuals, this somewhat hidden competitive environment and pursuit of diverse agendas amongst organizations has been stifled in an "overly polite and deferential setting" within SWA.

Against this background many observed that a more dynamic and empowered leadership is required to oversee governance changes and to instill a more strategic lens on thinking and proceedings. Other suggestions included the need for a higher level of resources so that more staff can be hired, resulting in less reliance on substantial but unpredictable and often less strategic volunteerism.

## 5.1. Membership

### 5.1.1. Categories and constituencies

SWA's 90+ members are drawn from seven core constituencies: 1) Developing Country Partners (mainly from Africa), 2) Donor Partners, 3) Multilateral Partners, 4) Development Bank Partners, 5) Civil Society Partners, 6) Research and Learning Partners, and 7) Other Sector Partners.

The rationale for these membership categories appears to revolve around their reinforcement of a governance framework that includes nominated or elected representatives from each group. This means that caucuses can support groups to take positions where appropriate and communications can be tailored and streamlined as a result.

#### Review findings

While many interviewees felt that the SWA Partnership's legitimacy is derived from **its wide number of partners and broad membership representation and clearly emerging brand**, there was universal agreement that SWA's membership categories need attention. This issue has been discussed by the Steering Committee and calls have been made for constituency simplification and redefinition, with particular emphasis on the creation of space for 'new' members to join the Partnership.<sup>39</sup>

As well as a perception that many categories overlap and create confusion, there is also a sense that they reinforce "old-fashioned" ways of viewing the world and outdated power dynamics. In this regard, the "developing countries" category, and the assumption that all developing countries are donor dependent, was viewed as most problematic, particularly if membership is extended to encompass countries such as India or China. Most of those interviewed did not understand the "Other Sector Partners" category with some commenting that this was a way of "favoring powerful players" in SWA. Concerns were also expressed about the Donor, Multilateral and Development Bank Partner categories which were seen as overlapping and giving excessive weight to these groups. Ultimately, it was observed, with the

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<sup>39</sup> See SWA SC Minutes, November 14, 2013

exception perhaps of the Civil Society partners and to a lesser degree Donors, categories of members do not really operate as constituencies who debate positions and coordinate responses.

Interviewees put forward a number of ideas for addressing membership concerns. These included: creating a single country membership category, allowing partners to join multiple membership categories, developing a regional membership system, creating membership categories that are linked to partnership contributions, and doing away with membership categories altogether. The majority conceded that, at the very least, the “Other Sector Partners” category should be done away with. Among the suggestions that were put forward to address the country categorizations was the idea of “clustering” countries along relevant WASH indicators rather than geographical or income indicators (see Section 4.1.3).<sup>40</sup> It was also noted that while SWA was certainly “northern dominated”, the main task was to ensure that it moves progressively to the “south” by engaging “southern” players more deeply.

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The review team believes that agreement on membership categories should be integrally linked with the direction that SWA chooses to adopt in the future. As it moves forward, **new membership structures should be simpler and centered around ensuring country engagement.**

To simplify and streamline SWA’s work, and hence make the decision-making group smaller and more operational, the review team proposes the adoption of two broad membership categories: Countries and External Support Agencies. In order to ensure useful country groupings, **an option would be to develop three country sub-categories within the Countries membership classification** (in line with those outlined in section 4.1.3 above). These sub-categories could, for example, be based on water and sanitation coverage in relation to the availability of resources (financial) and the availability of human capacity (management, technical skills, financial skills, etc.), and be organized as follows:

- Category 1: countries without (or with limited) capacity or resources
- Category 2: countries with capacity but needing to enhance their resources
- Category 3: countries with resources but needing to enhance their capacity

Thus, for example, self-selecting their category, countries like Sudan and Liberia might place themselves in Category 1. Countries like Ghana and Kenya (with their emerging capacity) might place themselves in Category 2. Countries like Indonesia and China might place themselves in Category 3. The review team recognizes that these categories need to be debated further with a view to what is acceptable to countries but also what allows them to tap into peer-to-peer support.

The External Support Agencies would include two broad groupings: Funders, and Learning and Implementation Partners (with the latter sub-category including local, national and global civil society). Country membership would be composed of government institutions.

These categories would serve as the basis for nominating or electing decision-making representatives (see 5.2.2 below).

### Key questions

- [Based on the purpose/function] Who needs to be involved moving forward?

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<sup>40</sup> Recent work from the Water Institute at UNC proposes five clusters that produce a comparative country typology more relevant to the WatSan sector than country groupings that are currently used throughout the sector, see Onda, K. et al. (2014)

- e.g. wider country representation, non-traditional donors, private sector, academia, civil society groups, local government bodies, etc.)

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Membership categories

While a number of global partnerships have membership categories that include “developing countries”, their overarching groupings are more clearly delineated and linked to their core function. The **GPE**, for example, which focuses on resource transfer and advocacy, clearly defines its members as: Developing Countries, International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector and Foundations, Donors and Local Education Groups. **IHP+**, with its advocacy focus, also has a set of simpler sector categorizations: Countries, Development Partners and Civil Society).

Implementation partnerships like **CAADP** have moved away from rigid membership categorizations by firmly situating countries as *the* key partners with other players working in “satellite” sector groupings, hubs or networks around these. **Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)**,<sup>41</sup> meanwhile, has four sector networks to support its country members: the Civil Society Network, UN System Network, Donor Network and Business Network. The central positioning of country or government constituencies is helpful in placing the emphasis firmly on the importance of national level action.

#### 5.1.2. Missing and unengaged partners

##### Review findings

Many expressed the view that, as the WASH and aid agendas shift, **more players need to be brought into the partnership as members**. Those indicated as possible new or expanded membership bases include:

- **Wider country representation:** bringing in more partners from Asia and Latin America. Only a few interviewees took issue with this, seeing it as a move away from what SWA’s focus should be and indicating that SWA is not strong enough to spread itself so thinly. Most, however, believed that it would be a bigger risk to turn these countries away. They suggested that there were easy ways of using the HLM to broaden the set of countries in SWA without stretching resources and that, if organized effectively through clustering, this would in turn enable SWA to engage with a wider audience and gain from their participation.
- **Non-traditional donors such as non-DAC and BRIC countries:** although SWA’s focus has been on off-track countries, there is a growing sense that greater inclusivity is needed. Many called for a more nuanced debate that includes discussions with BRIC countries such as India and China, particularly as they continue to have off-track areas / populations / groups that require attention and need access. The learning potential from these countries was widely viewed as crucial to share, with openings for important lessons around engagement processes and the ability to showcase how these countries have achieved what they have.
- **Private sector water users and providers, business coalitions, etc.:** almost universally, those interviewed saw this sector as essential to bring more effectively into SWA. Many country partners are already working with business in some shape or form and felt strongly that the private sector should not be left out of discussions, particularly in view of the changing nature of aid and the importance of looking at diverse resources for development. Most recognized that discussion needs to take place on who to involve from

<sup>41</sup> <http://scalingupnutrition.org/>

the private sector and the appropriate mechanisms for this.<sup>42</sup> Different potential dimensions included: domestic or non-domestic companies; large or small companies, including SMEs; water provider companies who may want to shape the debates more; and water users who may not want to be so involved in policy debates but are increasingly involved in supporting WASH programs and projects (directly or through their foundations); and private sector associations. Private sector associations were generally seen as the most helpful group to engage.

- **Private individuals and foundations:** with the growth of “new philanthropists”,<sup>43</sup> many saw connections with private individuals and foundations as essential. There appear be opportunities to involve them in SWA’s work not just as donors, but also as social investors with a keen interest in results and accountability.<sup>44</sup>
- **Academia:** Greater involvement of universities and research institutes was highlighted by the vast majority of interviewees. In this regard, the value of such partners in refining and deepening debate within SWA, particularly in relation to the post-2015 agenda, was emphasized.
- **More national and local civil society groups:** There was a general feeling that civil society involvement in SWA is not as strong as it could be. While there have been improvements through “more democratically elected” civil society focal points, many stress that the donor/recipient dynamic prevalent in SWA requires a deeper kind of civil society participation which must be promoted by country delegations. Also, although they are generally not as strong as needed, partly as a function of reduced support in recent years to such organizations, it was felt by many that country WASH networks should be a galvanizing point for SWA. Their emphasis should be on supporting expanded access where possible but also in keeping all actors (public, private, donor and international NGOs) accountable for their stated contributions. It should be noted here that the support provided by End Water Poverty is much appreciated, albeit insufficient.
- **Local government bodies:** a number of interviewees, particularly at country level, suggested that SWA should engage more effectively with representatives from the local level of public administration in order to inform debates, expand influence and legitimize in-country connections. Whilst policy decisions and funding streams are determined at the national level, improved access is ultimately the responsibility of local authorities and that groups like ICLEI (a global association of cities and local governments dedicated to sustainable development),<sup>45</sup> city manager associations, local authority associations or others are important stakeholders to include.
- **World Bank:** In order to raise SWA’s profile but also ground SWA’s work in country processes, many interviewees stressed that it was critical to engage more systematically with the World Bank in order to influence both countries and other development agencies. Some even referred to the Bank as “*the missing partner*”. At present, albeit with the Water and Sanitation Program as a proxy, the general sense is that World Bank water and sanitation staff members are not very familiar with what SWA is and what its contribution could be. Many noted the challenges of aligning the Bank more deeply with the aid effectiveness agenda, aligning SWA with World Bank country strategies, and engaging with such a large and disparate institution.

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<sup>42</sup> These issues are outlined well in: Davies (2011) <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/47088121.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/mar/07/new-philanthropists-wealthy-people>

<sup>44</sup> See Bishop & Green (2010)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.iclei.org/>

Most informants were of the opinion that expansion of SWA's membership is inevitable and that the real focus should be on providing clear arguments and engagement strategies for including new partners so that SWA can confidently take its agenda forward.

### **Moving forward: Analysis and pointers**

A central issue for any discussion around new members is what "value proposition" potential partners might derive from being more engaged in SWA and through what kind of mechanisms they should participate, i.e. should they become formal partners? Can they engage through focal points, existing platforms or groups? If so at what levels - international, regional or national? These questions rely upon **careful analysis of the incentives for new partners to join SWA**. The higher the incentives of each partner to participate, the more committed they are likely to be to improving SWA's performance, delivering on their expected contributions and participating in decision-making. Optimizing the participation of new players is therefore vital to the achievement of improved impact (including outputs, outcomes and reach). A further consideration is around maximizing participation to create a movement or "bandwagon" that would become difficult to ignore or not be a part of.

With regard to the private sector, the review team noted that an overly complicated and drawn out conversation within SWA regarding a stakeholder group that is "not exactly knocking down the door to be involved" is probably not necessary. Indeed, AQUAFED<sup>46</sup> (International Federation of Private Water Operators), an association set up to connect international organizations with private sector providers of water and sanitation services, and the CEO Water Mandate,<sup>47</sup> a public-private initiative that assists companies in the development, implementation and monitoring of water sustainability policies and practices, are already SWA partners and, perhaps with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD),<sup>48</sup> offer logical conduits for engagement with the business community.<sup>49</sup> **A membership code of practice for all partners would help to clarify how each partner, including the private sector, would be expected to contribute.**

Meanwhile, as the organization thinks through the design and focus of its new Global Water Practice, now is the time to see how best SWA can engage the World Bank. As noted above, although the HLM is hosted by the World Bank and the 2014 meeting was opened by its President, stronger efforts are clearly required to "lodge" the Bank relationship more deeply so that it becomes more than a connection at a bi-annual event. Closer links with the World Bank would certainly raise the bar for SWA in a number of ways. As noted in the contextual analysis section above, with the reframing of the Bank into global practices and with the clear emphasis on poverty and knowledge, this may be the ideal time for engaging the Bank more effectively.

With expansion of SWA, **the development of new membership guidelines will be necessary**. The current Governing Document, for example, states that SWA partners "cannot be for-profit organizations, although they may include not-for-profit associations or networks of for-profit organizations."<sup>50</sup> **New guidelines should include exact criteria for membership and codes of conduct, including some mention of under what circumstances a partner might be excluded.** As membership expansion may provoke deeper concern about conflicts of interest and/or capture by vested interests, the review team recommends that a Conflict of Interest Policy is

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.aquafed.org/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://ceowatermandate.org/>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.wbcSD.org/home.aspx>

<sup>49</sup> See [http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/partner\\_perspective/how-to-engage-with-the-private-sector-and-create-good-partnership](http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/partner_perspective/how-to-engage-with-the-private-sector-and-create-good-partnership)

<sup>50</sup> SWA, Governing Document, last version, 2013

developed and incorporated into membership guidelines (see Chapter 7 on Ensuring SWA accountabilities). Such a document would be helpful for addressing a wide range of concerns including, but not limited to, private sector involvement and donor power asymmetries.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, as has been done to some degree in this document with UNICEF (in later sections), some analysis of actual partner contributions should be conducted to understand who is bringing what to the table and how can these contributions be maximized. For more on this, the reader should refer to section on institutionalization and embeddedness (section 7.2).

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Working with the private sector

Working with the private sector has been a controversial issue for many global partnerships due to concerns that commercial interests will weaken their work or jeopardize their legitimacy. Particular difficulties have been highlighted with regard to health partnerships and the possibility of *private interests influencing agenda-setting and policy-making in global health*.<sup>52</sup> Informants from the private sector involved in global partnerships emphasize that their involvement needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.

These issues point to the importance of ensuring careful exploration of how the private sector might best be engaged in SWA's work, with an assessment of exactly who potential partners in the sector might include, the contributions they might bring to the table, their interest in being involved, and the most appropriate mechanisms for their participation. A good example of this kind of enquiry is provided by **SUN's Private Sector Engagement Toolkit**<sup>53</sup>, which looks at the benefits and challenges of collaboration with business, and serves as a guide for dialogue. The *Roadmap* produced by The Partnering Initiative<sup>54</sup> sets out a systematic approach for engaging with business as a partner in development, with recommendations for joint action by government, development agencies, business organizations and civil society in key areas. The CEO Water Mandate's *Guide to Responsible Business Engagement with Water Policy*<sup>55</sup> also offers useful information in this area.

The **Global Fund** has developed a specific policy for addressing both private sector engagement as well as wider conflicts of interest with guidelines that seek to "*ensure that contributions are derived from legitimate sources and reputable donors that subscribe to the founding principles of the partnership*."<sup>56</sup> **GAIN's** Director, meanwhile, stresses the importance of having open conversations about engaging with the private sector that involve broad-based coalitions of key players across stakeholder groups and networks to drive this agenda.<sup>57</sup> Having recently conducted an informal review on this topic, **IHP+**, which does not include private sector members at the global level, has elected to focus on national strategies for private sector involvement.

While ensuring connections at continental level, **CAADP** also focuses on country level links with the private sector. The CAADP Private Sector Work Stream<sup>58</sup> outlines three key areas where such linkages can be promoted: 1) Value chain connections between large and small private sector actors and Public-

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<sup>51</sup> Bezanson & Isenman (2012)

<sup>52</sup> Bartsch (2007)

<sup>53</sup> *Private Sector Engagement Toolkit*, 08 September 2011 [http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Business-Network\\_Private-Sector-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf](http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Business-Network_Private-Sector-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> The Partnering Initiative (2014)

<sup>55</sup> [http://ceowatermandate.org/files/Guide\\_Responsible\\_Business\\_Engagement\\_Water\\_Policy.pdf](http://ceowatermandate.org/files/Guide_Responsible_Business_Engagement_Water_Policy.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Private Sector Engagement & Avoidance of Conflict of Interest Guide, Global Fund, updated September 2013

<sup>57</sup> <http://community.businessfightspoverty.org/profiles/blogs/marc-van-ameringen-executive-director-gain-can-the-private-sector>

<sup>58</sup> See [african-private-sector-discusses-caadp-implementation-agricultural-growth](http://african-private-sector-discusses-caadp-implementation-agricultural-growth) and <http://www.africa-platform.org/events/caadp-private-sector-work-stream>

Private Partnerships; 2) An improved policy environment, improved infrastructure and support ecosystems; and 3) Agriculture/ Agribusiness around business metrics to accelerate implementation of interventions and tie sector development to national, regional and global value chain demand.

### SWA Membership Summary of recommendations

- **BRICS and private sector associations should be encouraged to join / become more active.**
- **Incentives for engagement with new groups should be explored in relation to SWA's purpose.**
- **Countries should be re-clustered (possibly on the basis of availability of capacity and resources).**
- **New and simpler membership categories should be established, e.g. Countries and External Support Agencies.**
- **Options for how different parties might work more effectively with SWA (Governments, World Bank, INGOs, etc.) should be developed, e.g. as partners, through focal points, via platforms, etc.**
- **Clear membership guidelines, a branding policy and a conflict of interest policy should be drawn up.**

## 5.2. Decision-Making

### 5.2.1. The Chair and Vice Chair

According to SWA's Governing Document,<sup>59</sup> a high-level appointed Chair and an elected or appointed Vice Chair will oversee the work of the Partnership in their personal capacity. While both are appointed (or elected) for a one-year term, they can be re-elected (or re-appointed) for up to three terms. The Chair's role is defined as that of a global leader with convening power to engage in outreach activities via the media, partnership events, etc. The Vice-Chair, meanwhile, serves as Chair of the Steering Committee.

#### Review findings

The current SWA Chair is former Ghanaian President and ex-Chair of the African Union, H.E. John A. Kufuor. There was general consensus that Kufuor, who assumed this position in November 2011, has been an important, albeit perhaps less than optimally utilized, asset. All felt that having a key politician as Chair has enabled SWA to open doors at various levels.

All those interviewed were complimentary about the work of the individual currently in the Vice Chair position with agreement that he had provided stability and consistency. Many, however, felt that **the role requires greater time dedication and should potentially be a part-time paid post,<sup>60</sup> in essence with the ability to act as an executive head at a level substantially above the current coordinator role.** Many mentioned the possibility of a SWA Vice Chair like David Nabarro whose charisma at the helm of the SUN partnership was clearly viewed as something that would invigorate SWA.

<sup>59</sup> SWA, Governing Document, last version, 2013

<sup>60</sup> The current Vice Chair has a negotiated arrangement with his employer of up to 30 days per annum to dedicate to the adequate execution of this role.

## Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

There have been a number of calls for more than one Chair, possibly with a counterpart for Kufuor from Asia, which would assist in promoting Sanitation and Water for All more broadly. This idea is currently under discussion within the Steering Committee. **Candidates for this position would preferably have a track record in addressing WASH issues.** Although not from Asia, someone like former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, for example, might be an ideal candidate given both his personal background and his very public commitment while in office to enhancing access to sanitation in poor communities.

Meanwhile, as the current Vice Chair comes to the end of his term of office, the review team believes that this is a good opportunity to explore new options and remit for the role, particularly as the next occupant may not be able to negotiate an arrangement with his/her organization to enable the necessary dedication of time to SWA. The preference would be for this position to be assumed by someone from the sector with a strong profile and political clout.

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Chairing arrangements

Studies of governance arrangements in other global partnerships<sup>61</sup> emphasize that Chairs should clearly represent the mission of the partnership rather than a constituency within it.

Specified terms are also common – the **Global Fund**, for example, stipulates two-year terms for the board chair and vice chair, with biannual rotation of these roles between “members of developed and developing countries”.

Following a review process, **GPE’s** rotating co-chair arrangement was replaced by a full-time, independent, non-voting chair, chosen through an open recruitment process for a three year term.

Both the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**<sup>62</sup> and **Sustainable Energy For All (SE4All)**<sup>63</sup> have opted for more than one high-level chair: in the case of the Global Partnership three high-profile Ministers from Mexico, Nigeria and the Netherlands occupy a chair role; while in SE4All, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, are co-chairs. In both these cases efforts have been placed upon maximizing the potential for achieving political prioritization.

The **Roll Back Malaria (RBM)** partnership, meanwhile, complements its Chair and Vice Chair with 8 alternating Regional Chairs who form part of the governing Partnership Board.

### 5.2.2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) has the overall responsibility for leadership and management of the SWA Partnership. It is designed to include a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 32 representatives from the seven membership constituencies, each of whom are elected for two-year terms. The SC currently has 23 members including the Vice Chair and the following representatives: seven from Developing Countries, four from Donors, three from Civil Society,

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<sup>61</sup> See Bezanson & Isenman (2012). This study looked at governance arrangements in the following partnerships: Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI); The Global Fund (for the fight against) AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN); The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – formerly the Fast Track Initiative; International Health Partnership (IHP) and related initiatives (IHP+); Global Water Partnership (GWP); The Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM); The United Nations Program on AIDS (UNAIDS); Cities Alliance (CA) and Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP).

<sup>62</sup> <http://effectivecooperation.org/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.se4all.org/>

two from Multilaterals, two from Development Banks, one from Research and Learning, and one from Other Sector Partners.<sup>64</sup> A member of the Secretariat and a leading public sector spokesperson from the water and sanitation sector are also SC members.

SC members are expected to meet at least four times a year in two in-person meetings and two virtual meetings. Decision-making is based upon consensus which, if unachievable, and in exceptional circumstances, may require the Chair calling for a vote. Motions require a two-thirds majority of those present. It is also worth mentioning that while the SC does not manage any funds, the Governing Document states that it is charged with reviewing and endorsing all proposed budgets for SWA activities and for the Secretariat.<sup>65</sup>

### Review findings

Most respondents agreed that the SC has promoted inclusivity as a result of its wide representation. However, whilst improvements in decision-making and communication procedures have been made in recent years, there was general consensus that the SC is too large, complicated, cumbersome and slow. The overarching sense was that an emphasis on ensuring inclusiveness has come at the expense of effectiveness. Many felt that, as a result of its size and in the interests of making progress, the SC is being “led” by a small group of insiders who act as a “kitchen cabinet” and make decisions on behalf of the rest. Some describe this as northern domination, others see it as a global/country player split, and another group as a necessary device given the realities of engaging the entire SC on all matters.

In the absence of a well-functioning SC, the Secretariat and, in some cases Task Teams, are viewed as having taken over the decision-making roles of the SC. While acknowledging that they have assumed a decision-making role beyond their remit, members of the Secretariat have noted that they did not actively seek this but had to step in to fill a gap with otherwise significant implications for SWA’s progress.

For many, **the concerns highlighted above relate to the fact that its members may not include those with sufficient seniority or delegation of authority, interest and ownership to engage effectively to allow the SC to take key decisions, create convergence and ensure action.** Some said that while many individual SC members are committed, it is not clear that they have the full backing and support of their constituencies or organizations (and thereby could not commit on their behalf without consulting back, further slowing down proceedings). Conversely, others suggested that there is a real question as to whether the SC members act in the best interests of SWA, but rather seek to use the platform to promote their own organizations or constituencies.

Some of the other issues raised related to the lack of time given to strategic decision-making, micro-management and a focus on events. Some complained about the holding of virtual meetings that appear to suffer from poor connections and preparation. Additional disquiet was also expressed about the lack of clarity on Standing Observer status arrangements and the remit for their engagement.<sup>66</sup> The Governing Document states that observers, who are not able to vote, “may *sometimes* be invited to attend SC meetings for specific agenda points. In *exceptional* cases, the SC may invite regular Standing Observers whose status is reviewed annually”, there are doubts as to how far these points are being abided by.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/about/governance/steering-committee>

<sup>65</sup> SWA, Governing Document, last version, 2013:10

<sup>66</sup> See SWA SC Minutes, 14 November, 2013

<sup>67</sup> Current Standing Observers include: WHO and the German government.

Concerns about the SC were expressed as early as 2012 with acknowledgement from the Secretariat that, in order to move forward on key agenda items, it had been forced to make decisions and take actions without having received formal concurrence from the full SC.<sup>68</sup> This was further addressed in a Discussion Paper in April 2013 which proposed an incremental approach to changes in the SC.<sup>69</sup> This included refining communication and task areas alongside consideration of a two-tier structure in which the current SC would act as a larger advisory board with a smaller operating board taking key decisions. Various interviewees stated that little had been done to move on this idea and that the need for change is more pressing than ever. Many see the urgent establishment of an Executive Committee, with carefully selected and committed people able to act on behalf of SWA members, as the best option for this. This idea, however, is not universally accepted with some stressing that a smaller executive body will limit genuine participation and that more attention needs to be devoted to ensuring that the “right” SC members are selected and empowered to make decisions.

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The review team notes that SWA has now gained sufficient traction and profile. This makes the need for effective governance more critical. Admittedly it would be difficult for the Partnership to select a small Executive Committee at this stage. Thereby, the recommendation is for a smaller SC comprised of no more than 17 people with representation as follows:

- Vice Chair
- Representative from host organization (UNICEF)
- Nine Country representatives (potentially with three members from each country membership category (noted in section 5.1.1 above) including two government representatives and a civil society representative from each)
- Six External Support Agency representatives – three from the Funders support group and three from the Learning and Implementation support group

The review team proposes that roughly two-thirds of the SC membership (10 representatives in total) should be elected (excluding the Vice Chair and the host representative), while the remaining members should be nominated or co-opted directly. As a functioning SC requires both representivity and a range of expertise and skills (advocacy and communications skills, policy skills, implementation experience, non-WASH expertise, etc.), direct nominations should ensure that the right representatives are chosen to provide requisite decision-making support and oversight. In this schema it is suggested that three country representatives (one from each category) are co-opted, and two are co-opted from the External Support group (one from Funders and one from Learning and Implementation).

The emphasis should be on ensuring that SC representatives are of a senior level with delegated authority to take decisions that are in the best interest of SWA but also to serve as a communications channel with their constituency. In all cases representatives should serve a term of two years. Observer status should remain with the proviso that Standing Observers only attend SC meetings that have agenda items that concern them directly.

With regard to meetings, the review team recommends that the Steering Committee continues to meet two or three times a year, with at least one face-to-face meeting. In the interests of promoting full ownership, and adapting an arrangement used by IHP+, it is also suggested that SC meetings should be co-chaired by the Vice Chair and a Country partner or

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<sup>68</sup> Steering Committee meeting final minutes. Thursday, 15 November 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Executive Function of Steering Committee, *Discussion Paper*, February 25, 2013.

External Support Agency partner alternating as co-chairs alongside the Vice Chair at each meeting.

The review team feels that the Steering Committee, as SWA’s decision-making body, should have a stronger role in decisions around and oversight of financial allocations and staffing. Amongst other benefits, this would give further reassurance to funders. As things stand, although donors contribute to an overarching proposal, some donors seem to be negotiating with SWA/UNICEF independently on how their contributions will be made and which elements they will fund. The review team feels that this approach leaves the Partnership in a somewhat vulnerable position as these funders could inadvertently steer the partnership in particular directions. This situation also makes it more difficult to discuss areas to prioritize if there are shifts in available funding. To avoid this it is important that the SC is able to ensure that particular areas are not prioritized over others and that funding fits within the SWA Partnership's overarching requirements. It is the review team’s hope that, as SWA is now fairly well established, a more solid business or operational plan could be the basis for both subscriptions from different funding institutions as well as serve as the foundation for negotiating with partner organizations around their in-kind contributions.

As mentioned above (section 5.1.2), in SWA’s Governing Document, a stipulation is that conflicts of interest and/or SWA capture by vested interests should be avoided with a proviso for the development of a detailed Conflict of Interest Policy “if necessary”.<sup>70</sup> In view of the concerns relating to membership and governance, the development of membership criteria (i.e. with clauses around actively supporting the achievement of the SDGs), a Code of Conduct (i.e. with clauses around actively pursuing the reduction of duplication, actively promoting mutual accountability, etc.), and a Conflict of Interest Policy should be pursued (see below). (Examples of such documents can be adapted from other similarly-styled global partnerships.) As an aside, although the Governing Document has been updated several times,<sup>71</sup> not all of its clauses are fully consulted or adhered to. The gender balance, for example, which stipulates that at least one third of the SC representatives should be men or women respectively, is clearly out of sync. Currently only three of the SC’s 23 members are women. A key recommendation for the future is that the SWA Governing Document is updated, presented and shared more strategically across the Partnership.

### Key questions

- How can the SC maximize effectiveness for strategic decision-making?
- How can the selection process for SC members ensure sufficient seniority so that members have the gravitas to be entrusted by the sector to engage more broadly but also the capacity and legitimacy to make decisions on behalf of their constituencies?

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Governing Boards and Steering Committees

A study of governance arrangements in 11 global partnerships<sup>72</sup> found that efforts to promote inclusiveness tend to result in unwieldy boards which often create conflict. The study notes that “*As a general rule, transaction costs and barriers to timely and effective decision-making seem to increase in proportion to the size and stakeholder diversity of governing boards.*” The authors recommend Boards/Committees that combine both constituency and non-constituency membership with careful selection processes based on capacity (skills, experience and expertise) and commitment to the

<sup>70</sup> Governing Document, SWA (updated 2013).

<sup>71</sup> On November 20, 2010, August 21, 2011 and October 3, 2013.

<sup>72</sup> Bezanson & Isenman (2012)

partnership. They also suggest that governing boards should assume responsibility for risk management, ensure transparency around decision-making, and careful reporting on performance. Where a CEO position is put in place, the study also notes that roles and responsibilities must be clearly delineated, particularly in terms of clarity around the roles of the chair and the CEO.

Specific examples from other partnerships are also useful to share here: Following an independent review in 2007, which was critical of governance arrangements, the **GAVI Alliance** moved to a single governing body with a hybrid multi-stakeholder constituency/independent executive board model. Two-thirds of board membership is now determined on the basis of constituency and one-third on independent membership, including the Board Chair. A 2010 evaluation noted that while this arrangement had led to improvement, the large size (28 members) and dominant constituency character made decision-making protracted and bureaucratic, incurred high direct and transaction costs, and produced weak decisions and positions that could reduce effectiveness.<sup>73</sup>

In the **SUN** partnership, a SUN Movement Lead Group was established in 2012 to improve coherence, provide strategic oversight, improve resource mobilization and ensure collective accountability. The Lead Group is made up of high-level leaders that represent the array of partners engaged in SUN – government, civil society, international organizations, donor agencies, businesses and foundations. The members are appointed by the UN Secretary General and are collectively responsible for the functioning of the Movement. The group works to improve coherence, provide strategic oversight, improve resource mobilization and ensure collective accountability across the SUN Movement.<sup>74</sup>

With a view to ensuring stronger governance, **IHP+** has recently established a Steering Committee of 16 members representing different constituencies: six from partner countries, four from multilateral agencies, four from bilateral agencies and two from civil society. Multilateral and bilateral agencies and civil society constituencies each put forward a representative(s). Country constituency selection criteria are based upon geographical distribution, language balance and experience in IHP+ processes. Committee members have to be of sufficient seniority to represent IHP+ and may serve for a minimum of one year, with the possibility of a one-year extension. The Steering Committee meets twice a year, with one meeting being face-to-face. Meetings are co-chaired by one country partner and one international development partner. The Co-Chairs are selected by the Steering Committee and serve for one year with the possibility of a one-year extension. Decisions are taken by consensus.<sup>75</sup>

**SE4All** has an Advisory Board that is co-chaired by the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President, and includes distinguished global leaders from governments, business and civil society who give strategic guidance to the initiative and serve as its global ambassadors. An Executive Committee provides operational oversight and is headed by a Chairman of the Board. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for SE4All is chief executive of the initiative and is supported by a Global Facilitation Team.<sup>76</sup>

**CAADP** does not have a Board or Committee as governance is conducted through Meetings. This comes alongside an acceptance that change is constant and needs to adapt to contextual circumstances, "*The boundaries and mandates [governing roles and responsibilities on CAADP implementation] are fluid and task-oriented rather than cemented into fixed structures ... the clarification of roles and responsibilities is evolving and may change over time and in different countries.*"<sup>77</sup>

### 5.2.3. Task Teams

The work of the SC is supported by Standing Committees or Task Teams that address aspects of particular importance to SWA. These currently include: the Governance Standing

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> <http://scalingupnutrition.org/the-sun-network/lead-group>

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/fileadmin/uploads/ihp/Documents/About\\_IHP\\_/mgt\\_arrangements\\_\\_\\_docs/IHP\\_Steering\\_Committee\\_TORs.Oct13.pdf](http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/fileadmin/uploads/ihp/Documents/About_IHP_/mgt_arrangements___docs/IHP_Steering_Committee_TORs.Oct13.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.se4all.org/about-us/executive-committee/>

<sup>77</sup> Accelerating CAADP Country Implementation: A Guide for Implementers

Committee, the Global Monitoring Task Team (GMTT) and the Country Processes Task Team (CPTT). Each group has a Chair and members may be drawn from both the SC and other constituencies. Reporting to the SC, Task Teams determine their own meeting arrangements in consultation with the Secretariat.

The GMTT was formed in May 2013 with the aim of developing a shared monitoring framework that harmonizes monitoring initiatives focused on inputs to the sector such as funding, human resources and planning processes, and oversees the development of a shared set of voluntary norms and standards for how data are collected. The goal is that all agencies are reporting on the same things in the same way. The CPTT, meanwhile, works to support the National Planning for Results Initiative (NPRI) by strengthening national planning processes and avenues for service delivery in off-track countries.

### Review findings

Although a number of interviewees thought that the Task Teams provided a valuable asset to SWA, it was widely agreed that they face serious problems in terms of effectiveness. Some stated that the teams are too independent and “secretive”. Most accepted that they work hard but there were reservations expressed about a lack of information on progress and little to show for their efforts to date. There were also criticisms that the teams lacked strong facilitation. Members of the teams observed that it was hard to move things forward as they are physically so spread out. The teams also stated that they lack resources, relying on voluntary contributions that are difficult for members to prioritize when faced with other demands from inside their own organization.<sup>78</sup>

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

Clearly, **some debate is required within SWA on the use of task teams and how far they are contributing effectively to the work of the Partnership.** Their voluntary nature and lack of resources presents a strong limitation to real, focused and ongoing engagement. **There also appears to be a need for better oversight of the teams and their work.** This raises questions about who might assume such a role, particularly as the Secretariat lacks time and resources for this, and may not (as currently formed) be accepted by partners as best placed or having the authority to take this on.

The review team recommends that a Strategic Oversight Group is established that includes Task Team Chairs, the Vice Chair, a representative from the Steering Committee and a representative from the host organization (UNICEF). The role of the Strategic Oversight Group would be to make sure that the component parts of the Partnership are speaking to each other sufficiently and ensure that Task Team work was shared regularly. To assist this process, good practice standards for Task Team operation should be drawn up and adopted.

#### Decision-making Summary of recommendations

- **Efforts to identify a high-profile champion from Asia (or Latin America) as an additional Chair should be continued.**
- **A clearer role for the Vice Chair should be developed, ensuring that the individual has dedicated, possibly paid time.**

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<sup>78</sup> DFID GMTT leader is an exception to this as this is part of their funding input into SWA.

- **A smaller Steering Committee should be established. 17 members (Vice Chair, Host representative, mix from Countries and External Support Agency partners) are recommended.**
- **Two-thirds of the SC should be elected and remaining members nominated or co-opted directly based on missing skills, geographies, etc.**
- **The SC should have more ownership over SWA with clearer parameters for oversight of budget, staffing, etc.**
- **A Strategic Oversight Group should be set up with good practice standards for Task Teams.**
- **SWA's governing document should be updated.**

## 6. Operational and Management Arrangements

### 6.1. Hosting in UNICEF

SWA is hosted by UNICEF New York with communications and advocacy support functions provided by the WSSCC from their Geneva offices. The intent of this arrangement has been to capitalize on UNICEF's reach in terms of implementation and convening power at the global level, as well as its profile and "political firepower", and to take advantage of the WSSCC's long history of advocacy in the sector – a key component of SWA's approach.

SWA's governing document stresses the importance of "close and transparent liaison between Secretariat staff" and states that, "The degree of independence of the Secretariat from the host(s) will be reviewed periodically by the SC, and is one important determinant in selecting the hosting arrangement."<sup>79</sup>

In order to frame discussion around such arrangements, the review team has sought to explore UNICEF's hosting role in relation to the following requirements that are specific to perceived needs for SWA:

- Clear convening power and political clout
- Wide (global) reach and scope
- Solid legitimacy and reputation in the sector
- An ability to speak / relate to a range of different stakeholder groups in "their language"
- Ability to embed pillars of SWA strategy directly
- Sufficient flexibility to allow initiative to be "driven" by an outside entity (SC) but with sufficient management capacity to provide oversight function
- Sufficient flexibility to contract in services easily

#### Review findings

In many of the conversations held by the review team, interviewees clearly appeared to blur the lines between UNICEF as a host of SWA and UNICEF as a partner in SWA. All respondents recognized that UNICEF provides a neutral, global convening power that directly appeals to national governments and donors alike. UNICEF is widely seen to bring political clout and clear connection to SDG processes as well as a clear seat at the table in national processes. Many also felt that, though somewhat traditional, UNICEF is able to promote and consolidate diverse tried and tested programmatic approaches more widely and deeply (certainly at the rural level) than perhaps any other institution in the WASH sector. Comments around UNICEF's programming were seen as relevant in that hosting was not merely seen as providing office space and some line management functions. Indeed, UNICEF's ability to mainstream SWA principles and approaches into its programming was widely viewed as a valuable contribution from a host, further affording SWA a sense of legitimacy and reach.

There was also general appreciation for the practical aspects of UNICEF's hosting role with regard to the physical location of SWA staff in UN buildings, the management oversight, contributions of logistics and communications support to the SWA Secretariat, and its ability to reach senior leadership in governments and across a wide range of institutions. Most also agreed that the relationship with WSSCC works well and the division of labor is clear. Some concerns were expressed about insufficient financial reporting to the partnership, blurred branding between UNICEF and SWA, the cost of staffing arrangements and the levels of bureaucracy inherent in the UN system. The use of UNICEF email addresses by members of the Secretariat was mentioned as a specific problem.

With regard to the perceived value of this host-partner blurring, through informal discussion with UNICEF staff not involved in SWA, the general sense was that SWA had not yet been sufficiently embedded (for better or worse) in UNICEF. They further suggested that the links and awareness in New York and beyond the UNICEF focal points in country could be strengthened.

#### **Moving forward: Analysis and pointers**

The review team believes that the UNICEF hosting arrangements for a fledgling partnership were appropriate, and that, given all the factors mentioned above, **any considerations around shifting SWA to another institution would be a distraction at this time.** The Secretariat could be rotated but only once SWA has solidified and embedded. There would be transaction costs, other agencies would have interests as well, and negotiations would still need to take place among a wide range of partners – thus, **there is no guarantee that rotation would make the Secretariat any more effective or efficient.**

UNICEF's brand clearly provides a strong level of comfort for the wide range of stakeholders (particularly national governments) to whom SWA seeks to appeal. Furthermore, UNICEF has unparalleled reach and is embedded in the system, "sufficiently central and close to the seat of global power", particularly at this time of negotiations around the Post-2015 agenda. **As the initial benefits of convening power and neutrality at the global level have been exploited, UNICEF's other strengths particularly of reach and influence now need to be tapped into** (again blurring the lines between host and partner).

The more significant concerns around SWA "capture" by UNICEF seem generally unfounded. **Any host institution of a global partnership would influence day-to-day procedures and decision-making. In some senses, this should be rectified or at least counter-balanced through a stronger Steering Committee and a more senior Secretariat with clearer mandates and relationships between the component SWA pieces.** Otherwise, some organizations may continue to feel as though they are spectators rather than partners.

This may speak to the discussions above about the need for a stronger connection between the different work streams of SWA to allow for partners to more effectively engage in different ways. As the emphasis on the HLM potentially reduces as the primary activity of the Partnership, UNICEF and other partners will want to increasingly engage in a different way. Also in terms of capture, in different instances, UNICEF, WaterAid, WSP, IRC all come to the fore as clear forces within the Partnership that drive relations at the national level in different countries.

The review team believes that the risks that UNICEF has taken by hosting the Partnership and putting its credibility on the line generally go unrecognized by SWA partners. UNICEF's brand is closely associated with SWA and works very much in support of the Partnership: letters of invite go out under UNICEF sponsorship; UNICEF carries the risks associated with staff management, etc. While other partners carry some risks of association, notably the World Bank for hosting the HLM, these are sporadic and often on their own terms of how much to engage. UNICEF cannot so easily walk away, distance itself from or reduce its participation in the partnership should something go wrong. While there is some speculation that SWA still requires close association with and even perceived ownership by UNICEF, it does seem that SWA as a brand is gaining sufficient traction and thus can begin loosening those ties somewhat. SWA will still rely on UNICEF as a partner for its convening power to attract senior officials like it should be relying further on other partners for other aspects.

With a clear hosting mandate, it is incumbent upon UNICEF to ensure appropriate staffing and line management for an increasingly complicated operating environment for SWA. This requires being transparent about budgets, funding and contracting (as well as claiming credit for its own in-kind contribution); sending clear signals of SWA's relative independence (by

creating non-UNICEF email addresses and, more importantly, by ensuring SWA branding and supporting SWA Secretariat responsiveness to partner organizations); and finding mechanisms, potentially through third parties, to bring in support as needed.

By all accounts, the relationship with WSSCC is smooth. While this may be due largely to “a function of personalities”, it does seem that both UNICEF and WSSCC are clear about their remits. This suggests that, **as long as the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, the SWA Secretariat should be able to function as a dispersed team which would allow them to engage more easily with more stakeholders and cover more events more fluidly, etc.**

While the benefits are clear, the review team recommends that consideration should be given to UNICEF’s pairing with organizations/s less encumbered by UN procedures and protocols. This would potentially reduce transaction costs, allowing for more dynamic and responsive approaches to opportunities as they present themselves.

### Key questions

- What assistance might be needed from third parties to support UNICEF in its host role? E.g. for seizing opportunities such as easier contracting, less formal communication channels, etc.
- How can UNICEF’s strengths of reach and influence be further tapped into (as a partner)? (for the benefit of SWA but also to model embeddedness)
- How can partners be guided & encouraged to take on more responsibility?

## Lessons from other global partnerships

### Hosting arrangements

The hosting of global partnerships is a challenge, usually because of perceptions that the host is imposing its rules and policies upon the partnership.<sup>80</sup> Trying to undertake activities without assistance from a host organization, however, is costly and can reduce efficiency.

Decisions to rotate or change hosting arrangements require careful planning and a degree of partnership maturity. In this regard the **GAVI Alliance’s** decision to establish an independent Secretariat following initial hosting by UNICEF is worth exploring. Another example, albeit on a smaller scale, is the multi-stakeholder global initiative, **Business Partners for Development (BPD)**, which became an independent entity having been housed as a program, initially by the World Bank and then by WaterAid. Although still hosted by WaterAid, and benefiting from office operational support and links to wider discussions in the sector, registering as an independent charity in the UK afforded BPD (then renamed Building Partnerships for Development) the flexibility to work as a small and nimble organization that managed its own affairs.

Reinforcing ongoing dialogue, review and transparency have been suggested as useful for good relationships between host organizations and global partnerships. In an evaluation of the **RBM Partnership (2004-2008)**, as tensions with WHO hosting arrangements were highlighted, a call was made for regular meetings and stronger monitoring of the relationship.<sup>81</sup> RBM efforts to clearly define its relationship with WHO include a statement on its website to explain that: “the RBM Partnership Secretariat is *functionally* accountable to the Board and *administratively* accountable to the hosting

<sup>80</sup> Bezanson & Isenman (2012)

<sup>81</sup> Dalberg Global Development Advisors (2009)

<http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/docs/RBMexternalEvaluation2009.pdf>

agency, the World Health Organization (WHO)". The MoU on Hosting, Secretariat and Administrative Services is also available for public view<sup>82</sup> and could serve as a useful reference for SWA.

## 6.2. Secretariat Structure and Capacity

Given the broad scope of the assignment, the review team has not been able to sufficiently scrutinize the organization, structures and job descriptions of the Secretariat staff. These more operational aspects appeared to be less critical to analyze at this time in comparison with the broader issues within the partnership covered in this report. That said, some overarching findings are noted below as based on interviews with Secretariat staff, UNICEF more generally and with wider stakeholders.

### Review findings

There was generally much appreciation for the Secretariat as a hardworking, dedicated team with a clear ability to work across formal protocols to engage senior officials. Some questioned whether, as its operating environment and expectations of SWA become more complicated, that the level of staffing (as opposed to the number of staff) was sufficiently elevated to be able to maximize its impact. The role of the Coordinator and the need for a more senior figure in this position was mentioned specifically by a number of respondents. Several interviewees also requested more information and discussion about the appointment of consultants to support the Secretariat.

With regard to process issues, by all accounts, information sharing is getting better but many suggested that it could be improved further still with an emphasis on headlines and quality rather than quantity.

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The responsibilities of SWA's Secretariat appear to have grown rather organically and opportunistically. This was an understandable approach in the early days but it now appears to be somewhat unstructured, with the Secretariat pulled in any number of directions. Indeed, some of those interviewed appear to have unrealistic expectations of what a global partnership can achieve without enough dedicated staff or some level of delegated decision-making authority.

Practically speaking, the Secretariat cannot, and should not, be expected to consult on every operational decision but needs to have clearly negotiated parameters for decision-making. It also requires more analysis of what partner organizations will do and what will be done by the Secretariat. Following some attention to the recommendations in this report, the staffing structures and job descriptions of the Secretariat, particularly the Coordinator role, will then require attention.

Initially the requirement may have been for a Coordinator who did just that – coordinated. As SWA has grown in stature and scale, however, the Secretariat, and the Coordinator position in particular, has had the vantage point of being in the center of the discussions and needed to acquire some authority (much of this admittedly as a result of the limitations of the SC), which has clearly displeased some stakeholders. There appears to be a lack of appreciation for the complexity of this role, particularly in an environment where the guiding structures are not sufficiently robust and the wider landscape of the WASH sector is evolving rapidly. If the

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<sup>82</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the World Health Organization Concerning Hosting, Secretariat and Administrative Services  
<http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/docs/RBMexternalEvaluation2009.pdf>

components line up effectively, the Coordinator role is key to reinforcing SWA as a primary hub for WASH globally, particularly as an interlocutor between the WASH sector and other sectors (or other elements of the wider water sector) in a post-2015 world. Within this scenario, the possibility of giving the Coordinator role more weight is worth considering. Ultimately, the Coordinator (and the Secretariat) has to keep stakeholders happy, to represent the partnership on some level, and to keep conversations going. This requires diplomacy, facilitation skills, being able to speak “different languages” with different stakeholders, and other skills. To explore this further, the review team thus recommends that the Coordinator’s job description should be benchmarked against other similar initiatives.

With regard to the appointment of consultants, it is clear that the Secretariat (and the Vice Chair) requires support to guide the functioning of the Partnership. There are, after all, a number of aspects to navigate in a complex and multi-faceted landscape. As a result senior consultants have been brought in. **Whilst there is solid respect for the individuals and their contribution to SWA and to the Secretariat more specifically, their roles, remits and at least projected level of support in person days should be shared more widely, certainly at least with the Steering Committee.** Given an understanding of the need and constraints faced by the Secretariat, UNICEF, in discussions with the Vice Chair, should then be allowed to solicit this support as appropriate to deliver on the expectations of the Secretariat. These should be described clearly in the Governing Document and in a revised business plan. A further consideration is that as SWA is trying to reach out to other sectors and non-WASH officials (like the Finance Sector), then consideration should be given to bringing in non-WASH senior support to SWA at this level.

A business plan based on a revisited purpose and greater clarity around pillars or components should determine the roles, skills sets and areas of expertise the Secretariat should provide vis-à-vis and as delegated by the Steering Committee. This would then determine job descriptions and person specifications. A key consideration is that for an evolving partnership like SWA, UNICEF staffing rules and structures may pose a challenge to a more flexible approach that enables SWA to ensure it can do what needs to be done. As it stands, **the work appears to be derived from stretching current capacities rather than the needs more clearly determining potential capacities required.**

At the same time, **the expectations around partner contributions (in a less than ideal voluntary capacity, and then the implications of these for the Secretariat’s role, remit and capacity) need to be debated and teased out further.**

Some further analysis should also be conducted around who within the Partnership needs what information and in what format and for what purpose (for information, for discussion and input, for decision and approval). This is a difficult aspect to get right for all stakeholders; there will always be those who want more or less information than that provided. In a related vein, some appear to have far more dedicated time than others to scrutinize documents and make recommendations. For some organizations, like WaterAid or IRC, however, perhaps this function and support to the Secretariat could be more formalized in some way, as is the case with the WSSCC.

### Key questions

#### Depending on agreement on the function of the partnership

- What should the Coordinator role be and what skills-set is necessary for this?
- What skills are required more generally in the Secretariat? Can partners be asked to contribute these skills in some way?
- What kind of communication channels and materials are needed for different stakeholder groups?

## Lessons from other global partnerships

### Secretariat structures

While “lean” Secretariats are perceived as promoting greater efficiency and reducing bureaucracy, a study of 11 global partnerships<sup>83</sup> found that “leanness has often been treated as an end in itself” and has had damaging consequences for progress and credibility. Adequate resources, including sufficient staffing and funding, are essential requirements for the effective functioning of such Secretariats.

Conversations about changes in the Secretariat should not supersede dialogue around reaching further clarity around SWA’s purpose and main areas of operation or contribution to the WASH sector (i.e. what the pieces are and how they fit together practically). As the cases of the GAVI Alliance and GPE show, an increase in Secretariat size appears to be determined by the availability of dedicated financial resources, largely as a function of the oversight role it plays in dispersing resources. For example, the **GAVI Alliance**, which is heavily funded by the private sector, has a large Secretariat<sup>84</sup> with six departments located in Washington and Geneva. The operations of the **GPE** Secretariat, meanwhile, are covered by the well-resourced GPE Fund. In this case, following a review that found the Secretariat lacked enough staff to efficiently address problems, particularly those related to country level programs, the Partnership expanded its Secretariat significantly. A three-tier system was put in place with a CEO and Front Office at the helm; units for monitoring and evaluation and a Chief Technical Officer for Innovation underneath this; and a third level encompassing different units for Partnerships and External Relations, Country Support and Operations.<sup>85</sup>

In the case of **IHP+** where the focus is mainly on advocacy, a small core group is responsible for the management of the Partnership. This group works directly through the staff of its co-hosts (WHO and the World Bank) to implement the agreed plan of work.<sup>86</sup>

### 6.3. Fostering relationships between SWA members and externally

SWA Partnership Meetings are held biennially to review progress and set future directions with one senior level official delegate per partner organization encouraged to attend. To date two Partnership Meetings have taken place: in Johannesburg in 2011 and Geneva in 2013.

While there may have been disagreements over expectations from, and the designs of, the Johannesburg meeting, the Geneva meeting was generally considered to be well designed and executed. Because it is an expensive prospect to bring stakeholders / members together in this way on a regular basis, “takeaways need to be clear”. Thus the growing emphasis on facilitation and communications to provide opportunities to meet and share viewpoints shown in Geneva and at the Senior Minister Meeting (SMM) in Washington in April 2014 are seen as positive advances.

With a stronger Steering Committee that is mandated with the task of deciding direction, resourcing, etc., and sufficient member clarity on “what SWA is”, such meetings going forward should focus less on SWA itself and more on the sharing of information between SWA members / partners. As mentioned previously (see section 4.1.3), **the Sector Ministers Meeting held in Washington in April 2014 provided a clear example during the break-out sessions of the key benefit of SWA – its ability to bring together different experiences and perspectives.**

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.gavialliance.org/about/governance/secretariat/>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.globalpartnership.org/secretariat>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/en/faqs/>

In terms of external communications, by all accounts, this has improved dramatically in terms of clarity and format. The website is well organized and usefully captures key information and provides supporting documentation. Again, **the question that SWA needs to consider is the depth of its communications.** Whilst no one would deny the need and the value of investing in and ensuring access to water and sanitation services, **there is some sense that the sector needs to now see itself not as the “beleaguered laggard” but rather as able to share a clear and sophisticated sense of direction**

#### 6.4. Internal Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements

Monitoring and evaluation by SWA of SWA appears to happen regularly on an informal basis through the Steering Committee. An example of this was the feedback meeting on the day after the 2014 HLM. This progress review has also served for partners and SC members to share views and information that they may be less likely to say in a public forum or to express to the Secretariat. It is the review team’s hope that this process has provided a useful and sufficiently neutral format for such views to be shared. Regular stocktaking in this or related ways should be encouraged to ensure SWA’s continued relevance and effectiveness.

Practically speaking, as a wide range of stakeholders are viewing the Partnership from different angles, and provided that there are formal and informal feedback mechanisms in place with sufficient caucusing amongst stakeholder groupings, one can safely assume that the partnership benefits from sufficient M&E scrutiny. For specific events (Partnership Meetings, Sector Ministers Meetings, etc.), evaluation forms have provided useful and generally positive feedback.

#### 6.5. Value for money

The issue of value for money did arise in a number of interviews. The perception is that SWA is an expensive undertaking, particularly given the nature of the high-level events and broad partnership convening, but also as a function of the cost of staff being housed in UN agencies. There is a rather commonly expressed sense from interviewees that such arrangements should strive to be as “lean and mean” as possible. At this stage though, such financial efficiencies could be to the detriment of effectiveness. If the partnership is striving to attract high-level participants in these early days, this brings costs.

**Following a clear response to the recommendations in this report, further efforts should then be made to analyze value for money more specifically.** Given the significant scope of the review and that this aspect is not believed to be “make or break” for the partnership at this time, the review team focused its energies in other areas. For meaningful comparison, figures would need to be extracted from other similarly styled and similarly staffed global partnerships that bring comparable global reach. A review of recent studies of value for money of UN programming would also be instructive.

Admittedly, the review team believes that a Secretariat function could be less expensive if it were not hosted in a UN agency. In this early stage of the partnership though, this could jeopardize the in-kind hosting and partner contributions of reach and convening power (as described in more detail above) of UNICEF and WSSCC. In future years, were SWA strong enough with sufficient clout in its own right, it may only require more light touch logistical and administrative housing arrangements or could actually be self standing in its own premises. (It is premature to think of SWA becoming an independent entity (i.e. registered in its own right). The perception is that being housed in a big organization affords certain economies of scale. This may be true in some ways but if it is encumbered by a large organization’s administrative procedures without some flexibility to take tailored decisions on behalf of the partnership, this

could outweigh the benefits with impacts on timeliness and even cost. Needless to say, analysis would be needed around such options.

As SWA and its operating environment and activities become more complex and sophisticated, it will need to invest more resources in facilitating the “pooled action” approach even if it does not directly pay for the individual actions of SWA members. **Basing the Partnership primarily on loosely structured volunteerism should not be considered as a viable way forward. This also suggests that SWA might benefit from bringing a third party in a more formal way to support the Secretariat.**

## **SWA operations and management**

### **Summary of recommendations**

- **If willing, UNICEF should continue to host SWA Secretariat.**
- **A skills audit based on SWA’s strategy should be undertaken and the roles of the Secretariat determined in line with this. SWA / host should then ensure appropriate staffing and management.**
- **Additional formalized support from third parties should be explored.**
- **Parameters for Secretariat decision-making should be negotiated.**
- **The Coordinator role should be benchmarked against similar global partnerships (not size but function).**
- **SWA’s relative independence should be demonstrated with consistent use by Secretariat of SWA e-mail addresses.**
- **Internal and external communications should be fit for purpose, provide clear information and a sense of direction.**
- **Work should continue on development of systematic internal M/E to build on achievements and take corrective action where needed.**

## 7. Other Overarching Issues

This chapter reflects on three overarching and interlinked issues that the review team believes are central to the promotion of greater efficiency and effectiveness in SWA: accountability, institutionalization and ending.

### 7.1. Enhancing SWA accountabilities

#### Review findings

There is wide acceptance that “fit for purpose” governance, management and operational arrangements require a clear emphasis on defining who is accountable to whom and for what.

Opinions differed as to whom SWA is ultimately accountable. The majority stated that accountability should rest with countries but that this is probably not the case in reality. Some stated that SWA’s accountability is to its “partners” but most believed that SWA is primarily accountable to donors/funding agencies.

As SWA places great emphasis on the importance of “mutual accountability” between donors and recipients in order to achieve its goals,<sup>87</sup> the **fact that donors were singled out by many interviewees as not being as accountable as they should be is a cause for concern**. Many complained that the treatment of and expectations around donor countries differed enormously from that for “southern” countries and there were calls for them to engage more deeply, and to lead by example by providing a better account of their actions, especially where changes in focus are involved. Others felt that it was inevitable that donors are treated differently as they make financial and other contributions to SWA that naturally put them in a different position to other partners.

A number of interviewees felt that SWA should focus more strongly on accountability to citizens rather than on mutual accountability between donors and recipients. This latter aspect, they asserted, once again, reinforces an outdated development dynamic. Many insisted that a move away from a “top-down” to “bottom-up” driven process in SWA is necessary with countries providing a clearer steer, taking more responsibility for progress and having a greater say in what they need.

In order to promote a change in the asymmetry of power within SWA, the importance of ensuring stronger linkages with local government and national civil society organizations in country processes was stressed. DFID’s report on Mutual Accountability<sup>88</sup> points out that regional civil society partner groups working on WASH<sup>89</sup> offer clear country-level networks for bottom-up accountability that could be mobilized by SWA. While this is occurring in some countries, greater focus on supporting solid country compacts and encouraging fuller participation in SWA of donor country offices were also mentioned in this regard. Additional attention was drawn to the importance of addressing the issue of country capacity if national and local level accountability is to be improved.

In all cases it was suggested that improved accountability arrangements in SWA rest upon more effectively translating behavior into action, with greater clarity around what is expected of members in supporting and strengthening accountability processes. Suggestions included:

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<sup>87</sup> See Sanitation and Water for All, A Global Framework for Action, Guiding Principles, June 9, 2010

<sup>88</sup> See DFID (2013)

<sup>89</sup> Including the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS), End Water Poverty, the Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA), and the Millennium Water Alliance (MWA), and the Africa Water Association (AfWA).

- Development of a Code of Conduct that clearly articulates what is expected of members.
- Greater engagement with regional forums and mechanisms to promote country level accountability, e.g. working more effectively with SAN networks as well as regional development communities and forums.
- Positioning risk management as a more shared responsibility, with oversight by the SWA SC of risk assessment and mitigation for different players (particularly UNICEF as the host).
- Reinforcement of monitoring and evaluation processes that endorse a culture of commitment and mutual accountability. This is well endorsed by the DFID review mentioned above in which “review, remedy, re-review” protocols are promoted as useful for endorsing ownership, alongside the fostering of adaptive learning through rigorous evaluation.<sup>90</sup>

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

The review team believes that clarification around accountabilities relates fundamentally to greater certainty within SWA about its function, i.e. whether it is a certification agent (certifying delivery on commitments – which there is lip service to but no real appetite for) as opposed to more of a network focusing on advocacy and learning, and then joint messaging. Once there is greater clarity of purpose in SWA, accountability systems and processes can be developed that address the following core areas:

- **Compliance** – whereby rules of engagement are clearly defined and agreed, and partners (including donors as well as countries) and SWA more generally are held to account for its and/or their own commitments.
- **Transparency** – whereby SWA gives a stronger account of its strategic goals and links between goals, components and activities.
- **Responsiveness** – whereby SWA (through its component parts) takes account of and balances decisions around recommendations made by its constituencies (particularly countries), and shares the learning from this amongst its partners and stakeholders.

#### Lessons from other global partnerships

##### Accountability

A review of a selection of global partnerships suggests that strong governance and accountability enables partners to collaborate more effectively and avoid partnerships investing time and energy on managing conflicts and crises related to competition, free-riders, disputes and grievances.<sup>91</sup> Partnerships that have managed to improve their performance have done so by: creating incentives for good partnership governance; ensuring that governance systems in place are understood and respected by partners; and making efforts to build the knowledge and capacity of partners to govern effectively.

Guidelines, standards, codes of conduct and policies on conflicts of interest have an important role to play in promoting transparency and accountability in global partnerships. As well as avoidance of capture by vested interests and the addressing of power imbalances, they are also useful for promoting clarity with regard to the duties and tasks of different partnership components, including members, chairs, boards and committees, task teams, etc., as well as operational and management arrangements. An “accountability compact” or a code for Legal and Ethical Conduct to which all partners subscribe are also posited as useful tools.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See DFID (2013)

<sup>91</sup> Rochlin, S. et al. (2008)

<sup>92</sup> Bezanson & Isenman (2012)

In line with these suggestions, **SUN** has developed the *SUN Movement Principles of Engagement*<sup>93</sup> which consists of seven principles designed to maintain a common purpose and mutual accountability. These include commitments to being transparent, inclusive, rights-based, willing to negotiate, mutually accountable, cost-effective, and continuously communicative. It is noted that these principles provide a starting point for the development of strategies that every stakeholder group can develop to best integrate and contribute to the SUN Movement.

**GPE**, meanwhile, has a *Policy on Conflicts of Interest*<sup>94</sup> which, although mainly designed to ensure transparency around funding issues, helpfully distinguishes between actual and potential conflicts of interest, provides guidelines for ensuring transparency and openness in decision-making processes, including rules on disclosure, and an outline of procedures for non-compliance.

Another study of global partnerships suggests that a full “backbone structure” involving global, national and, crucially, regional levels, can play an important part in creating accountability.<sup>95</sup> **CAADP’s Mutual Accountability Framework**<sup>96</sup> is a useful reference here as it centers upon the provision of positive and ongoing incentives” for partners to effectively deliver on their commitments and thereby achieve substantive impact on poverty and hunger. This has involved: (i) reinforcing monitoring and evaluation processes based on mutually agreed performance criteria, including tailored indicators for specific partners such as donors; (ii) establishing Review & Dialogue Platforms in which M&E reports are reviewed by key CAADP partners in consultation with their constituencies; and (iii) Recognition Platforms in which reports are presented at technical and political forums, achievements recognized and thereby political support increased. All these efforts recognize the importance of mutually reinforcing accountability mechanisms and relationships at national, regional, continental and global levels. In this regard, the role played by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to support reinforcement across these levels is crucial.

## 7.2. Institutionalization

### Review findings

Interviewees universally agreed that SWA was not deeply enough embedded in different partner organizational systems and processes. As a result, in the words of one interviewee, “There is no strong sense of ownership.” The feeling among a number of respondents was that this situation has meant that responsibility for SWA and its work is not shared equally among partners with some taking on more of the “burden” for its work than others. This was particularly highlighted in the case of UNICEF, both in its role as Secretariat host as well as a SWA partner.

It was also noted that, in spite of three HLMs, SWA still has to convince the World Bank of the importance of having such a meeting, and encourage finance ministers and political leaders to attend. A number of interviewees also felt that SWA as a platform had not played a strong enough role in the post-2015 dialogue and the SDGs. This lack of leveraging power suggested to some that SWA is also not yet sufficiently institutionalized in the wider aid and development architecture.

### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

While acknowledging that burden-sharing is unequal and that more robust efforts are needed to further embed SWA within and across all partner organizations, **the review team believes**

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<sup>93</sup>SUN Movement Principles of Engagement <http://scalingupnutrition.org/principles-of-engagement>

<sup>94</sup> Policy on Conflicts of Interest, GPE, November 2011

<sup>95</sup> Patscheke, S. et al. (2014)

<sup>96</sup> Oruko, L. et al. (2011)

**deeper engagement and a sense of ownership by partners requires greater clarity on SWA's usefulness for their work and an understanding of exactly what is expected of them to achieve SWA's goals.** This reverts back, once again, to the need for discussion around the Partnership's purpose and the roles and responsibilities for delivering SWA's strategy.

Once there is clarity on purpose and strategy, the review team recommends that an analysis of actual partner contributions should be carried out in order to understand who is bringing what to the table and how can these contributions be maximized and made fit for purpose. This is also likely to require revisiting partner incentives for engagement in SWA and a clear organizational understanding of the risks and benefits of participation to each. As highlighted above (section 5.1.2), the higher the incentives of each partner to participate, the more committed they are likely to be to improving SWA's performance, delivering on their expected contributions and participating in decision-making. This, in turn, will encourage the embedding of SWA within their organizations.

**Institutionalizing SWA into organizational systems and practices also necessarily requires ensuring that individual partner representatives are of a senior enough level, or fully supported and mandated, to take action on behalf of their organizations. Revisiting the SWA governing body terms of reference and expected engagement should further underscore who is required to fulfill the Steering Committee's function.**

With regard to SWA's wider institutionalization in the aid landscape, clarity of purpose will also assist this process as partners will be surer of their roles and able to articulate support for the Partnership more confidently. Policy level endorsement is crucial here and rests upon close connections and communication loops between different partners at different levels (across, between and within organizations) to ensure that the SWA agenda is reinforced. **More systematic efforts and avenues for dynamic exchange among SWA partners and stakeholders at national, regional and global levels will also assist in mainstreaming SWA within the wider development system.**

### 7.3. Sunsets, Trajectories and Exits

#### Review findings

For the large majority of those interviewed for this review, any question about an "end" or an "exit strategy" for SWA was seen as inappropriate. Interestingly, many linked this to the fact that lack of access to sanitation and water, and ongoing issues such as quality, affordability and equity, are likely to exist for many years to come, and hence the Partnership would continue to be necessary in the long-term. Very few acknowledged that SWA should have a clear end date linked to time bound frameworks for the achievement of specific results or indications of "success", ingredients that are fundamental to a solid business plan.

#### Moving forward: Analysis and pointers

While common to many partnerships, a lack of interest in identifying (or even having a conversation about) an endpoint is problematic, particularly as there is widespread evidence to suggest that the effort required to perpetuate partnerships beyond an acceptable timescale for the achievement of clear and tangible results almost inevitably leads to stagnation and/or a steep falling off of partner participation and engagement.<sup>97</sup> It has also been noted that partnerships may serve best as transitional mechanisms that address particular issues, achieve

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<sup>97</sup> EQUAL Guide See for example Mainstreaming and Further Action, *EQUAL Guide to Development Partnerships*, Brussels, 2005

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal\\_consolidated/data/document/partnerguide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/partnerguide_en.pdf)

expected results (or not), and then dissolve or move into something else where there are further opportunities for the partners to find fresh ways of working together.<sup>98</sup> In this sense, the potential for partnerships to achieve genuine transformation may actually be increased by the pressures of being temporary and transitional.<sup>99</sup>

**A conversation about what success looks like for SWA, how partners will get there, as well as how they will know when they have achieved it is crucial to ensuring that the Partnership works more efficiently and effectively.** As well as clarity around expected impact, this will also assist in ensuring that governance and operational arrangements are appropriate for working towards a clear “arrival point”. When this has been achieved, partners will then be able to think about how to expand or narrow down the remit of the Partnership. As noted above (section 4.2), **SWA’s current pillars or components of activity do not move in tandem and thereby some sense of progression (success) needs to be defined for each.** This in itself may suggest a useful trajectory for the Partnership as a whole.

If, as this report suggests, the primary focus of SWA is likely to be that of an advocacy and learning agent (rather than a certification body), then such **an exploration will require agreement as to what results are desired and expected by partners of SWA in this role, at what levels, and by when.** Result based management frameworks are useful here as they assist in developing roadmaps. Specific criteria for success can then developed alongside the processes and resources necessary to achieve targeted results. This conversation was actually started, or at least strengthened, at a SWA members meeting in London in 2013.<sup>100</sup> At this meeting, partners were asked to look ahead at what success might look like in five and ten years and then use this to project backwards in order to determine how SWA might have forged a path towards defining the activities required for achieving these goals. The analysis put forward from that set of exercises should certainly be revisited and potentially repeated in some form.

### Lessons from other global partnerships

#### Roadmaps for the future

**IHP+** was launched in September 2007 with a time-limited work plan that meant that decisions about its future would be made following a review in 2013. In July 2013, the Partnership set out a series of actions and timeframes that focused on fast-track implementation in countries and learning about delivery and results, development agency change, and greater South-South cooperation, with more systematic approaches to learning within and across countries.<sup>101</sup>

The **SUN** Movement has a clear road map that specifies indicators, measurable targets and time-bound objectives. The Movement was envisioned as time-bound for a 3-year period with an evaluation of their work due in 2015.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Caplan & Stott (2008)

<sup>99</sup> Halper (2009)

<sup>100</sup> Visioning exercise. SWA London Members Meeting, facilitated by Barbara Evans and Ken Caplan (May 2013)

<sup>101</sup> Aligning for better results IHP+ roadmap for intensified action by all development partners, [http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/fileadmin/uploads/ihp/Documents/Upcoming\\_events/Roadmap\\_aligning\\_for\\_better\\_results\\_July\\_2013\\_\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/fileadmin/uploads/ihp/Documents/Upcoming_events/Roadmap_aligning_for_better_results_July_2013__2_.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> [http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SUN-Movement-Road-Map-Septemeber-2012\\_en.pdf](http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SUN-Movement-Road-Map-Septemeber-2012_en.pdf) and also <http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/archived/12-05-14-SUN-Movement-Key-Processes-Note-from-the-SUN-Secretariat-FINAL.pdf>  
<http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SUN-MOVEMENT-STRATEGY-ENG.pdf>

Other roadmaps worthy of review include **RBM's Global Malaria Action Plan (GMAP2)** for the period 2016-2025,<sup>103</sup> and the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation** program which bases its work on the achievement of the Busan Commitments<sup>104</sup> and delivery on ten progress indicators and targets for these with clear indicative timelines for country monitoring efforts.<sup>105</sup>

## **Other Overarching Issues**

### **Summary of Recommendations**

#### **Accountability**

- **Clear rules of engagement should be developed to hold SWA members to account for their commitments.**
- **Clarity should be ensured around strategic goals and links between goals, components and activities.**
- **The SC and Secretariat should provide clear feedback mechanisms to show that decisions have taken account of different constituency views.**

#### **Institutionalization**

- **Greater clarity should be provided to partners on what is expected of them to achieve SWA's goals.**
- **An analysis of partner contributions should be conducted in order to see where and how these can be maximized.**
- **Individual partner representatives should be fully supported by their organizations and mandated to take action on their behalf.**

#### **Sunsets, Trajectories and Exits**

- **Agreement is needed on what success looks like for SWA in each pillar of work and how to get there.**
- **Decisions should be made about what results are desired and expected by partners of SWA in relation to "success", at what levels, and by when.**

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/gmap/index.html>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

<sup>105</sup> [http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/20130701-Busan-Global-Monitoring-Guidance\\_ENG\\_FINAL.pdf](http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/20130701-Busan-Global-Monitoring-Guidance_ENG_FINAL.pdf)

## 8. Key conclusions and recommendations

There is huge appreciation for the potential of the SWA Partnership and much recognition for what it has already accomplished in terms of advocacy and convening power. Indeed, although it was difficult for the review team to assess the counterfactual, we are fairly convinced that if SWA did not exist that the WASH sector would likely form something resembling SWA, particularly in the run-up to the Post-2015 period.

Across the board in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and impact, SWA is a work in progress. As the Partnership moves forward, attention needs to be paid to three key core areas:

- Vision / Purpose – What is a realistic yet ambitious contribution from a networked entity like SWA going forward?
- Strategy – How can SWA most effectively put countries at the center of its approach?
- Governance – How can SWA ensure effective and strategic governance while embedding the partnership purpose and strategy in partner organizations?

In order to address these questions the SWA theory of change may need to be re-articulated or sharpened in light of what is regarded as realistic at the global and national levels. The component parts also need to be more joined up to have the desired impact. Emphasis should then be placed on creating (and resourcing) the structures that would lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency.

With regard to the purpose or function of the Partnership, the review team believes that there is little appetite among partners for SWA to fulfill the role of a verification or accountability-oriented agent “with teeth”, or to take on more than a light touch role at country level. The framing of mutual accountability between donors and recipient countries has also proved challenging. In view of the regular mention by interviewees of a changing resource landscape that emphasized government and other local resources being brought to bear on challenges to WASH access, the team’s sense is that, where possible, SWA should be facilitating discussions around where and how country systems have become more effective as a result of specific interventions. SWA could also seek to understand lessons from those outside the WASH sector.

At present SWA is clearly not a resource transfer agent that can channel funds or capacity to those most in need or most able to make good use of them, although a stronger “pooled action” approach could be appreciated. The Partnership’s key strengths and achievements have been in the advocacy arena. While the review team feels that there is value in continuing to emphasize the commitments process, to be meaningful, commitments must be fundamentally aligned with national priorities and processes and better monitored. While the capacity to do this at national level may very well be missing in a number of countries, civil society clearly has an important role to play in supporting this process.

At the end of the day, the HLM cannot remain the mainstay of the Partnership. The focus needs to shift to regions and countries, providing a platform or platforms for well-facilitated and properly evidenced exchange. As currently framed, it is not clear that the HLM will continue to draw the same kind of participation as in 2014 without more on the “how” to increase and/or sustain access to services overtaking the emphasis on the “why” to focus on WASH. By all accounts, the WASH sector is rising up the agenda and the outside world is expecting the sector to provide solutions, not to appear to be “endlessly debating the merits of one approach over another”. SWA could be that external-facing vehicle.

All of the above suggests that greater inclusivity is required in SWA as a partnership with efforts to reach out to those not currently engaged (from local government associations, other development sectors, private sector associations, etc.). There is an understated competition within the sector and a sense of politeness has perhaps pervaded SWA’s discussions. The

cause deserves rigorous and more evidenced based debate amongst WASH advocates. SWA needs not only to build upon what it has done best – advocacy – but also enhance these much needed coordination and learning elements to its work.

As to the structures of the Partnership, in an increasingly sophisticated landscape, SWA needs to be managed in a flexible way such that it can respond to opportunities as they arise. This might mean seeking ways for more flexible partners to officially take on different roles. With solid leadership from an effective governing body and a Secretariat with sufficient delegated authority and capacity, many global partnerships manage this kind of dispersed organizational structure, and SWA need not be an exception. In this way, SWA will be able to forge ahead more confidently and effectively and meet the high expectations that people have of it.

## Summary of key recommendations

<p><b>1. Vision and purpose</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overarching framing of SWA should be revisited with a decision made about its precise focus and scope.</li> <li>• SWA partners should undertake a mapping exercise to reflect who does what in the WASH sector, how and with what kinds of resources, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create greater congruence and inter-linkages should be promoted across the three priority areas.</li> <li>• Commitments processes should be sequenced so that those offering external support can align and respond in a more structured manner.</li> <li>• Strategic discussions on the viability, design and participation in future HLMs should be continued.</li> <li>• Agreement should be reached on a mechanism by which countries can categorize themselves to determine what kind of support they need or how they want to engage with SWA.</li> <li>• A roadmap should be developed with clear processes for SWA partnership to assist different countries in achieving universal access within own contexts.</li> <li>• Robust peer-to-peer learning systems should be established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Governance</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Membership</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BRICS and private sector associations should be encouraged to join / become more active.</li> <li>• Incentives for engagement with new groups should be explored in relation to SWA's purpose.</li> <li>• Countries should be re-clustered (possibly on the basis of availability of capacity and resources).</li> <li>• New and simpler membership categories should be established, e.g. Countries and External Support Agencies.</li> <li>• Options for how different parties might work more effectively with SWA (Governments, World Bank, INGOs, etc.) should be developed, e.g. as partners, through focal points, via platforms, etc.</li> <li>• Clear membership guidelines, a branding policy and a conflict of interest policy should be drawn up.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Decision-making</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to identify a high-profile champion from Asia (or Latin America) as an additional Chair should be continued.</li> <li>• A clearer role for the Vice Chair should be developed, ensuring that the individual has dedicated, possibly paid time.</li> <li>• A smaller Steering Committee should be established. 17 members (Vice Chair, Host representative, mix from Countries and External Support Agency partners) are recommended.</li> <li>• Two-thirds of the SC should be elected and remaining members nominated or co-opted directly based on missing skills, geographies, etc.</li> <li>• The SC should have more ownership over SWA. Clearer</li> </ul>

	<p>parameters for oversight of budget, staffing, etc. are recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strategic Oversight Group should be set up with good practice standards for Task Teams.</li> <li>• SWA's governing document should be updated.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Operations and management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If willing, UNICEF should continue to host SWA Secretariat.</li> <li>• A skills audit based on the strategy should be undertaken and the roles of the Secretariat determined in line with this. SWA / host should then ensure appropriate staffing and management.</li> <li>• Additional formalized support from third parties should be explored.</li> <li>• Parameters for Secretariat decision-making should be negotiated.</li> <li>• The Coordinator role should be benchmarked against similar global partnerships (not size but function).</li> <li>• SWA's relative independence should be demonstrated with consistent use by Secretariat of SWA e-mail addresses.</li> <li>• Internal and external communications should be fit for purpose, provide clear information and a sense of direction.</li> <li>• Works should continue to develop systematic internal M/E to build on achievements and take corrective action where needed.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Overarching issues</b>	
<b><u>Accountability</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear rules of engagement should be developed to hold SWA members to account for their commitments.</li> <li>• Clarity should be ensured around strategic goals and links between goals, components and activities.</li> <li>• The SC and Secretariat should provide clear feedback mechanisms to show that decisions have taken account of different constituency views</li> </ul>
<b><u>Institutionalization</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater clarity should be provided to partners on what is expected of them to achieve SWA's goals.</li> <li>• An analysis of partner contributions should be conducted in order to see where and how these can be maximized.</li> <li>• Individual partner representatives should be fully supported by their organizations and mandated to take action on their behalf.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Sunsets, trajectories and exits</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement is needed on what success looks like for SWA in each pillar of work and how to get there.</li> <li>• Decisions should be made about what results are desired and expected by partners of SWA in relation to "success", at what levels, and by when.</li> </ul>

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Review scope and objectives

From Terms of Reference for Progress Review of the Sanitation and Water for All Partnership after 4 Years of Operation

#### SCOPE and OBJECTIVES

UNICEF hosts the SWA Secretariat and is responsible for contractual oversight of this Review.

##### *II.1. OBJECTIVES*

The main objectives of this consultancy assignment are:

- 1) To assess SWA's progress towards achieving its objectives since inception in 2010.
- 2) To review the appropriateness of the existing activities, operational management and governance structures.
- 3) To review the direction of the Partnership, draw key lessons learned and recommend specific ways to help SWA better achieve its intended outcomes and its overall objective/mission.

##### *II.2. REVIEW CRITERIA/QUESTIONS*

Reviewing the performance of SWA involves an assessment of the impact of the Partnership, and an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness with which the partners work together to achieve this impact. The SWA Steering Committee has therefore decided to commission this review with specific attention to:

**Efficiency:** Efficiencies in delivering SWA activities, measured in terms of impacts and benefits in relation to effort and resource expended (both monetary and in kind) as well as SWA ability to minimize transaction costs and deliver value for money.

**Effectiveness:** The extent to which SWA is achieving its results and how the current arrangements (governance structure, activities etc) are contributing to these results.

**Impact:** A review of the overall impact of SWA on universal access to sanitation and water services for all. A detailed assessment of SWA's impact may be undertaken for a sample/cluster of SWA activities from the three priority areas, to correlate the intensity and quality of SWA interventions within priority areas and between them.

## Appendix 2: List of Individuals Formally Interviewed (with affiliation)

The review team is grateful to the following individuals who generously gave of their time (in some cases more than once) to support the review through a lengthy interview process. We are particularly appreciative of the patience shown by country focal points of SWA in accommodating difficult phone and Skype connections.

Beyond those mentioned below, the review team had numerous less formal conversations over the period of the review with a wide range of individuals from the sector.

- Aaron Saltzberg, US Department of State
- Amanda Marlin, WSSCC
- Ana Gren, SIDA
- Anyitike Mwakitalima, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs - Tanzania
- Apollos Nwafor, WaterAid
- Bruce Gordon, WHO
- Catarina de Albuquerque, UN Special Rapporteur on the HRWS
- Cecilia Scharp, UNICEF
- César Cabral, Ministry of Public Health & Social Welfare - Paraguay
- Chris Williams, WSSCC
- Cindy Kushner, SWA Secretariat
- Clare Battle, WaterAid
- Clarissa Brockelhurst, SWA Advisor
- Darren Saywell, Vice Chair / SWA
- Dick Van Ginhoven, DGIS-Netherlands
- Dominick De Waal, WSP
- Erma Uytewaal, IRC
- Fiorella Polo, SWA Secretariat
- Francois Muenger, SDC-Switzerland
- George K. Yarngo, Ministry of Public Works – Liberia
- Heather Skilling, USAID
- Henry Northover, WaterAid
- Irfan Tariq, Ministry of Environment - Pakistan
- Jae So, WSP
- Jamie Bartram, UNC
- Jason Morrison, CEO Water Mandate
- Jean de Dieu Rakotondramihamina, Ministry of Water - Madagascar
- Johan Gely, SDC-Switzerland
- John Oldfield, WASH Advocates
- Jon Lane, Independent
- Juan Carlos Coronel, Ministry of Public Health & Social Welfare - Paraguay
- Kamal Kunwar, UNICEF WASH Coordinator - Pakistan
- Leonard Tedd, DFID-UK
- Lukas Kwezi, DFID-Tanzania
- Marcus Howard, AusAID
- Margaret Batty, WaterAid
- Maria Notley, Finnish Foreign Ministry
- Martha Solomon, DFID-Ethiopia
- Martin Walshe, DFID-Sierra Leone/Liberia
- Ned Breslin, Water for People
- Nugroho T Utomo, Ministry of Development Planning – Indonesia
- Olivier Germaine, SWA/EWP
- Patrick Apoya, WSA
- Peregrine Swann, Independent / GLAAS
- Peter Lochery, CARE
- Phyllida Travis, IHP+
- Piers Cross, SWA Advisor
- Prince Kreplah, Africa Civil Society Network – Liberia
- Rebecca Budimu, UNICEF-Tanzania
- Roberto Acosta, Ministry of Public Health & Social Welfare - Paraguay
- Samuel Godfrey, UNICEF
- Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF
- Thomas Van Waeyenberge, AquaFed
- Unami Mpofu, CAADP
- Veronique Verdeil, World Bank
- William Rex, World Bank
- Yael Velleman, WaterAid