



DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

MINUTES OF THE HIV / AIDS CORE GROUP MEETING

PROJECT : THE WATER SECTOR HIV / AIDS MAINSTREAMING PLAN
AGENDA : CORE GROUP MEETING
DATE : 20 February 2009
TIME : 10:00 – 13:00
VENUE : IRISH AID, HATFIELD

CHAIR: Mr Ngaka Machete, DWAF

PRESENT: Malcolm White, Qaphela Moatshe, G.K. Sehlakgoe, LGX Zulu, D.S. Hash, Helen Moremong, Nandi Dube, Shantal Harigobin, Ngaka Machete, Nthuse Monyela, Vasna Ramasar

APOLOGIES: Rosetta Simelane, Tabita Napakade, Nombulelo Msikinya; Mokgadi Phokojoe, Annatjie Moolman, Petunia Ngema, Winnie Dhlamlenze, Tamara Mathebula

MINUTES:

1. DWAF Progress Report

Ngaka Machete presented a progress report on work being undertaken by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the water sector. The work has been undertaken under the themes of guideline development, communication material, lessons from projects and regional interactions.

DWAF Activities

DWAF are developing HIV and AIDS guidelines for contractors involved in the construction of water and sanitation projects. In addition, they will be making a contribution on HIV and AIDS to the National Health and Hygiene Strategy for the Water Sector. Under communications, participation in the World AIDS Day was highlight followed by the development of an informational handout on HIV and AIDS in the Water Sector.

Challenges of development

A key focus has also been learning from projects that are already underway including a development in Evaton, Gauteng; the De Hoop Dam in Limpopo, a WASH project in Vryheid. In addition, an attempt will be made to apply some of this learning through work in Willow Park, North West Province. In terms of regional interactions, discussions are being held with all the regional champions to understand their successes and challenges and learn from regional experiences. The learning from projects led to a discussion of the need to look at the impact of development across gender, HIV and skills areas. The De Hoop Dam case study raised the need to learn from past experience. An issue raised was the difficulty that arises with DWAF as both the regulator and implementor and that this needs to be highlighted to the WSLG at their meeting in June. The Department of Health also raised the concern regarding the lack of inclusion of environmental health issues in Environmental Impact Assessment. They are in the process of find ways to incorporate environmental health in EIAs and agreed to send out the draft document so that the Core Group can also make inputs.

Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the Water Sector

Nandi Dube reported that the Strategic Framework has not been approved as yet. The document is currently awaiting approval from the DDG Policy & Regulation. The DDG has raised questions about why DWAF is drafting the strategy and the matter will be discussed with top management before approval.

A discussion was held by the Core Group regarding the mandate for the Strategic Framework. It was agreed that the request for the Strategic Framework came to the Core Group from the Water Sector as a whole and therefore the mandate is much broader than DWAF. A decision was taken that the mandate for the development of the Strategic Framework should be re-confirmed by the Water Sector Leadership Group as a means to support the submission to the DWAF top management. A letter will be prepared to the chairs of the WSLG describing the whole process to date and requesting their endorsement of the Strategic Framework. The letter must have the logos of all the partner organisations of the Core Group and must be addressed to the chairs of the WSLG in their capacity as such. Nandi Dube will take responsibility for drafting the letter and circulating to the Core Group members for comments and inputs. The next WSLG meeting is 18-19 June 2009. The letter must be approved by the Core Group before then. Helen Moremong agreed to find out when the committee which puts items on the WSLG agenda are meeting and what and when material needs to be sent to them.

Representation

A discussion was held of various aspects of representation including representation in the Core Group and representation on the Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee on HIV and AIDS.

A question was raised about expanding the membership of the Core Group to include greater representation from other groups such as labour. It was noted that the Core Group is represented by organisations that make up the WSLG and therefore membership is defined at this higher level. It was emphasised that the focus was specifically on HIV and AIDS in the water sector and the Core Group cannot afford to lose this focus. Ngaka agreed to send out the Terms of Reference of the Core Group to everyone in order to provide background on the original mandate of the group.

One significant group not well represented at the Core Group meetings is the HIV and AIDS Unit of the Department of Health. It was acknowledged that they are a key member of the Core Group and their participation is important. Ngaka mentioned that repeated efforts have been made to involve the DoH HIV Unit but capacity constraints have been cited as a reason for non-attendance. Efforts will continue to be made by DWAF and the DoH Environmental Health representative in particular to encourage their participation.

A final point of discussion was held regarding the representation of DWAF on the Inter-departmental Coordinating Committee on HIV and AIDS. The Committee is chaired by the DoH and previously had included people representing internal mainstreaming within government departments. However, over the last few years it has become clear that external mainstreaming is also important and membership of the Committee has been broadened. At present DWAF is represented by the HR champion for EAP but there is an opportunity to have two representatives from DWAF. Nombulelo from DPLG agreed to send out the minutes of the previous IDC meeting to the Core Group and Ngaka agreed to meet with the DWAF representative on the IDC to investigate representation from the Masibambane team.

2. Report from Irish Aid

Malcolm White made a report on behalf of Irish Aid on the World AIDS Day event, the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa and Lesotho HIV and Water initiatives.

World AIDS Day and International Conference

Two documents were presented to the Core Group summarising the first two activities. Although they provided useful information, there was no specific actions for the Core Group to take forward and it was therefore agreed that anyone wanting further information should contact Tamara Mathebula from Irish Aid directly.

Lesotho HIV and Water

Malcolm reported on the interactions between himself, DWAF and the Lesotho government regarding sector-wide responses. Lesotho are also developing a sector-wide response similar to Masibambane and had invited Malcolm, Rosetta and Kalinga to present on the South African experience. All three people agreed that there is an important opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the Core Group in South Africa and the Lesotho water sector. Although Lesotho has a number of departments dealing with water and there are a number of projects between South Africa and Lesotho, no one is really addressing HIV and AIDS in the water sector. There is thus an opportunity to share some of the learning, lessons and processes from South Africa's water sector with Lesotho to assist them in developing their sector-wide responses to HIV and AIDS.

A discussion was held on the best way to start this engagement and it was agreed that Malcolm would work with his Lesotho counter-part in Irish Aid and set up a meeting with the Commissioner and Principle Secretary of Natural Resources for a few members of the Core Group to present the work of the Core Group. The representatives would take the support and offer of the Core Group to work together and build a relationship with the Lesotho Water Sector.

As a first step, Malcolm agreed to identify potential dates for the visit. Core Group members would then decide if they would like to participate in the meeting and get the appropriate approvals from their respective organisations. Within DWAF, efforts would be made to involve the SADC Support team and the Water for Growth and Development team as well as any other relevant units.

3. Report from DPLG on local government initiatives

Nombulelo from DPLG presented their work as well as some initiatives from SALGA, who were not able to attend the Core Group meeting due to another commitment.

Local Government Handbook

A Handbook on an Integrated Response to HIV and AIDS has been developed for Local Government along with a CD which will be launched at the upcoming southern African HIV conference in Durban between 30 March – 03 April 2009. The Handbook will be launched at a special event on 02 April 2009. This will be followed by a plenary session on 03 April. Anyone wanting to attend the launch can request an invitation from DPLG and in this way they will not have to pay the conference fee to attend this one event. There will also be a stand at the conference where DPLG can make space available to other Core Group members if they want to put out material. The Handbook and related documents are available from the CMRA website <http://www.halogen.co.za>. The Handbook is also available from the DPLG and MRC websites.

Benchmarking Exercise

A benchmarking project led by CMRA is underway. Seven municipalities have been selected to apply the benchmarking tool. They will share their lessons between themselves and the most innovative responses by local government will be supported to continue projects with Dutch funding.

Integrated Development Plans

DPLG noted that the IDP reviews will begin shortly. There is an opportunity for DWAF to sit in on the reviews and make inputs on HIV and AIDS related to water services. Nombulelo will forward information to the group on the IDP process.

4. Closure

Ngaka thanked everyone for attending and confirmed the next meeting date as 24 April 2009.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN:

	ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Send out the Terms of Reference of the Core Group to all meeting participants	Ngaka Machete
2	Send out draft document on environmental health inputs to Environmental Impact Assessment for review and inputs	Qaphela Moatshe
3	Draft a memo to the chairs of the WSLG on the history and purpose of the Strategic Framework and request their endorsement. Send to Core Group members for comments and inputs	Nandi Dube
4	Identify how to get the matter of the Strategic Framework onto the agenda for the next meeting of the WSLG	Helen Moremong
5	Send minutes of the last IDC meeting to the Core Group	Nombulelo Msikinya
6	Liaise with DWAF IDC representative to discussion representation from the Masibambane programme	Ngaka Machete
7	Arrange a meeting with the Commissioner and Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources, Lesotho	Malcolm White
8	Request invitations to launch of Local Government Handbook	Any interested members
9	Share information on the IDP review process	Nombulelo Msikinya