

DRAFT
Terms of Reference
for the
National Platform on waste management in Sri Lanka

Preamble

The Tsunami hit Sri Lanka on the 26th December 2004 and caused massive devastation in the coastal belt. As the situation became more clear, it was realised what an enormous devastation the Tsunami had caused. About 30,000 people died, many towns were destroyed, drinking water sources contaminated, means of existence were washed away.

Though the national and international community offered assistance, some aspects were notoriously difficult to deal with. The already overstretched solid waste management systems have virtually collapsed and Tsunami related waste is disposed indiscriminately. Also unplanned coastal zone dumping practices, poor urban environment planning, substandard water management and sanitation practices and a general waste of resources are frequently observed.

On the other hand, the aftermath of the Tsunami inspired a confidence in people, organisations and institutions that together they can make things better. Collaboration and cooperation in waste management also showed to many the enormous waste of resources resulting from duplicating efforts. This was hitherto hidden from view as many solid waste projects were operated in isolation.

Analogue to the learning alliances from IRC, the process of increased information sharing can be initiated by a few persons or a project. In this case the CORDAID financed project “*Rapid implementation of community based short- and middle-term measures to improve the functioning of solid waste management in Tsunami affected areas of Ampara and Hambantota Districts*” has been the initiator.

The first meeting of the “national platform on waste management” was convened in Colombo in April 2006 drawing participants from central and local government, community organisations and (international) non-governmental organisations. Participants reflected on the need for a platform where lessons from the various activities and organisations could be shared. Eventually this will also improve the planning process.

The second platform meeting was convened in Colombo in November 2006, bringing together participants from local and central government, community based organisations, (international) non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The meeting concluded stating that:

- ◆ This is a very unique platform where experiences from many different stakeholders are shared, no such Forum exist in Sri Lanka.
- ◆ Hence, participants strongly recommended that the national platform should continue.
- ◆ After observing it twice, and seeing its functionality, participants felt that it is now the appropriate time to formalise the national platform.

- ◆ Thus a detailed Terms of Reference for the national platform may be derived at by project partners and circulated by e-mail to stakeholders for their comments and then amended /adopted for the next national platform meeting.
- ◆ International wing of the Association of Municipalities Netherlands (VNG International) working with local authorities in the Southern Province is interested in supporting the national platform and possibly even co-hosting the next meeting scheduled for November 2007.
- ◆ IRC offered support to develop the knowledge exchange function of the project as part of their existing MoU with WASTE.
- ◆ Prescribed format of reporting is very much encouraged, but someone has to take the lead in shifting through information, requesting for it, ordering and updating it.
- ◆ Under the current project, Energy Forum is willing to have this function until the end of the project, thus an exit strategy needs to form part of the Terms of Reference.

Introduction

This Terms of Reference draws lessons from the experiences of WASTE, AOO (solid waste discussion platform in The Netherlands), International water and sanitation Centre (IRC, learning alliances), Institute for Housing and Urban Development (IHS, facilitating local participatory initiatives) and particularly from the Terms Of Reference of the functional National Water and Sanitation Coordination Group in Sri Lanka (established in 2005). The Terms of Reference specifies objectives, key functions, guiding principles, members, alliances, secretariat function, characteristics secretariat, exit strategies and financing.

Objectives

- To improve waste management in Sri Lanka structurally through a process of consultation and information exchange
- To identify in due course how this process initiated as a response to the Tsunami can be institutionalised. self-sustaining learning alliance

Key Functions

- To strengthen the existing forum of committed partners, to address key issues related to waste management in transitional shelters, permanent settlements and housing schemes, and to provide advice of such services in a systematic way to the decision makers and the External Support Agencies.
- To ensure that adequate attention and possibly funding is provided by the Government of Sri Lanka to cover waste management that exceeds local boundaries as well as for those in distress in transitional shelters sites of IDPs and tsunami affected families.
- To identify needs, issues and obstacles and direct attention as appropriate for their resolution to the relevant Government authorities or NGOs.
- To facilitate communication and exchange of information as needed among all parties concerned with waste in Sri Lanka , particularity between those working on national level and district level.
- To ensure that there is a mechanism for information exchange with districts.
- To review systematically the key information and issues brought forward by local authorities that cannot be dealt with at District level and that need immediate attention by Government Authorities at Colombo level.
- To maintain a directory of all external agencies and all NGOs involved in waste management in Sri Lanka and their respective contributions and roles.

- To systematize lessons learnt and contribute to their wide dissemination (Guidelines, technological designs, communication messages, community empowerment).

Guiding Principles

- The right to a healthy and clean environment cannot be dissociated from human dignity
- Everyone has the right to participate in decision-making processes that affect their right to a clean environment
- Communities have the right to determine the nature of their solid waste services
- Everyone should be given full, transparent and equal access to information

Members

- Organisations will be member and participate only if the benefits of participating outweigh the transaction costs. This is especially the case where participating organisations themselves pay the bill. Members may also see the possibility of creating synergies by bringing in their own funds.
- As a broad spectrum of stakeholders is envisaged, platform meetings will be open to new members, even on a temporary basis to contribute to cross-fertilization between local and national level and between sector Groups
- The members of the National Platform are skilled and dedicated professionals who have been selected by their organizations to provide their knowledge, expertise and time to support the (Local) Government to achieve its solid waste management goals and objectives. The members are expected to agree to share information and to work together for the most effective and efficient results.
- The members of the National Platform are representatives of main stakeholders, local government, Government Institutions, bilateral cooperation, development banks, United Nations agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs, consumer associations, private sector and universities.
- The coordination meetings are open to new members, even on a temporary basis to contribute to cross-fertilization between local and national level and between sector Groups
- A list of members will be updated regularly and widely distributed to all interested partners.

Alliances

- Earlier it had been reviewed whether solid waste management should be seen as an extension of the National Water and Sanitation Coordination Group in Sri Lanka. Due to its specialised nature it was perceived (reference 1st National Platform meeting) that it would be more appropriate to function separately. As membership partially overlaps it could be considered to have a functional alliance at national and / or at district level.

Secretariat's functions:

- Organise and convene thematic workshops per year. Suggested is four workshops.
- Convene four platform meetings in conjunction (before or after) thematic workshops
- Organise site visits and tours to relevant projects
- Assist members in presenting key findings, success and failures of each project, assist in identification of generic and locally specific lessons.
- Develop and maintain (a dedicated section of) a website
- Participate in meetings of relevant other organisations and present key findings on the website

- Facilitate exchanges between the various members of the platform.
- To prepare working modalities for each of the events it organises.

Key characteristics of the secretariat:

- The secretariat should have its base in Sri Lanka
- It should have office facilities such as office space, telephone, internet connection
- It should be registered, type of registration will depend on what type of organisation functions as Secretariat.
- It should have prior experience and expertise in the waste sector
- It should have an extensive network of organisations active or willing to be active in the sector.
- It should have proven experience in organising meetings, site visits etc.
- It should have affinity with web based publications.

Exit strategy

- The project which has initiated this initiative will come to an end on 30 November 2007. The third national platform is scheduled for November 2007. International Association of Municipalities Netherlands has shown interest in supporting the process further. Similarly others could be approached to continue their support as the process is still very much in its formative stages.
- If no external support is forthcoming the meetings would have resulted in a well documented approach to solid waste management. Participating organisations will have made contacts with others in the field and an informal solid waste network would have been established. Sustainability would be suspect.

Financing

- It is not standard practice to provide a detailed budget as the platform is still very much in its formative stages. However, we do consider that the platform could be supported by a secretariat. If the platform agrees with the tasks and key functions of the secretariat, a budget can be prepared.