

# What are the software criteria?

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) advocates for the integration of Hardware and Software components in Water and Sanitation programming. The Water and Sanitation Software component is understood in Red Cross Red Crescent as an umbrella term, covering both hygiene behaviour change and community management of water and sanitation facilities. A set of Water and Sanitation software criteria, as follow, has been identified aiming at enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of sustainable Water and Sanitation/Hygiene Promotion programmes within the National Societies.

## ***Criteria 1: Capacity building***

Increasing technical and managerial skills of the Red Cross and Red Crescent staff in Water and Sanitation programming should be a common objective in all the Red Cross and Red Crescent water and sanitation programmes in order to strengthen national capacities in responding to water and sanitation needs.

The actions should strengthen and build upon existing technical and managerial capacities while addressing gaps. Financial management and technical skills, willingness to pay, conflict resolution and problem solving should be addressed and targeted by the water and sanitation staff and community water and sanitation committees. These committees should be recognized as the leader of the implementation process and become the organ responsible for the overall maintenance and sustainability aspects.

## ***Criteria 2: Participation***

The targeted community should be the key partner in this approach. As many beneficiaries as possible should be involved in conception, planning as well as implementing activities, and to give them a voice in decision making in regards to design, siting and management of water and sanitation facilities. This is especially relevant because the ownership of the project should be with the community, and the process of decision-making should be taken by the participation of all stakeholders.

## ***Criteria 3: Standard methodology***

The use of the PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation) methodology supports the success and sustainability of the project by improving their hygiene behaviours, preventing diarrhoeal diseases and encouraging the community to own their facilities by selecting themselves the most appropriate technology option and agreeing on its management system. Targeted communities through this process are able to examine existing hygiene behaviour and understand how transmission of disease takes place and how they can be prevented at household level. The community is given the opportunity to evaluate current behaviour and facilities and decide which appropriate sanitation and hygiene improvements they wish to undertake.

The International Federation promotes PHAST methodology as the backbone of software activities since, throughout the seven steps, the two core software elements, hygiene behaviour change and community management, are widely addressed. However PHAST must be applied in a very dynamic and flexible manner including more or less emphasis on community management and / or behavioural change depending on the scenario.

The last PHAST mapping conducted in March 2009 shows that 38 National Societies worldwide are implementing PHAST components integrated within their larger Water and Sanitation long term programmes. The understanding on what is PHAST and how to implement it within the Red Cross Red Crescent environment varies notably from one country to another. International Federation in its effort to standardize the PHAST approach and share best practices across the members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, published, in 2009, the PHAST evaluation checklist and guidance. This assessment package aims at helping Red Cross/Red Crescent personnel to evaluate their PHAST components by providing a simple and quick self-evaluation checklist and background technical information in the form of brief guidance.

The checklist can be used along the different steps of the project cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation). In the planning phase, the checklist might be used to verify whether core PHAST elements are properly and fully incorporated into the proposal (narrative, logical frame and budget). For those implementing water and sanitation projects, the checklist might be useful for organizing sound work plans and ensuring that a monitoring system is effectively put in place. This tool should facilitate the collection and review of information that reveals how the PHAST programme is proceeding and what aspects of it, if any, need correction. The checklist also might be informative for those who plan to conduct a self-evaluation (or mid-term review) without the assistance of an external consultant. The result of this evaluation might be fed back into the remaining period of implementation.

### **Impact:**

In general, the following impacts might be expected from water and sanitation projects implemented under GWSI:

- ◆ Reduced risk of water and sanitation borne diseases. Improved health status and sustainable hygiene behaviour within the target population.
- ◆ Increased organizational and individual capacities of National Societies staff, volunteers and the community in Water and Sanitation – water, sanitation and hygiene - programming.
- ◆ Increased awareness of the various policies and strategies in country and globally. Contribution to the MDG's (specifically MDG No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7).
- ◆ Increased access to sustainable and affordable Water and Sanitation services by vulnerable groups, especially women, orphans, PLWHA and other vulnerable groups.
- ◆ Increased women's involvement in management of water and sanitation projects and the decision making process.

- ◆ Generation of technically sound manuals, reports, guidelines, booklets, etc. Adaptation of some of the manuals and guidelines generated by the project by the various sector stakeholders. Sharing experiences and lessons generated by the project should be disseminated by production of information and communication materials (e.g. leaflets) highlighting project progress/achievements. These can be distributed periodically among the stakeholder group, Government agencies and water and sanitation sector players.
- ◆ Increased knowledge and awareness in hygiene related information (food, water, environment, personal and domestic hygiene domains). Adherence to good hygiene practices at the household and community levels.
- ◆ Development, adaptation and promotion of appropriate and affordable water and sanitation technology. Effective linkage between engineering aspects of the project and software water and sanitation elements need to be ensured.
- ◆ Replication of appropriate technology to other communities beyond the project areas.
- ◆ Development of a robust and dynamic monitoring and evaluation system to track the envisaged impact resulting from the Red Cross and Red Crescent water and sanitation actions. Implementation of periodic reviews should be institutionalized involving the beneficiaries and the targeted groups as well as other key stakeholders. A participatory mid-term evaluation process should be facilitated including review of project objectives and expected results at all levels. The results might be useful in reviewing the project progress and re-designing the final implementation phase of the project if needed. At the end of the project, the final evaluation should be made consulting different stakeholders.
- ◆ Production of a set of participatory indicators to measure objectively the achievement of the expected results and project activities. Indicators developed should be constantly reviewed at the community level based on PHAST activities and local realities. The various community groups through a participatory approach will be expected to guide the project interventions during the periodic monitoring and evaluation meetings and sessions as well as stakeholder consultations.
- ◆ The actions should have a multiplier effect through addressing organizational capacities and individual skills gaps at Red Cross / Red Crescent and community levels. These capacities strengthen and established should be utilised beyond the project cycle, for example: PHAST groups formed can be used to train other communities, water and sanitation committees can be used to train other water and sanitation committees in Red Cross and Red Crescent project areas, project managerial skills are imparted on the National Societies project staff.