

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The experiences gained in this project will be shared at different levels within the project areas, nationally and internationally, through specific knowledge sharing platforms and activities.

### THE PROJECT'S EXPECTED IMPACT

The project expects a number of impacts at different levels:

- Direct improvement of the livelihoods and health of poor (peri)-urban communities, through improved sanitation, wastewater management and hygiene promotion, which reduce the risk of disease transmission, while enhancing production from agriculture.
- Improved understanding of authorities regarding relationships between sanitation, wastewater management and hygiene

This project is undertaken by a partnership comprising of International Water Management Institute, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, COSI Foundation for Technical Cooperation and the Stockholm Environment Institute.

promotion, and the need to address all three in an integrated way.

- Strengthened capacity of authorities, and community, members to carry out integrated participatory planning, involving all relevant stakeholders.

### PROJECT LOCATION AND DURATION

This project will be undertaken in the cities of Rajshahi in Bangladesh and Kurunegala in Sri Lanka from December 2005 to 2008. Both cities have areas with inadequate sanitation facilities, open sewers and areas where wastewater is used untreated to irrigate agricultural land. These cities were selected because they are representative of hundreds of similar cities across Asia and therefore provide an opportunity to test solutions that could be applicable to many other cities in the region.

# WASPA Asia

Wastewater Agriculture and Sanitation for Poverty Alleviation in Asia



NGO FORUM  
FOR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION



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Working with stakeholders in alliances to improve environmental sanitation and hygiene in poor urban areas, and alleviate poverty through productive and safe use of wastewater.





## BACKGROUND

Rapidly growing populations in urban areas produce large volumes of wastewater. In cities in South Asia, it is largely unmanaged and wastewater collected in open drains or less frequently in covered sewers generally enters water bodies with little or no treatment. Even onsite sanitation systems may contribute to urban pollution through leaking septic tanks or pit latrines; and in poorer areas with no sanitation, open defecation and solid waste in storm-water drains add to the problem.

Wastewater can be turned into an effective resource as shown in Kolkata (India) where natural wetlands have been used to treat wastewater and support vital livelihoods through their use as fishponds and for agriculture. However in many parts of the world good practices are non-existent and poor urban and peri-urban farmers often utilize untreated or partially treated wastewater to irrigate their land and benefit from its nutrients. This source of water is particularly important in dry areas where rainfall is unreliable and water is scarce.

The extent of wastewater use in agriculture is much larger than is recognized and authorities tend to discourage its use because of the significant health risks.

However, it is a common reality that authorities must address actively, especially as there are alternative options available to reduce related health risks without losing the benefits from its use.

This requires wastewater planning and integration into urban water resource management, simultaneously applying technical solutions for wastewater treatment and disposal and a range of preventive measures to mitigate health risks in the short term.

Holistic and sustainable solutions require interventions in the whole chain, from improved sanitation, to contaminant



reduction, waste treatment, disposal, safe use in agriculture and promotion of hygiene behavior. At the same time it needs a change of practice in terms of planning water and sanitation at town level.

## AIM

The WASPA Asia project aims to develop and test solutions for sanitation and wastewater management, for use in agriculture, through a participatory planning approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders.

## LEARNING ALLIANCES

The approach of the project is to establish stakeholder coalitions at town and national level, called Learning Alliances that will bring together the main stakeholders including community members, government agencies, NGOs, community based organizations, scientists and practitioners. The Learning Alliances will foster knowledge generation and sharing, which will strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and improve collaboration.

## PARTICIPATORY ACTION PLANS

The Learning Alliances will work with the project team to improve understanding of the current sanitation situation, urban and



peri-urban agricultural practices, and the associated livelihoods issues in the area. This will lead on to identification of the needs of the community and development of Participatory Action Plans to test appropriate technologies for sanitation, safe wastewater management and application in agriculture, as well as interventions to improve household and food hygiene.

