

018530 - SWITCH

Sustainable Water Management in the City of the Future

Integrated Project
Global Change and Ecosystems

D6.2.6 Vision and organisation of learning alliances

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SWITCH Deliverable Briefing Note Template

SWITCH Document D6.2.6 Vision and organization of learning alliances Visioning of learning alliances was combined with the workpackage on strategic planning and is reported there. Learning alliances did not as originally anticipated develop formal rules and arrangements so these are not reported. A monitoring and evaluation framework for cities was developed and is reported here.
Deliverable reference: D6.2.6
Author(s) and Institution(s)
Publication date:
Audience For internal project use. A summary is made available for external publication in the switch in the city book (d6.2.12)
Purpose To provide a M&E framework for the city learning alliances.
Background Awareness of the SWITCH project and objectives will be developed through meetings, workshops and other activities leading to initial LA workshops. At early stage this group will agree on their objectives, probably based upon visioning and scenario building exercises. Members of the city LAs will also develop rules and procedures for the functioning of the group with clear agreements on the commitments to be made by the SWITCH project and the participants. Procedures for monitoring the activities and impact within the city will also be developed based upon participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques.
Potential Impact n/a
Recommendations n/a



Learning Alliance Briefing Note 7: A framework for monitoring and evaluating project outcomes at city level

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Introduction

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of good project management. At the most basic level it may simply focus on outputs i.e. were the intended deliverables of a project completed on time and to a sufficient standard. In the context of complex, multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary, learning-orientated and innovation-focused projects like SWITCH (Sustainable Water Management Improves Tomorrow's Cities' Health www.switchurbanwater.eu), M&E needs to be much more elaborate.

Although it may be possible to plan the goal of the project (e.g. more sustainable, efficient and socially inclusive urban water management through widespread adoption of integrated approaches) it is almost impossible, at the outset, to design the right set of actions to achieve this goal in different cities. And even if it were, the ground in cities is constantly shifting. People change positions, institutions evolve, politics follows its course and innovation (hopefully) happens. For these reasons, project design needs to be constantly revisited. Projects need to continually learn and re-orientate themselves in order to be successful. In SWITCH, this learning is facilitated by multi-stakeholder learning alliances focused at the city level.

Monitoring deliverables is clearly not enough then. But monitoring impacts (the more sustainable, more efficient and more socially inclusive water management that is ultimately strived for) is possibly a step to far. Indicators of most of these changes could realistically only be expected to show significant changes over a timescale of decades, well after the end of the 5 year time span of the SWITCH project. Furthermore, the ultimate impacts will not easily be attributed to project interventions within an initiative like SWITCH because there are a whole lot of other actors and factors driving innovation and change in fields like urban water management. Hence

monitoring impacts, while important and necessarily, will probably be too late and too distant to itself influence project implementation. So what is the alternative?

In this briefing note it is suggested that the SWITCH project and its learning alliances should focus on the outcome level. Outcomes fall between outputs and impacts. Outcomes on the one hand are more than the production of deliverables, but on the other hand they reflect more immediate changes than the ultimate impacts sought. Most of the indicators and targets proposed in this note are related to these kind of intermediate changes. The note aims to provide guidance for SWITCH learning alliances to monitor and keep track of the such outcomes. To be successful this monitoring must form the basis for evaluation and changes in project implementation.

It is assumed that a mix of both quantitative and qualitative indicators and methods will be needed for monitoring change in an area like Integrated Urban Water Management (IUWM). Some things may be relatively easy to monitor, especially hardware (e.g. the number of people served by a water supply systems, kilometres of pipeline installed, etc.), but others are much more difficult to track especially the software (e.g. perceptions, behaviour change, collaboration etc.). Since learning alliances (see Briefing Note No.1 for an introduction) place emphasis on these software issues, specific tailored methods are required.

One tool that is suitable for monitoring these 'software' outcomes, is known as descriptive ordinal scoring or 'micro-scenarios'¹. Our aim here is to provide ideas based upon this method that can be adapted and used in each SWITCH city.

The micro-scenario method, should compliment other approaches to monitoring change such as process documentation methods (see learning alliance briefing note no.6) and others. There are advanced M&E methods of course that are specifically adapted to monitoring at outcome level such as the 'most significant change' method and outcome mapping. Where significant levels of resources are available for M&E these may be appropriate and resources linked to these methods will always be useful for inspiration. However, with relatively limited resources for monitoring, most SWITCH learning alliances will only be able to implement a simplified alternative like micro-scenarios.

¹ This approach draws on the Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA) and on Qualitative Information Appraisal (QIA). Both use participatory methods to record people's perceptions, QIA translates these descriptions into scores and numbers. MPA was originally designed for a global study involving IRC and partners and WSP together with 88 communities in 15 countries

Micro-scenarios as a framework for M&E within SWITCH city learning alliances

Learning alliances in SWITCH (see briefing note no. 3) are intended to:

- break down barriers to both horizontal and vertical information sharing and learning within cities, and
- speed up processes of identification, development and uptake of solutions related to urban water management.

The micro-scenarios scoring method provides a starting point for reflection on these types of objectives. Where the indicators and scenarios are common the method allows for comparison across cities. Over the course of the SWITCH project the method may also be used to assess changes over time in a given city. The latter approach allows some indicators to be adapted to fit the different city situations.

Micro-scenarios are used to identify different levels of achievement of a mainly qualitative change that can be objectively assessed in a participatory way. Key elements of the approach are:

- Stakeholders choose the micro-scenario that most adequately reflects the situation.
- Ordinal scoring options are benchmarked and peer-reviewed.
- The reason for a specific score is recorded.

To use 'micro-scenarios' in monitoring SWITCH learning alliances and research activities it will be necessary to:

- Identify key change objectives together with stakeholders. It is important to ensure unambiguous wording so that all involved understand the indicators.
- Identify the different levels: 'micro-scenarios'. Define the key word that distinguishes each level (Each level has a score on a scale of 0-100).
- Identify a 'benchmark' – what is the minimum acceptable level we would like to achieve in SWITCH?
- Identify a 'baseline'. What is the current level?
- Monitor at regular intervals: record, reflect and discuss why has change taken place (or not)? What actions are required?

Proposed objectives, indicators and scenarios for SWITCH learning alliances

The following objectives were developed during a workshop involving most SWITCH cities. Four common objectives, considered to be the most critical were identified. Cities additionally identified one to three city specific objectives. The list of objectives is not comprehensive and may be extended over time, but these initial objectives were selected in order to begin monitoring of learning alliance performance. In all cases the indicators, their wording and benchmarks will need

to be adapted and changes agreed. The scenarios have not yet been pre-tested and that may also reveal flaws in their wording that will need to be addressed.

Objective 1: We know who learning alliance members are, and facilitate communication between them effectively

Indicators are the *availability of a record of learning alliance members* and their participation in learning alliance events and activities and the use of *effective communication tools* to share information between learning alliance members

Scenarios for objective 1	Score
• This is no accessible record of learning alliance members, and their involvement in various events and activities	0
• There is an out-of-date record of learning alliance members and their involvement in events and activities	25
• There is an up-to-date record of LA members and their involvement, and some basic communication tools are systematically used (e.g. email, phone) between events	50 benchmark
• There is an up-to-date record of LA members and their involvement, and archives are maintained through systematic use of advanced communication tools (e.g. a google group).	75
• Member information is accessible to all (e.g. online database), participation in all events and activities is systematically recorded and a combination of methods is used effectively (based on feedback received) to communicate between events.	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Objective 2: Regular, effective and innovative events capture and sustain interest of learning alliance members

Indicators are the *regularity and quality of events* organized or supported by SWITCH learning alliances. These aspects may be assessed with reference to reports of activities, evaluation sessions and the follow-up generated by events.

Scenarios for objective 2	Score
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (e.g. workshops, site visits, seminars) are not regular and only announced at the last minute. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular events are held at least every six months, but have limited impact in capturing the interest of learning alliance members. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate events are announced well in advance and use a mix of mainly standard methods to effectively engage interest of city stakeholders at least once every 3 months. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly (or more frequent) events use effective and innovative facilitation methods (not just presentations and discussion). 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly (or more frequent) innovative events result in high-quality reports (or other outputs) that capture content and ideas and are rapidly made available. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Objective 3: Demonstration activities are undertaken within a framework for scaling-up

Indicators are the availability of demonstration plans, the level of ownership of these plans, and commitments made to scaling-up implementation.

Scenarios for objective 3	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration activities are initiated without significant discussion in the learning alliance 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration activities are decided after limited consultation with some members of the learning alliance 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration activity plans are consistent and integrated within LA plans (city storylines) and are supported but without clear commitments to scaling-up 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning alliance members with potential to scale up demonstration activities pro-actively made suggestions and proposals that were 	75

addressed in demonstration plans.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning alliance members maintain a keen interest in demonstration activities at all stages and report back against their initial commitments to scale-up interventions. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Objective 4: The SWITCH team and learning alliance understand why change is occurring in IUWM, not just what happens.

Indicators are the amount and quality of process documentation undertaken to capture the change process and its dimensions and motivations, and the sharing of that information to encourage learning.

Scenarios for objective 4	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No process documentation is in place 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional ad-hoc process documentation is undertaken using some of available tools (including different media such as writing, photography, film etc) but with limited attention to detail or quality. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few process documentation tools are used regularly following a process documentation plan but results are not widely shared. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several process documentation tools are used regularly and results are widely shared within the learning alliance 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective process documentation is used for reflection and analysis that results in improved project implementation plans 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Accra – additional objective A1: We know what is going on in the IUWM sector in Accra

Indicators are the availability of information on issues of IUWM, its sharing among learning alliance members

and their active participation in keeping accessible information updated.

Scenarios for objective A1	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is no information available on IUWM issues in Accra for LA members 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited and outdated information available to LA members 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is significant up-to-date information on issues of IUWM in Accra available to LA members 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and information is shared regularly with LA members (including researchers and implementing organizations) and LA members contribute to the information database 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and information provided is used by LA members in their work and LA members give regular feedback to improve the information database 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Accra – additional objective A2: We involve marginalised groups in learning alliance meetings
Indicators are the availability of information on issues of IUWM, its sharing among learning alliance members and their active participation in keeping accessible information updated.

Scenarios for objective A2	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalised groups do not take part in LA activities 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalized groups take part in LA activities but do not make any contribution 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalized groups participate in LA activities but do not influence decisions 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalized groups are able to influence at least one decision taken by the LA per year 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalized groups are actively 	100

involved in all activities and take part in all decision making	
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Alexandria - additional objective AL1: Stakeholders support the issues of social inclusion and efforts to eradicate exclusion are made.
Indicators are how research incorporates marginalized groups and their participation in the learning alliance and city council.

Scenarios for objective AL1	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research has not considered marginalized groups and they are not represented at the learning alliance or city council 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research considered marginalized groups but without their input as they are not members of learning alliance or represented on city council 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research considers marginalized groups and uses their inputs but they are not members of learning alliance. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some research is directed towards social inclusion with the input of marginalized groups that are members of learning alliance, but not very active 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on different themes is directed towards social inclusion, with input of marginalized groups, and they are active members of the learning alliance and city council 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Alexandria - additional objective AL2: Wide participation and support for the Integrated Urban Water Management (IUWM) planning process.
Indicators are the level of participation of learning alliance members in different tasks and aspects of the planning process.

Scenarios for objective AL2	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No present participation of learning 	0

alliance members in IUWM planning process.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning alliance members participate in meetings and provide data but do not make other significant inputs. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning alliance members occasionally participate in the process and are make active contributions to key discussions. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs made by all learning alliance members, and some are part of IUWM planning teams contributing to analysis. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some learning alliance members are full members of the core IUWM planning team and report back to the entire learning alliance. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Belo Horizonte - additional objective B1: A regular, quality flow of information between learning alliance members.

Indicators are the way and (timeliness) that learning alliance members initiate and share information.

Scenarios for objective B1	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA members do not respond to information requests from LA members. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is gained from LA members only on request of the facilitator. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA members regularly and proactively share information with the LA facilitator, who then shares information with other LA members. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasionally information is shared between LA members usually due to a specific event or need. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA members regularly and proactively share information with each other using a variety of communication methods. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

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Belo Horizonte - additional objective B2: Stakeholders are involved in priority setting in research.

Indicators are the type of involvement of learning members in research priority setting and communication of decisions taken.

Scenarios for objective B2	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research priorities are set by researchers without any involvement of LA members, and are not even communicated to the LA members 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research priorities are set by researchers without any involvement of LA members but the research priorities are sometimes communicated to the LA members. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research priorities are set by researchers without any involvement of LA members but the research priorities are always communicated to the LA members 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA members are consulted on research priorities. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research priorities are set together by all the LA members and researchers using the LA platform. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Belo Horizonte - additional objective B3: Regular communication, awareness raising and advocacy is undertaken in the city around the topic of urban water.

Indicators are the planning of activities, level of activities undertaken and learning from what works best in the city.

Scenarios for objective B3	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA does not undertake any communication, awareness raising or advocacy activities within the city. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA has developed a plan for communication, awareness raising and advocacy but has not implemented it. 	25

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA has attempted to undertake some communication, awareness raising and advocacy activities but with limited success. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA has adopted new practices to undertake (communication, awareness raising and advocacy activities (including use of feedback, learning new skills etc). 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA is implementing a plan for communication, awareness raising and advocacy with greater success and continuously tries to improve its efforts. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Birmingham - additional objective BM1: Inclusion within active learning alliance membership of key stakeholder that have been only peripheral to the learning alliance process to date.

Indicators are targeted efforts to involve and include identified peripheral but important stakeholders (developers, Association of British Insurers, local community/environmental groups etc) and the resulting engagement.

Scenarios for objective BM1	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No real efforts are made to include peripheral actors or their representatives in the LA activities. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial contacts made with peripheral actors and invitations made to events but no sustained effort to entice them to maintain regular attendance. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peripheral actors are informed well in advance of meeting date, time and agenda and there is active follow up prior to and after meetings. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peripheral actors are informed well in advance of meeting date, time and agenda, and in addition special efforts are made to help prepare them to attend. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location, time, topics (agendas) and convenience were well considered in organising meetings to maximise participation of peripheral actors. 	100

Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Hamburg - additional objective H1: Residents, consumers and socially marginalised groups are introduced to the learning alliance and take part in the process.

Indicators are targeted activities to engage residents, consumers and socially marginalised groups within the learning alliance process, the use of appropriate tools, and the level of representation and engagement of these groups.

Scenarios for objective H1	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No activities to introduce residents into the learning alliance process, and no stakeholders represent residents in the learning alliance. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of basic methods for grassroots information sharing, and some stakeholders represent residents in the learning alliance. Facilitators identify social marginalised groups and think about possible ways to involve them appropriately. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable methods are regularly used for information sharing and facilitating active participation of residents and socially marginalized groups in the learning alliance process (developing of IUWM solutions, setting of research priorities etc.) 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legitimate representatives of residents are part of the core learning alliance, and socially marginalised groups respond positively on participation methods and their engagement. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning alliance members legitimately represent the real composition of the society (including social marginalised groups), and additionally some residents are directly involved in the process. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Hamburg - additional objective H2: An IUWM plan informed by connected demonstration project, is developed and adopted by the learning alliance members.

Indicators are the completion of a IUWM planning process and the acceptance and use of the plan by stakeholders, including activities to implement the plan.

Scenarios for objective H2	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No activities towards an IUWM plan or SWITCH demo project are realised. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short IUWM plan is developed but not accepted by the learning alliance members. There is no connection between the SWITCH demo project and the IUWM planning process. 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An IUWM plan is developed and accepted by core members of the learning alliance. There is an attempt to connect the SWITCH demo project to IUWM planning. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An IUWM plan is accepted by all learning alliance members and used as the basis by some for their own planning activities. The SWITCH demo project is integral to the IUWM plan, and steps towards implementation are clearly identified. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IUWM plan is accepted by all learning alliance members as a basis for their own planning activities and the SWITCH demo project is a core step in an implementation plan (of the IUWM plan) along with other realized activities. 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Lodz - additional objective L1: Issues of social inclusion (gender, poverty, other marginalised groups etc) are systematically mainstreamed across all SWITCH activities in the city..

Indicators are the level of awareness within the research team, and action to address social inclusion in planning activities across all workpackages and in the wider activities of the learning alliance members.

Scenarios for objective L1	Score
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research team have not considered their potential positive/negative impact on marginalized groups 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There's some awareness of poverty and gender issues within the research team and LA but it is not reflected in the workplans (except for the social inclusion workpackage) 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good awareness leads to specifically targeted actions to address social inclusion within several activities across different workpackages. 	50 benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of mainstreamed project activities to address social inclusion is tracked by monitoring against appropriate indicators and a baseline. 	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practices to promote social inclusion are scaled up (used within their own organisations) by members of the learning alliance 	100
Justification of score (with date)	Score awarded

Some notes on methodology and reflection

Users of the micro-scenarios method might want to think about the following questions:

How is data analysis done? Data analysis is relatively simple. Scores between 0 and 100 (50 for the benchmark, 0 for the worst case and 100 for the best case) can be easily recorded and compared.

How reliable are the results and how do you avoid bias?

While scoring can be done by the project team, involvement of stakeholders in the process is a key principle of this approach and leads to more reliability as well as ownership of the change process. Involvement in setting the micro-scenarios, as well as the assessment is desirable. Reliability is enhanced by pre-testing micro-scenarios and ensuring they are very carefully worded (language is a key issue and scenarios will not easily be translated but rather will need to be redrafted in other languages and locations). M&E will be less biased if an impartial researcher (i.e. not involved in other SWITCH activities) is also involved and empowered to provide constructive input.

How can data be presented? Scoring results can be illustrated in a visual way by using graphs, charts or

web diagrams. Such presentation can help facilitate discussion.

How can results influence learning and change? A key aspect of creating a good learning environment in the learning alliances is to reflect on progress and to define next steps based upon experience of what works and what doesn't. Regular identification of 'lessons learned' for different stakeholders and internal or external audiences will help to systematize SWITCH project experiences. Critical reflection requires asking 'why?', "so what?" and "now what?". Identifying the reason for a particular score or change in scores using the micro-scenarios method will help uncover issues underlying project performance. This can help to identify possible catalysers or constraints and ways to overcome them.

Links and resources

Method for Participatory Assessment guideline (includes examples of micro-scenario tools) at

www.wsp.org/publications/mpa%202003.pdf

Outcome mapping at www.outcomemapping.ca

Qualitative Information Systems at

www.irc.nl/page/12940 and *Making monitoring simple and useful* at www.irc.nl/page/15628

Qualitative Information Appraisal: using people's perceptions in large development projects by A.J. James, Postma L., Otte, C. IRC (unpublished).

For more information please contact: John Butterworth, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (butterworth@irc.nl) who coordinates the learning alliance work package within the SWITCH project, or Carmen Dasilva (dasilva@irc.nl) who co-authored this briefing note.

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