

How Does SuSanA Generate Impact?

Case Story 1: Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies

At a Glance



Country: Germany

Topic: The Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies

Actors: GTO, Global WASH Cluster, German WASH Network, Eawag, SuSanA

Impact Argument: The systems approach promoted by SuSanA finds entrance into German policies through the Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies developed by the German WASH Network and Eawag together with the Global WASH Cluster, SuSanA and other key actors in the sanitation sector.

Introduction

Providing adequate sanitation solutions is imperative for protecting human health and the environment in emergencies. With financial support from the Federal Foreign Office and the Swiss Humanitarian Aid, the German WASH Network is currently developing a *Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies* aimed at bringing together proven technologies as well as innovative technology options suitable for emergency contexts. Under the leadership of the German Toilet Organization (GTO) and together with the German WASH Network, SuSanA, Eawag, the Global WASH Cluster, and key humanitarian WASH organisations, the Compendium serves as a capacity building as well as a decision support tool for actors in humanitarian relief. With a strong focus on a systems-approach, the Compendium takes into account the entire sanitation service chain instead of solely focusing on the provision of sanitation facilities in emergencies. We talked to Robert Gensch from the German Toilet Organization about the Compendium and SuSanA's role in the production process.



Interview

SuSanA: Robert, what triggered the idea for a compendium of sanitation technologies specifically targeted towards emergencies?

The idea for such a compendium has been growing for a couple of years. Due to the development of conflicts and the surrounding humanitarian contexts becoming increasingly longer-term or protracted, it has become obvious that quick-fix solutions with a mere focus on the provision of on-site facilities in emergencies are no longer an acceptable strategy. Instead there has been a growing awareness that there is a need to put a much stronger sector focus on a systems approach in emergencies by looking at the entire sanitation service chain (i.e. toilet, collection, transport, treatment and safe disposal/reuse). This shift has also been incorporated into the Federal Foreign Office's strategy for WASH in emergency relief contexts.

SuSanA: Were you able to build on previous publications?

Most definitely. While existing publications regarding sanitation in emergency contexts are scarce and/or already slightly outdated, the *Compendium of Sanitation Systems and Technologies* by Eawag from 2008 (2nd revised edition 2014) – required reading for sector professionals – forms the basis upon which the *Compendium on Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies* can build. Eawag's publication, by the way, constitutes one of SuSanA's core publications.



SuSanA: What is your intention with the Compendium?

The *Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies* puts the systems-approach in the centre – an approach that has been wholeheartedly embraced and promoted by SuSanA from the very beginning. The aim of the Compendium is to present various technology options as well as to clearly define terms, particularly considering that there have been many new developments in the area of faecal sludge management in recent years. By providing these resources, we want to enlarge the focus within emergency contexts from solely looking at the provision of on-site sanitation facilities to keeping the whole sanitation chain in mind, from emptying, transport, and treatment to safe disposal/reuse of faecal sludge.

SuSanA: How does SuSanA come into play?

SuSanA and particularly the SuSanA WG8 and users of the SuSanA forum have been involved since the very early stages of the publication. In fact, the idea of compiling such a compendium was thought through with SuSanA in mind. We are convinced that the success of the Compendium depends on it being a multi-actor-publication. What I mean by that is that ownership for the publication has to reside within the sector, which means that as many sector

representatives as possible should be able to contribute to the publication. And here the SuSanA network provides an

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- Robert Gensch, GTO

really getting quality feedback from a great number of WASH sector professionals.

SuSanA: How exactly did you engage SuSanA/make use of SuSanA?

We have already presented the first draft of the Compendium on the SuSanA forum and to the SuSanA core group and have asked members to provide input and feedback. And indeed, the feedback has been tremendous and helped to further improve the publication. The feedback also showed us once again that there is a demand for such a publication and that many practitioners in the field have been facing the same challenges that we attempt to address with the Compendium. In addition to using the forum to ask for feedback, we also use it to post regular updates on the progress of the publication. Here again, SuSanA gives us the ability to communicate with other professionals within the sector through one central platform.

SuSanA: Are there other ways, in addition to the forum, that you use to mine the expertise of SuSanA members?

Yes, there are. In particular, we use Working Group 8 (“Emergency & reconstruction situations”) and its email list to further develop and promote the Compendium. Working Group meetings have proved to be a great way to get people involved and to discuss the current state of the publication. Moreover, other SuSanA events, like its 10th birthday celebration, provide us with the opportunity to present the current state of the Compendium. To sum up, through the forum, Working Group 8 and different SuSanA events, the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance has served as a valuable sounding board since the earliest stages of the Compendium.

SuSanA: What are your plans once the publication is finished? Do you intend to use SuSanA as part of your dissemination strategy?

Absolutely. For one, the publication will be available through the SuSanA library and we will use the aforementioned channels to inform people about the availability of the Compendium. Moreover, we do not only intend to have a “fixed” version of the Compendium but to turn it into a living document. What I mean by that is that as an online publication the Compendium should include many features that further add to its usability. We plan, for example, to link the individual sections to the corresponding sections of the forum, the SuSanA library and the SuSanA flickr gallery. SuSanA and its online platform are essential for this idea to work. Also, SuSanA’s regional chapters are important channels to bring publications like the Compendium to the attention of actors operating in the respective regions. We particularly plan on working with the MENA regional chapter and translating the Compendium into Arabic.

SuSanA: What is the policy impact of your publication?

Given the fact that the Federal Foreign Office is funding the hard copy of the *Compendium for Sanitation Technology in Emergencies*, the *Compendium* is part of the operationalization of the Federal Foreign Office’s strategy

regarding WASH in emergency contexts. Thus, it will have a direct impact on Germany’s WASH strategy for humanitarian relief situations. In addition, the publication will also serve to enhance Germany’s profile in the humanitarian sector and add to its increased visibility in the respective international governmental bodies. Finally, a multi-actor publication like the Compendium promises to serve as a guidebook for future operations – given that many of the implementing NGOs operating under the umbrella of the Federal Foreign Office have contributed to it.

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us and good luck on the completion of the *Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies*.

Further Information

SuSanA Working Group 8 (“Emergency & reconstruction situations”)
<http://forum.susana.org/61-wg-8-emergency-reconstruction>

Review process for “Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies” on SuSanA
<http://forum.susana.org/89-new-publications-books-articles-partner-newsletters-journals-blogs-websites-videos/21466-review-process-for-compedium-of-sanitation-technologies-in-emergencies-just-started-i-become-involved>

German WASH Network
<http://www.washnet.de/en/>

German Toilet Organization
<http://www.germantoilet.org/>

SuSanA Impact Case Story

Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies

SuSanA 2018 (Last updated: January 27, 2018)

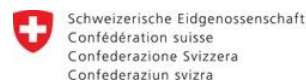
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