

Voices about AGUASAN

AGUASAN

work-shops

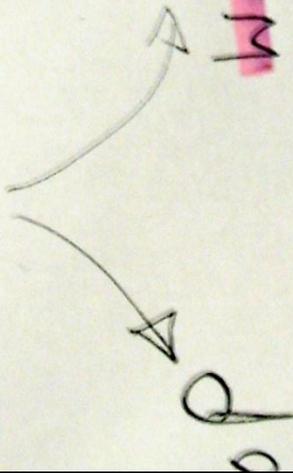
RESEAU

Interviews conducted by Learning and Networking, KLC SDC/
Charlotte Nager, October 2016

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1. Introduction

Mandated by the Global Programme Water Initiatives (GPWI) to capitalize on the experiences of AGUASAN, the Team Learning and Networking collected opinions, stories, questions, proposals from the different partners of this long-standing and successful Community of Practice. The collection of these voices aims at giving the GPWI an idea about how to go on with networking and learning in the Water Sector in Switzerland as well as on global level.

The focus of the questions was on the AGUASAN Community of Practice (CoP) and the AGUASAN Workshop (WS), but included also the RésEAU, the Water Team Days (WTD) and the Swiss Water Partnership (SWP). It became clear that they are part of and have a specific function in the Swiss Water sector and have to be considered all together as one system.

We asked members of the AGUASAN-CoP, participants of the AGUASAN Workshops, SDC Water specialists in Berne, NPOs in the field, Regional advisors of SDC in the field and at the headquarter, long standing water specialists, facilitators of the Workshops, pioneers of the CoP and present here the rich feedback from the different perspectives. A list of all the interviewees is in the Annex.

The feedback is structured according to the instruments or formats – AGUASAN-CoP, AGUASAN Workshop, RésEAU, Water Team Days, Swiss Water Partnership – and according to the different perspectives on this instrument – perspective of CoP-members, perspective of SDC-staff at the headquarter, perspective of SDC-field staff (regional advisors and NPO). During the interviews it became clear that the understanding of one instrument could differ quite a lot between the various functions. So the AGUASAN Workshops are seen in a very different way by the NPOs than by the SDC GP-staff in Berne. That is why we think it is important to keep the different perspectives separate. We have also added a small overview of the different links that exist between the different instruments and formats.

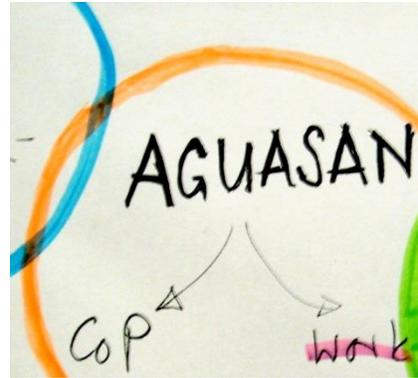
The conclusions are a first draft. It needs further reflection and discussion with the different partners for a consolidated picture. In the first place it is recommendable to look together at the specific objectives of each format and the different links, synergies, overlappings and complementarities between the various formats.

2. AGUASAN-Community of Practice

2.1. CoP-members

What is the Community of Practice?

- The AGUASAN-CoP is a Swiss-based gathering of Swiss experts in the water sector. It enables learning and exchange among each other about new approaches, tools and projects. The members of the CoP are mostly NGOs; international and multilateral organizations are not well represented. As it is not a platform for mandate generation, the private sector is not (or only very limited) part of the CoP.
- SDC is a partner among others, without having the lead or being dominant.
- The members of the CoP are based in Switzerland, the protocols of the meetings are sent to the field, in order to establish the link with the operations.
- The CoP-members are quite stable, but a part changes. Thus new ideas can enter the CoP, at the same time institutional knowledge is kept. Content-wise, the old members are necessary to make the link between the old members and the newcomers.
- The participants of the CoP are kept together by thematic interest.
- The CoP gives access to SDC and to information about SDC's policies and strategies.
- The CoP is self-organised, it has a light administration with a rotating chair. A small mandate is given to SKAT to coordinate the meetings and the minutes. However, this mandate is an important driver of the CoP.



Changes

- In the beginning there were just 6 persons that formed the CoP and met four times a year. They were experts with a lot of experience that came back from the field. They formed very close relationships, they were even called the Water-Mafia. At that time SDC was more in the steering seat, now SDC is rather in the background.
- Since 1998 the CoP started to grow larger and more NGOs joined, also the CoP grew younger. With the growing of the CoP also the number of topics discussed in the CoP increased. This leads to the situation that not all the topics discussed are relevant or interesting for all the members of the CoP.
- In the beginning the members were individuals, that were related also personally to the other members. Today the members tend to become rather representatives of organizations.
- In the beginning the CoP supported SDC not only in practical questions, but it also contributed to the elaboration of policies. Today the discussions turn less around practical questions, but it still serves as sounding board for new ideas and approaches.

What is the CoP doing well?

- The CoP is a motivated, self-organized community that is flexible and informal. It makes networking and information-sharing possible in a very easy way. It has a very good image as a think tank.
- It enables the transfer of knowledge from the older to the younger generation and gives to juniors a unique possibility to get introduced with all relevant stakeholders.

- CoP is a safe space that gives the possibility to exchange openly about projects and to also ask critical questions. Members can present new ideas before they are tried out and proven in a non-competitive environment. It is also possible to discuss about mistakes or lack of success. It is a trusted environment for learning and exchange, where also conflicting views can be discussed. This atmosphere of supporting and sharing probably comes from the long existence of this CoP.
- The participation in the CoP is high and shows the clear demand for this space. It would also go on without the support of SDC as long as there is a motivated core team. However, the CoP needs a good steering.

What could the CoP do better?

- The CoP grew quite large in the last years. It needs maybe a new approach for the facilitation of this meeting in order to get also time and space for discussion and reflection.
- Now the meetings are mostly focused on information sharing – information about projects, strategies, topics – and not on generating knowledge. A more participatory and interactive facilitation of the meeting is asked for.
- Thematically the CoP-meetings are less interesting than they used to be.
- A systematic KM-approach would be necessary, in order to access the huge expertise that is collected in the CoP and to make it also accessible for others. There are no outputs from the CoP except the minutes of the meetings. Why not produce yearly AGUASAN-briefs that bring together the knowledge created in the CoP? However, there are less people that come really regularly to the meetings. It is difficult to generate knowledge regarding a specific topic, to establish a more systematic thematic approach with the idea to publish something in the end with always changing participants in the meetings. In this regard it also could be necessary to create a committed core group that steers also the topics discussed in the CoP-meetings with the perspective of creating new knowledge and to publish it. The problem is that the old core group does not exist anymore and that it is difficult to find members that have the time to dedicate to such a task.
- The question is also asked if it really needs four meetings a year. Some think less meetings would be enough, others propose less meetings of 1,5 days, that would also give an evening for networking.
- It seems that the CoP is not priority anymore for some of the organizations. Senior staff comes less often, juniors are sent, SDC also sends its juniors without senior staff participating regularly.
- SDC just gives the room for the meeting and offers coffee. Maybe SDC does not need the CoP anymore as the topic is now accepted in the house.
- The relation between the CoP and the AGUASAN-workshop is not so clear. There are people that doubt the necessity that the CoP has to be involved in the setting of the topic for the workshop. However, the majority clearly supports this link and sees it as a very important function of the CoP.
- Also the cooperation with the Swiss Water Partnership should be reflected on. In this relation the CoP could even elaborate a strategy that is now missing.

2.2 SDC Headquarter

What is the Community of Practice?

- The CoP brings together the Swiss Water Community engaged in international cooperation. Implementation partners and research actors come together in the CoP. With the constant focus on water, it concentrates on innovations and their implementation. It serves like the quality control of innovations, it gives second opinion to new approaches, analyzes new ideas on a voluntary basis.
- The CoP is a group of 20-25 persons that cooperate rather with the South Cooperation. The persons that are members of the CoP are more important than the institutions. The private sector is not present. For the Global Programme the CoP offers a link with the field.
- The meetings are now conducted in a rather classical way and serve the exchange of information.
- The small secretariat of the CoP is essential and one of the success factors. The costs are very low and there are no formal rules regarding the membership in the CoP.
- There is a close and dynamic relationship between the meeting and the workshop.

Changes

- CoP is an important part of SDC-history and it helped in the lobbying for water as one of the global topics. It used to be considered as just a group of friends. Only when the evaluation in 2003 confirmed the successful learning community SDC wanted to replicate it.
- In the last years the CoP grew larger and the topics widened – it followed the trend from WASH to water as a resource.

What does the CoP well?

- The CoP is like a family with a strong identity and a high feeling of belonging to a community. There is a constant change in members, which is important in order to get a good mix between old leaders and newcomers. The regular meetings create a good contact between the members and create a safe space, confidence and trust.
- The members are very active and a lot of senior staff participates in the meetings.

What could the CoP do better?

- The facilitation of the meetings should be organized in a way that there is room for discussion and reflection. Now it is mostly information exchange. It would be important that the CoP works along topics and would for example invite experts and to focus more on learning.
- The CoP is not focusing on aspects relevant to water in humanitarian aid.
- Changes should not be rushed, the CoP works in a well-tuned balance.

2.3 NPO / SDC-Field staff

What is the Community of Practice?

- The CoP is a space for professionals who share field experiences. The CoP is the RésEAU.

What could the CoP do better?

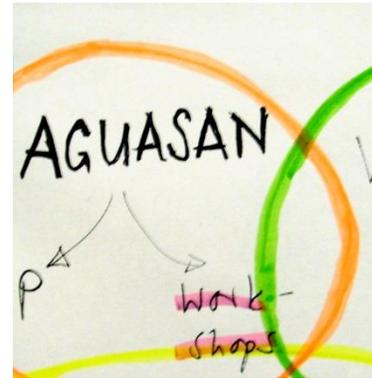
- The CoP is very far away from the field. Field staff does not know what the CoP is doing during the year.

3. AGUASAN Workshop

3.1 CoP members

What is the AGUASAN-Workshop?

- The around 50 participants of the yearly Workshops are international staff from the projects, SDC-staff, SCO and field staff of implementers with focus on WASH and humanitarian approaches. About 1/3 of the participants remain each year the same, the rest changes. The participants do not form a community among each other. They do not necessarily work together. The participants are motivated to participate through the topic. If the topic is relevant to them, they will apply. The Workshops are punctual, topic-specific events.
- The Workshops focus on practitioners and produce a concrete output, which is presented to the WTD.
- The Workshops are narrowly linked to the CoP: the steering group of the CoP proposes the topic to the CoP, selects the participants, steers the organization, preparation and conduction of the Workshop and reports back to the CoP. The output of the WS is a synthesis of the work including recommendations regarding approaches.
- Participants have to apply in order to participate in the Workshop. The selection of the participants is done according to age, gender, geographic area, thematic expertise, organization of the applicants, with the aim to have a good mix of backgrounds in the workshop. The demand for the workshops is higher than the places available.



Participants in the Workshops (2012-2016):

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Local organisations (NGOs, Gov., Business)	5	8	7	6	12
Field staff of Swiss Organisation	12	7	8	10	7
HQ staff of Swiss-Organisations	4	6	7	8	4
SDC Field (expats)	2	2	5	3	3
SDC Field (NPO)	5	5	11	9	9
SDC Headquarter	4	3	6	1	4
AGUASAN-Community	7	4	6	6	8
Consultants	1	2	1	1	1
Field staff of IOs (not Swiss)	1	2	1	1	1
Headquarter staff of IOs (not Swiss)	1	2		1	5
Academia / research	1	1		1	1

It is interesting to see that the number of local organisations increased considerably. It is however not clear, if these local organisations are partners of SDC or of other CoP-members. Also in general it can be observed that the field increased its participation (mostly through SDC-NPOs) in the past years.

- SDC finances the conduction of the workshop, while the participants pay for their own costs. The role of SDC is in the Workshop more dominant than in the CoP. It also happened that SDC just decides about the topic. The Workshops are considered to be a SDC-instrument.
- The workshops focus on the field and the needs of the practitioners. They are invited to propose topics for the workshop.
- The workshops are conducted in a participatory and result-oriented way, following classical large group-interventions. The preparation of the workshops, especially the preparation of presented cases, is very intense and the whole procedures follow a complex choreography.
- It is conducted back to back with the Water Team Days, but also with the Team Days of Helvetas. They take place just before the holidays so that it can be combined with private holiday stays in Switzerland.

Changes

- The conduction of the Workshops stayed the same since the beginning. But the group increased from 25 persons to around 50 persons or more, because SDC could reduce like this the costs per participant of the workshop. The larger group can still be well handled with the large group-interventions.
- Since 2016 seecon took over from SKAT, who prepared and facilitated the Workshops since their beginning. seecon is following the same procedures for the Workshop. The only difference is that SKAT clearly separated between thematic and methodological lead in the preparation and the conduction of the WS.
- The group of participants not only grew larger, it also grew wider. In the beginning they were a group of like-minded persons, now the WS is almost public. Also there can be a trend observed, that the practitioners are interested in practical, hands-on questions, while the NPOs and government partners are rather interested in abstract questions, like for example water and human rights.

What does the Workshop well?

- The WS offers the unique possibility to work for five days on one specific topic. It has the aspect of a thematic retreat with an important capacity-building component that leads to the further development of the operational work. The high demand for the WS shows that the topics are well chosen.
- The facilitation of the WS pays attention to the integration of newcomers.
- It offers the possibility to network with the field.
- The discussion is opened, if the WS should in the future continue to be conducted in Switzerland. The majority of the voices are in favor of the Swiss-option, although they recognize that after 30 years it may be difficult to find relevant projects for field visits. However, they also think that the field visits in Switzerland are relevant and eye-openers. Moreover, the conduction of the WS in Switzerland allows the combination of the WS with the WTD, which is considered to be very important. The conduction of the WS in the South would make the organization very complicated and it would be necessary to have somebody outside of Switzerland who would prepare the WS in the specific place. In the South, of course, the field visits would be much more relevant to the participants, at the same time there would also be the danger that it would be too specific and the

participants could not transfer the knowledge to their own reality. It would also be difficult to spend only one day for a field visit in the South.

- The supporters of the WS in Switzerland also mention that the AGUASAN-CoP is based in Switzerland and it is therefore also logical that the WS is conducted in Switzerland.

What could the Workshop do better?

- However, there is also a minority that opts for the conduction of the WS in the South, in order to exchange better among the South partners, to involve also regional stakeholders and to be able to visit relevant projects.
- The topic of the 2016 Workshop about the SDGs, was considered to be very abstract and floating. In the end they were all happy about the WS and how seecon prepared and facilitated it.
- It is difficult to prove the added value of five days of learning about a specific topic, but it is planned to make a specific follow-up in the presented cases regarding the effects of the WS.
- The link between the CoP and the WS should be strengthened. Besides the fact that the members of the CoP form the steering committee and inform before and after the WS, there are no other links between them. The information remain rather superficial, there is no reflection or discussion.

3.2 SDC Headquarter

What is the AGUASAN-Workshop?

- The steering group of the CoP identifies the topic of the WS and supports its preparation and conduction that follows a well-defined and complex procedure. The outputs of the WS flow back to the CoP.
- The WS are trainings for partners and NGOs. About 1/3 of the participants stays each year the same, with the other 2/3 of new participants also new ideas enter the WS.
- The WS aim at the field staff involved in practice. The participants are rather coming from the partner organizations of the South Cooperation. The WS give to SDC the opportunity to explain to the practitioners in the field the international political context of water.

Changes

- In order to reduce the costs per person for the WS, SDC asked to double the number of participants. Since this year the WS are prepared and facilitated by seecon, before they were facilitated by SKAT.

What does the Workshop do well?

- Workshops are good investments. At the center stands the relevance of the topic. It is therefore important that the steering committee consists of different partners and organizations that try to find a consensus in the identification of a topic.
- The WS also have the aspects of think tanks and laboratories. New ideas and approaches can be reflected upon, tools are developed, new aspects are discovered. To underline and enable this think tank aspect it is important to leave some flexibility in the conduction of the WS.
- Some voices say that it is more complicated to conduct the WS in the South, and even more, with the SDGs also the Swiss projects are relevant.

What could the workshop do better?

- The WS needs new facilitation techniques, a new dynamic has to be established, a new approach and a new interactivity are needed. In this setting seecon still has to find its role.
- The WS in fact should be a think tank, but with the diversity of the participants, this is not possible.
- On one hand it is said that it is important that SDC does not dominate the WS, on the other hand it is deplored that SDC has no say in the identification of the topics.
- For some of the voices it is clear, that if the WS would be conducted in the South, only motivated and interested people would participate and stronger links could be established with and between programmes in the South, and the field visits could be more relevant. However, it would be important to ensure that all the participants could come easily to the venue. It is also clear that the participation of the Swiss staff would be reduced.

3.3 NPO / SDC Field Staff

What is the AGUASAN-Workshop?

- The AGUASAN-Workshop is a training, in which 50% of the participants are SDC staff, 50% implementing partners. The participants are practitioners that will participate when the topic is relevant for them. They come from the AGUASAN-CoP. The WS is organized as a one-week in-depth exchange of profound experience and expertise. It follows a well-elaborated concept with a training manual.
- It is a training, where the participants are not involved in the definition of the topic and also do not have ownership for the training. The thematic advisors in the SCOs make sure that NPOs or advisors from the region participate. But the WS is just a training. All the work for exchange, connecting different stakeholders and thematic learning is the task of the regional sub-groups of the RésEAU.

Changes

- At the beginning the workshops focused mostly on questions related to WASH and Humanitarian Aid, then they started to enlarge their scope. The topics of the workshops went from more technical to more political and strategic, water was also treated in combination with other topics (water and health, water and human rights).

What do the Workshops well?

- In the WS you get for five days the state of the art in the water sector. It allows to get to know other experiences and other colleagues and to relate directly to them. It gives an overview of the experiences in the different continents and allows the sharing of these experiences and good practices. It gives also the possibility to present oneself and what one is doing and to discuss about this. It also provides a network and access to expertise and it facilitates exchange. It allows also a good networking with institutions.
- The WS are very helpful to partners to know better the functioning and the approaches of SDC. It makes it possible to get on the same level with partners and other stakeholders at the right time – as happened with the SDGs.
- The topic of the Workshop is always a surprise to the field.

- By giving the NPOs the possibility to present a case they allow and encourage them to be closer to the projects.
- It is good that the WS takes place in Switzerland. It is a neutral place and like an award for the NPOs; moreover it makes it easily possible to combine the travel to the WS with the WTD. Swiss examples are also interesting and motivating.

What could the Workshops do better?

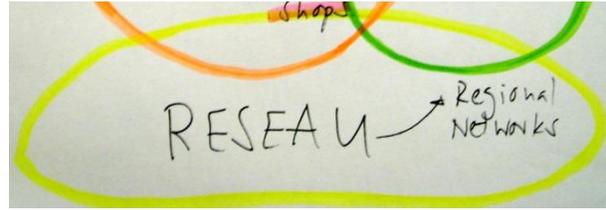
- The community has not changed during the past 10 years, it needs new ideas and new perspectives.
- The topics for the WS should not be too far from the field. However the topic of the 2016 WS was very global and in the end, it was broken down to the question how it can be applied. So it was also practical in the end.

4. RésEAU

4.1 CoP-members

What is the RésEAU?

- The activities of the RésEAU consist in sending a newsletter, having a library on the shareweb and organizing e-discussions. These activities are conducted by SKAT. The people are aware about being a member of the RésEAU because they receive the newsletter. The members of the RésEAU mostly work in the South Cooperation.
- The RésEAU is mostly active on regional level, where sub-groups are meeting regularly and conduct technical regional meetings, using other “moments forts” of their work (conferences, events). They are informal, without budget or working plan.



Changes

- The RésEAU was created in 2008/2009. 2016 the RésEAU created a core group and it is tried to strengthen the regional sub-groups and to bring back the output of these sub-groups to Berne.

What does the RésEAU well?

- The regional sub-groups developed some dynamic.
- The newsletter of the RésEAU works well to distribute information about specific projects in the SCO.

What could the RésEAU do better?

- The RésEAU is not really a community, but rather an electronic platform. It is not clear who the members are. Its outreach is quite limited.
- The members are often not aware that they are members of the network and they also do not have time to comment a document or to contribute to a strategy. In the RésEAU information is exchanged, not specific questions explored.

4.2 SDC Headquarter

What is the RésEAU?

- RésEAU is a network of persons that stand in close contact to the SDC water-sector. It focuses on aspects relevant to development and on a policy level.
- The RésEAU has three main channels: the newsletter and minutes of the AGUASAN-meetings; the AGUASAN-Workshops, the Water Team Days and the meetings of the regional sub-groups; and the direct contact between regional advisors and NPOs.
- Water specialists in SDC refer mostly to the regional sub-groups that have quite informal regular meetings (virtual and f2f, mostly back to back with other events) and discuss together more technical questions. The meetings are organized and conducted by the regional advisors in the Water sector that approach the different NPOs. Their task is to facilitate the sharing of good

practices, new approaches and ideas, new challenges and new tools, and also to inform about the programmes of the Global Cooperation. The majority of the participants is SDC-staff.

Changes

- The water specialists in the SCOs slowly are disappearing as water is rather integrated into other sectors than a sector on its own.

What does the RésEAU well?

- RésEAU establishes contacts between the Global Programme and the water specialists in the SCOs.
- For the NPOs it is easier to get the permission to participate in a regional meeting than go to a AGUASAN-Workshop in Switzerland.

What could the RésEAU do better?

- There is no link between the regional sub-groups and the AGUASAN-workshops, the sub-groups are not involved in the identification of topics for the Workshops.
- The NPOs need the possibility to exchange with their peers. They rather need to exchange about policy questions on a strategic level than about technical questions.
- The RésEAU is not very relevant to HH-aspects

4.3 NPO / SDC-Field staff

What is the RésEAU?

- Since 2016 the regional advisors are members of the core group of the RésEAU. The WTD are considered to be the f2f of the RésEAU. However, they can also meet other members of the RésEAU at the AGUASAN-WS and the WTD.
- For SDC-staff in the field the regional sub-groups are their communities. They are informal, have no budget and no planned meetings. Since 2011 there are regional WTD in Central Asia, that last for 4 days. These events are – depending on the region – topical exchanges on projects and specific subjects or more technical. They can bring together the advisors, the implementers, also government representatives of the region. The regional sub-groups promote a solution-oriented networking. In some regions these meetings are only virtual.
- The membership in the RésEAU is limited to the reception of the newsletter, access to the shareweb and the d-group.
- The Humanitarian Aid has its own learning network in water, the expert group for water.

Changes

- Some years ago, the RésEAU was dominated by Latin America, now also the East Cooperation joined the network and more regional sub-groups came into existence.
- Less and less country-strategies have water as a domain, less and less thematic PO or NPOs work in the programmes.

What does the RésEAU well?

- Sub-groups are flexible and serve the needs of their clients. Sometimes field visits are organized, which are helpful, but still they are not a training like the WS. The sub-groups rather facilitate contacts and exchange in informal ways.

What could the RésEAU do better?

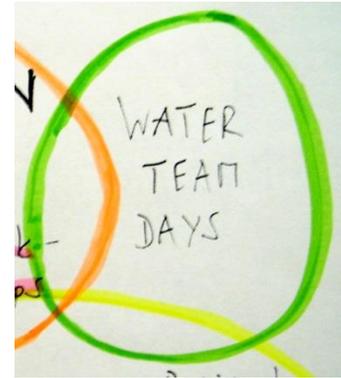
- Regional groups and presence in the field is very important, but for this it needs more backstopping resources, more exchange, peer reviews, learning from each other. The facilitation of regional sub-groups is a way to keep the competencies of SDC-staff up to date
- SDC-Field staff feels rather to be a member of the regional sub-group. On this level the network lives. They have to nurture the global RésEAU.
- On the shareweb of the RésEAU the profiles of the members could be more specific, so that you can easily find a specific expert for a specific question

5. Water Team Days

5.1 CoP-members

What are the Water Team Days?

- It is a SDC-event that is mostly for SDC-internal topics, sharing information about policies and strategies with the SDC Field staff. More or less the same persons participate in the WS. It serves the exchange about institutional questions and is probably more interesting for the NPOs than the WS.
- Guests are also invited and it gives them the possibility to exchange with SDC and to discuss about possibilities for cooperation. It has aspects of capacity-building and of a time-out.
- The WTD are the f2f of the RésEAU



Changes

- The WTD exist since 2004, they took place even before the RésEAU was created because SDC found it helpful to have a moment with its field staff on their own. Only after the creation of the RésEAU also partners and implementers were invited.
- First the WTD lasted just one day, then two days. The number of participants increased to around 60 persons today.

Participants in the Water Team Days (2012-2016):

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Local organisations (NGOs, Gov., Business)	2	6	4	4	6
Field staff of Swiss Organisation	4	3	2	2	3
HQ staff of Swiss-Organisations	2	2	6	2	7
SDC Field (expats)	3	3	5	4	5
SDC Field (NPO)	4	8	13	11	11
SDC Headquarter	13	11	21	15	13
AGUASAN-Community	4	5	7	6	10
Consultants	2	2	2	3	5
Field staff of IOs (not Swiss)		1	2	1	3
Headquarter staff of IOs (not Swiss)	2	1	1	5	4
Academia / research	1	2	2	1	3

The trend towards more SDC-participants is shown in the table, as well towards more participation from the field. It has to be clarified also here, who the local organisations are: partners of SDC, partners of the Global Cooperation, the South Cooperation?

What do the WTD well?

- In the WTD there is time for interaction, discussions and reflections. There is a retreat atmosphere with a good group dynamic.
- Information about SDC's activities on regional level are very interesting for partners.

What could the WTD do better?

- The WTD are only 2 days and cannot go into depth. It is mainly information sharing not thematic discussion.

5.2 SDC Headquarter

What are the Water Team Days?

- The WTD are the f2f of the RésEAU and focused on SDC-staff. Information from the SCOs is shared. The objective of the WTD is to get the different SDC-staff – mostly South Cooperation-staff working in the field – on the same page and to inform and update about the activities of the Global Programme. Information is shared from the programmes, but with a focus on management, and institutional questions.
- It is the occasion to meet with the core group and the field staff-members of the RésEAU and to discuss and reflect about the RésEAU. But also partners and headquarter-staff on different hierarchical levels is participating. The NPOs of the Global Programme are participating more regularly than the NPOs of the South Cooperation.

Changes

- Since the event is open to everybody, the number of the participants increased in the past years.

What do the WTD well?

- They offer a good occasion to exchange and to get to know each other and the different activities.

What could the WTD do better?

- The information shared could also be shared in a good newsletter. For some persons the topics discussed are not relevant.
- The WTD are not really a thematic f2f. These are taking place on regional level, where the same language and similar interests and needs exist.
- The WTD also offer the possibility to enter in a dialogue with the hierarchy, but this does not always work.

5.3 NPO / SDC Field staff

What are the Water Team Days?

- A large group of persons, around 50-60, meet for 2 days. The participants are the WS-participants plus people from the SDC-headquarter.

- The WTD are the f2f of the RésEAU. They allow SDC peers to exchange between different regions and countries. Also the core group of the RésEAU can meet and exchange.
- In the WTD the institutional perspective is at the centre and strategies are discussed. The focus is on networking, cooperation possibilities and updating about activities. The regional WTD are organized by the regional advisors and are more technical.

What do the WTD well?

- The WTD are more important than the WS. It is interesting to exchange with other colleagues about other approaches of SDC. They are related to the programmes and the portfolio and to challenges on institutional level and the internal functioning.

What could the WTD do better?

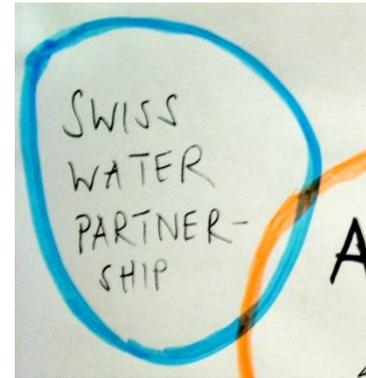
- The WTD are too short and on a global level. There is no possibility to exchange and relate to each other.
- NPOs could not come to the WTD without the WS. They are too short.
- If something has to be regional then rather the WTD should be regional and not the AGUASAN-WS.

6. Swiss Water Partnership

6.1 CoP-members

What is the Swiss Water Partnership?

- The SWP was initiated by SDC in 2012. It is an association of Swiss organizations active in the Water Sector. There is a formal and paid membership and a secretariat of the association. It is not a SDC-instrument and not SDC-driven.
- The members are similar to the AGUASAN-CoP-members, but there are also international and multilateral organizations and the private sector. The members of the SWP-steering board are also members of the AGUASAN steering committee. The AGUASAN-CoP advises the SWP in technical questions.
- The SWP produces a newsletter, organizes events, facilitates networking events, disseminates information about workshops and serves as platform about the Swiss water sector. Working groups form around specific questions. SWP discusses and reflect on policy level and on specific possibilities for cooperation.



What does the SWP well?

- Gives to its members a good platform to the outside world (eg. at the Stockholm World Water Week) and shares information about interesting trainings taking place in the network.
- The private sector could be integrated in a good way to the association.

What could the SWP do better?

- There is a lack of community-feeling in the SWP. The members in SWP and the AGUASAN CoP are almost the same and the distribution of roles between these two organizations is not clear. There is also the feeling of redundancy and duplication. In 2014 a MTR was conducted. One of the recommendations was to clarify the distribution of the roles between AGUASAN CoP and SWP.
- SWP founded a working group to work further on the 2017 UN-topic of Waste Water. The cooperation with AGUASAN could have taken place, but the reflex to initiate such a cooperation did not exist.
- The CoP could be a think tank for the SWP. The complementarities between SWP and CoP have to be explored.
- In the SWP it is rather difficult to generate activities, perhaps because most of the organizations are already linked with each other in the CoP.
- It is not clear how knowledge created in the Workshop can be transferred to the SWP.

6.2 SDC Headquarter

What is the Swiss Water Partnership?

- SWP was born in a meeting of the AGUASAN-CoP. The idea was to establish a new CoP, including private sector and multilateral organizations, that is independent from SDC. The SWP was maybe easy to establish because the different members of SWP already cooperated during many years in AGUASAN.
- Activities of SWP are similar to the ones of AGUASAN, but larger and with the objective to influence the global politics regarding water, for example at the World Water Week. The SWP is an interesting partner for the Global Programme Water Initiatives, as it deals with policy questions, about partnership and the Swiss Voice.

What could the SWP do better?

- It is advisable to look more closely at the distribution of roles between AGUASAN and SWP.

6.3 NPO / SDC Field staff

They do not mention SWP.

7. Links between the various formats

AGUASAN-CoP with the other formats:

- Workshop: members of the CoP form the steering committee of the WS; it decides about the topic of the WS
- RésEAU: the members of the CoP usually receive the newsletters of the RésEAU; but it is not an active membership in the network
- WTD: CoP-members are invited to the WTD and are often also participating
- SWP: CoP is or could be the think tank or the content advisor

AGUASAN-Workshop with the other formats:

- CoP: In the CoP-meetings there are information slots where the steering committee informs about the workshop, before and after
- WTD: The results of the Workshop are presented at the WTD
- RésEAU: some participants are members of the RésEAU
- SWP: none

RésEAU with the other formats:

- WTD: core group and regional sub-groups meet at the WTD
- SWP: none
- Workshop: members of the RésEAU participate
- CoP: some members receive the newsletter of the RésEAU

Water Team Days with the other formats:

- RésEAU: possibility for exchange, information sharing; informal f2f of the RésEAU
- CoP: none
- Workshop: receives information about the results of the WS
- SWP: none

Swiss Water Partnership with the other formats:

- RésEAU: none
- CoP: potential for working groups linked to the CoP
- Workshop: none
- WTD: none

8. Conclusions

These preliminary conclusions are based on the voices of the interviewees. To validate and validate these voices further steps have to be undertaken.

AGUASAN-CoP

There are voices that see the beginning of a new area of the CoP. There is the need to decide about the objective and the aim of the CoP. Should it serve also in the future the exchange of information, the good cooperation between various stakeholders in the Swiss Water sector, or should it also focus on the generation of thematic knowledge, to serve as a laboratory for new ideas? According to the setting of the objective maybe the methods for the conduction of the meetings will have to be adapted.

There seem to be some doubts about the role of SDC in the CoP. It used to be a very important driver of the CoP in its beginnings. Now SDC is rather in the background. Does this mean that SDC does not see the value of AGUASAN-CoP anymore?

SDC Field staff is very far away from the CoP. Although they theoretically receive the minutes of the meetings, it may be quite difficult to follow the discussion or to see the value of these discussions for the own work. Does it make sense to bring the field staff closer to the CoP? Is it necessary?

AGUASAN-Workshops

For the CoP-members and for SDC-headquarter-staff the WS are clearly trainings with the objective to improve the operational quality of the work, and also to explore procedures and approaches. For the NPOs the AGUASAN WS is like a network event: to meet colleagues, to share experiences, to learn about other projects in other regions, to link with their colleagues.

It should not be forgotten, that the participants of the WS do not form a CoP. It is not the task, neither of the CoP nor of the WS, to encourage and strengthen the exchange between the different programmes and projects. This is rather the task of the regional sub-groups of the RésEAU – who are in fact doing this already.

One of the questions is to be asked is, where else can the field staff relate and exchange with their peers on a global level? Could it be possible, that the regional advisers join the steering committee of the WS and could link the topics discussed to the needs and experiences in the field?

RésEAU

The RésEAU does not seem to be a living community. Regional sub-groups facilitate exchange between the various stakeholders on regional level, but their discussions, insights, result do not reach the global level – except in the AGUASAN-WS and informally.

RésEAU and AGUASAN-CoP have somehow very similar tasks, which are taken over mostly by the CoP. With the focus on the exchange in Switzerland, the field staff of SDC and the experiences of SDC are not taken up in the network. It could be discussed, how the cooperation of the CoP and the RésEAU (or a merging?) could look like and how the SDC field-staff could be better integrated. Or would this destroy the AGUASAN-CoP?

In the Cooperation Strategies the Water sector is less and less a separate domain, but is rather integrated in other domains. What is the effect of this on the competencies of the responsible NPOs, on their identification with the topic, on their needs to learn and exchange?

Water Team Days

The WTD are obviously very important for institutional knowledge sharing for the Field staff, probably especially about the GPWI. How are the South Cooperation-programmes involved? Are they also part of the preparation and organization of the WTD?

How does this go along with acquisition activities or expectations of participating consultants? Are these not too different objectives at the same time in the same room?

Swiss Water Partnership

It can be concluded that the SWP and the AGUASAN-CoP are working very closely: there are almost the same members and treat very similar topics. It is clear that there have to be some formal links between the two formats. The links are now given, by the identity of the members. It would be helpful and very necessary to reflect, how the links could be formalized and nurtured. For some the SWP constitutes rather a competitor than a partner organization that works on a different level with a different objective.

It is very much recommended to continue this reflection together with representatives from these different formats and to discuss in-depths the objectives of the different formats, the links that they have with each other and how the synergies between them all could be fully used and even increased. This could be done in a workshop with the different stakeholders.

Annex: Interview partners

AGUASAN CoP

Roger Schmid, SKAT

Karl Wehrle, formerly SKAT

Riff Fullan, Helvetas IC

Chris Zurbrügg, eawag

Agnes Montangero, Helvetas IC

Kim Müller, Caritas

Johannes Heeb, seecon

SDC Headquarter

Johan Gély, GPWI

Christian Eggs, GPWI

Hannah Capeder, GPWI

Marc André Bünzli, HA

François Münger, formerly SDC

SDC Field / NPO

Eduart Rumani, Albania

Diana Rojas, Colombia

Thierry Umbehr, Usbekistan

Sergio Perez, ALAK