



WASH Pledge for Access to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at the Workplace



Implementation Case Study Nestlé Cameroon, Central America and India

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Introduction

Nestlé is a founding member of [the WBCSD Pledge for Access to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene \(WASH\) at the workplace](#), and was one of the first companies to join the initiative in September 2014. As co-chairs of the WASH Pledge, the company also provides strategic input and support to the WBCSD's work program on access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), including through a [World Toilet Day CEO Call to Action](#) by Paul Bulcke, CEO of Nestlé, in November 2015. The WASH Pledge has been rolled out globally within Nestlé, and this case study sheds light on the implementation of the WASH Pledge in Nestlé Central America, India and Cameroon, three markets that have been particularly active on WASH.

About the WBCSD WASH at the workplace Pledge

The WASH at the workplace Pledge ("WASH Pledge") was launched in September 2013 to address the WBCSD's [Action 2020](#) Water Must-Have of *Significantly accelerating the progressive realization of the human right to water and sanitation, relative to the 2012 baseline*. This is the societal must-have linked to the WBCSD's [Vision 2050](#) of 9 billion people living well within the boundaries of this planet.

According to estimates, 1.8 billion people currently do not have access to safe drinking water¹, and over 4 billion people do not have access to safe sanitation². In addition, 1 in every 8 people still practices open defecation. This poses an immense cost to society, but also presents an important opportunity. Every US dollar invested in water and sanitation yields a return of USD 4.3 through reduced health care costs for individuals and society³, and hygiene behavior change, specifically hand-washing is one of the most cost-effective health interventions⁴. The WBCSD is leading the business contribution to address this issue. An important first step is to ensure safe and sustainable access to WASH for employees at the workplace.

¹ World Health Organization (WHO) 2015 estimates. See here: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs391/en/>

² WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation, 2015 estimates. See here: http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/JMP-2015-update-press-release-English.pdf

³ WHO & UN-Water (2014), UN-water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS) - Investing in water and sanitation: increasing access, reducing inequalities. Available here:

http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/glaas_report_2014/en/

⁴ WaterAid (2015). See here: <http://www.wateraid.org/news/blogs/2015/october/handwashing-and-hygiene-measuring-behaviour-change>

What does a WASH Pledge signature imply?

Signing the WASH Pledge means guaranteeing the provision of and access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to a company's employees at the workplace within three years

- The WASH Pledge only concerns a company's **direct operations** (extended value chain, employees' homes and contractor premises are not included within the scope of the Pledge, although signatories may consider these).
- Companies have **three years** to demonstrate integration of the Pledge provisions into existing internal processes and adherence to these provisions. This can be done via the WBCSD Self-Assessment tool used for each operation/site.
- There is **no formal reporting requirement** given that the Pledge is a non-legally binding commitment. However, companies are encouraged to communicate about their achievements through both internal and external channels.
- Signatories receive **WBCSD support for implementation** (Helpdesk, tools, Pledge community sharing and learning).
- Non-WBCSD members may follow the lead set by members.

The WASH Pledge also contributes directly to the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). [SDG 6](#) sets out to *Ensure availability & sustainable management of water & sanitation for all*, and targets 6.1 & 6.2⁵ aim to achieve universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene. WASH is also a bedrock for the realization of many other SDGs, notably ending poverty and ensuring healthy lives, among others.

To date, 42 multinational / large companies have signed the WASH Pledge, representing over 2.5 million employees with access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at the workplace. Within the WASH Pledge learning and sharing community, WASH Pledge signatories share their lessons learned and challenges, and collaborate on advancing WASH in specific sectors and in the global agenda. To access the latest list of signatories and implementation materials, please visit: <http://www.wbcscd.org/Clusters/Water/WASH-access-to-water-sanitation-and-hygiene/WASH-at-the-workplace-Pledge>.

“Nestlé has been part of the WASH Pledge since the start. As part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, universal access to safe water and sanitation should become a reality by 2030. Each of us, government, civil society, NGOs and business has to work together to achieve these targets. By signing this Pledge, and more importantly, by taking concrete action, business can and should play its part.”

Paul Bulcke, CEO, Nestlé in the [CEO Call to Action video](#) on World Toilet Day 2015

Background

Headquartered in Vevey, Switzerland, Nestlé is a leading nutrition, health and wellness company. Founded in 1866, Nestlé's global portfolio includes more than 200 brands including dairy, culinary,

⁵ The goals specifically spell out to: **6.1** by 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; **6.2** by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.



Good Food, Good Life



coffee, beverages, infant nutrition, bottled water, confectionery, pet food, and ice cream. 2015 sales amounted to CHF 88.8 billion, while operating 442 factories in 86 countries and employing approximately 335'000 people in 197 countries. Nestlé works with 161'000 Tier 1 suppliers in more than 100 countries, and relies on 5 million farmers in the upstream supply chain of which 760'000 supply directly to Nestlé.

Nestlé & Water

As a company, Nestlé recognizes the human rights to water and sanitation. Delivering upon the WASH Pledge is about ensuring dignity and decent working conditions for the company's workforce. All Nestlé sites are expected to supply their employees with adequate WASH facilities, reflecting Nestlé's commitment to the WASH Pledge. In addition, the *Nestlé Guidelines on Respecting the Human Right to Water and Sanitation* set out to ensure that operations and activities in the upstream supply chain do not negatively affect the human rights to water and sanitation.

The WASH Pledge is a core element of Nestlé's **Water Stewardship strategy**, which consists of the following:

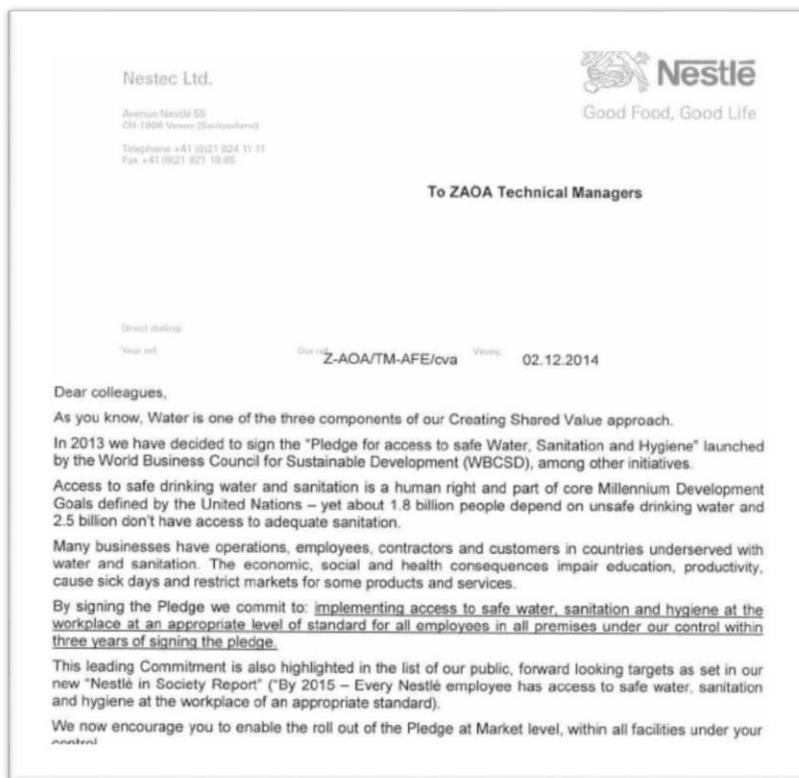
- Work to achieve water efficiency and sustainability across operations
- Advocate for effective water policies and stewardship
- Treat discharged water effectively
- Engage with suppliers, especially those in agriculture
- Raise awareness on water conservation and improve access to water and sanitation across the company's supply chain

Nestlé also engages in WASH initiatives beyond owned sites, delivering water and sanitation projects in priority communities around company operations, including factories and sourcing areas. To date around 440'000 people have benefitted from these in various countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, India and Pakistan. This is sometimes implemented with partner organizations such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

WASH Pledge implementation in Nestlé

Following the WASH Pledge signature by Nestlé Corporate Management, the commitment was

communicated internally to all sites.



Nestlé's Corporate Safety, Health & Environment Department distributed the WBCSD WASH Pledge Self-assessment tool to the factories, which were asked to complete the self-assessment by end of 2015. The Water Resource Reviews that the company conducts to examine all water-related activities within and around the factory helped to reinforce usage of the self-assessment tool. Following the completion of the self-assessments, by end 2016, last gaps will be closed to fully comply with the WASH Pledge.

Corporate Operations, and more specifically, Corporate Safety, Health & Environment and Corporate Water departments were involved in the roll-out of the WASH Pledge.

Challenges faced & lessons learned

Ensuring that more than 400 factories in more than 80 countries make the WASH Pledge a priority and making them understand what the WASH Pledge expects them to do was the biggest challenge. Site managers are typically focused on KPIs related to the production of foods and beverages. They may sometimes not see the direct link between a better WASH provisions and a more productive work force or they just do not know how to approach the self-assessment tool. Support from corporate functions has been critical to guide sites with the implementation of the WASH Pledge, guiding them in the identification of gaps and the development of corrective action plans.

Advice to other companies implementing the WASH Pledge

1. **Build a compelling case.** Explaining to site managers why WASH Pledge implementation is relevant and of importance to them.
2. **Have a support structure at the corporate level** in place to respond to the sites' questions in the implementation of the WASH Pledge.
3. **Link WASH Pledge implementation with existing programs.** Combining the realization of the Water Resource Reviews with the implementation of the WASH Pledge (given that there is a degree of overlap between the two) has worked out very well for Nestlé. This has helped to save resources and embed the WASH Pledge into the bigger picture of an overall water stewardship strategy.
4. **Use the WASH Pledge as a hook to engage on WASH beyond the fence.** In Nestlé Central America, for example, the implementation of the WASH Pledge served as an opportunity to

take WASH beyond the fences of factories into supply chains. Seeing that the WASH Pledge is aligned with the [Nestlé Responsible Sourcing Guidelines](#), requiring suppliers to provide a healthy workplace, the market organized a workshop with Tier 1 suppliers, discussing ways in which the WASH Pledge can be implemented in Nestlé's upstream supply chain, and encouraging suppliers to implement the Pledge at their workplace.

WASH Pledge implementation: Nestlé Cameroon in focus

Background

The Douala factory, located in Western Cameroon, produces culinary products (Maggi cubes and tablets) and refills Nescafé coffee and Nido milk. It is one of the eight Nestlé factories located in Central and West Africa, a region where 90 percent of the products sold are produced locally. Nestlé directly employs more than 6,700 people in this region. The implementation of the WASH Pledge started in 2014 and all sites will be covered in 2016.



WASH Pledge implementation

The Douala site met the Pledge's overall compliance level where a 100% score was achieved in all areas to full satisfaction. The assessment showed the importance of establishing adequate water and sanitation facilities for more than 500 workers on site and in providing safe and clean drinking water at two water fountains for the local communities.

A minor gap was found in the site, namely that there was no toilet for disabled people in the factory. To address this, a new locker room with a toilet for disabled people was built. In addition, the size of the locker room was increased because the number of staff had grown considerably over time. A CAPEX investment was used to finance this.

Feedback from the assessment will be used as a guide for other sites in Cameroon, such as at the distribution centers and head office.

Impact of rolling out the WASH Pledge

The WASH Pledge has made the factory staff more responsive to WASH and environmental issues. They have learned to understand the consequences and impact of their actions on the environment around the factory and on the WASH-related behavior of employees. The WASH Pledge has enabled the factory to better engage with the communities around as well as with the local authorities.

With the actions implemented the factory staff is very happy and more committed. In terms of health and safety, they now have enough space with new toilets and locker rooms.

Lessons learned

Several factors were key in the successful roll-out of the Pledge. First, it is important to involve various stakeholders in the exercise:

- At least one Factory Management member, who has a deep understanding of the operations of the factory. This person also plays a key role in keeping the management committee informed of the assessment progress, findings and follow-up actions to be taken.
- Local experts who deeply understand the water and environmental situation of the area where the factory is located.
- Local communities since they are an important partner of the factory.

Transparency is also key in making this exercise successful. Results of the assessment were shared with the employees, who were proud of the collective achievement.

Finally, it is important not to underestimate the time and resources needed to roll-out the Pledge. Nevertheless, the commitment was worth taking. The self-assessment exercise has given the factory the confidence that it is on the right track when it comes to providing adequate water and sanitation facilities to its employees and visitors as well as the local community⁶. This has also instilled a sense of pride for factory employees and allowed the company to strengthen the relationship with the local community.

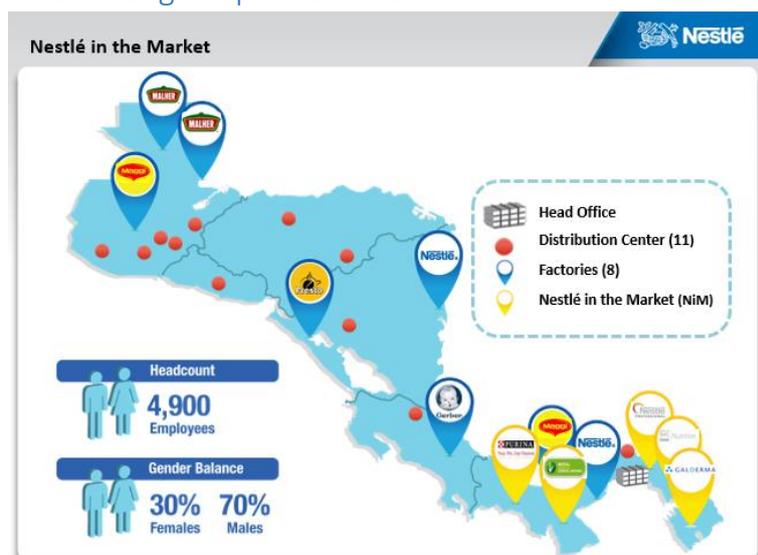
⁶ In addition, water fountains were put at the disposal of local communities.

WASH Pledge implementation: Nestlé Central America in focus

Background

The Central American Nestlé factories produce dairy (evaporated milk, condensate milk, cheese, cream, dry milk) and dry and wet culinary. Co-manufactured goods include soluble coffee and concentrated banana pulp. Nestlé Central America has 4,900 direct employees working in factories, distribution centers and sales offices. The WASH Pledge was implemented in 17 Nestlé facilities in the region (7 Nestlé factories, 1 co-manufacturing factory, 8 distribution centers and the Panama Head Office).

WASH Pledge implementation



After Nestlé's global signature, Nestlé Central America launched the WASH Pledge at a WBCSD Action2020 program event in El Salvador in September 2014. The Nestlé Central America Technical Director presented the importance of implementing this initiative in the region and communicated Nestlé Central America's commitment to deliver access to safe water and adequate sanitation in all workplaces in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panamá. In 2015,

WASH Pledge implementation was included as a reporting exercise in the Technical Operational Master Plan (OMP) for all factories.

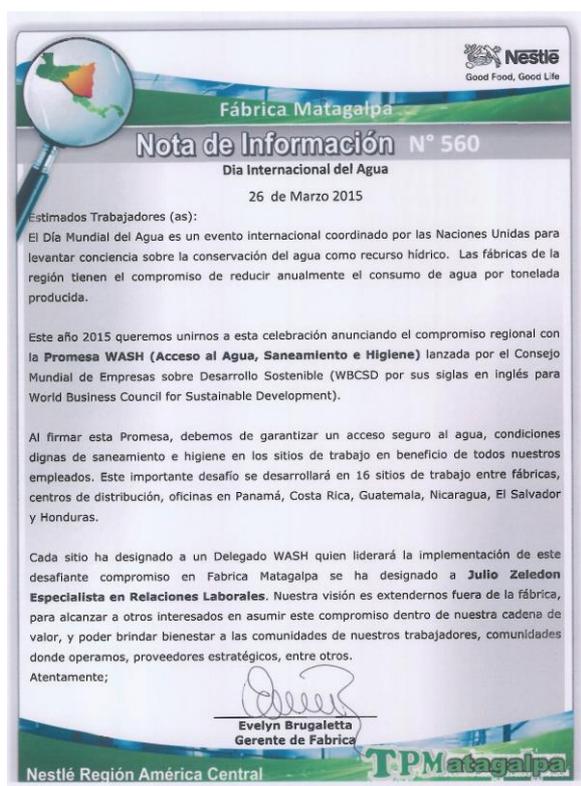
Nestlé Central America appointed the Regional Sustainability Manager as a WASH ambassador, who met with each site manager to explain the WASH Pledge implementation plan, objectives and related activities. Subsequently, each factory / distribution center manager appointed a WASH delegate, coming from HSE, human resources or technical departments.

Overall, most sites met the WASH Pledge provisions, though some small gaps were identified, as outlined below.

Item	Identified gap	Action plan
Compliance with local / national laws and regulations	In order to comply with local and national laws, environmental site permits to operate one of the distribution centers had been requested but were in pending status with the authorities (owing to local government's lengthy bureaucratic procedures and lack of resources)	Throughout the year, the WASH delegate requested the pending permit directly from the local authority, did some lobbying and requested frequent meetings until the permit was delivered.
Drinking water testing	Not all water fountains in the sites were regularly tested.	In some sites, the drinking water came from an external supplier (a drinking water

		company). Only the sanitary certificate of the company could be found, and a request for a water testing report was unsuccessful. As a result, a decision was taken to conduct water testing in Nestlé's internal quality labs.
Accommodations for disabled and elderly persons	Some facilities were not prepared to receive disabled persons.	An assessment was conducted on how often disabled persons were in the individual facilities and on the basis of this, a decision was taken whether or not to adapt facilities.
Monitoring and reporting on water-related diseases	Workers don't usually give such detail in their medical reports.	The doctors at the factories were aware of this item. Even though water-related diseases are usually not reported, the doctors are aware they should ask employees as part of the annual employee medical exams.

The financial resources required to address these gaps were covered with budget that had already been set aside for improvement activities; it amounted to around USD 130,000 per factory. As some of the facilities are rented, any infrastructure improvement needed to be discussed and agreed with the property owner.



Particular attention was paid to employee awareness raising about the WASH Pledge. Each site presented the WASH Pledge to their employees in quarterly meetings, and the region's Human Resources department also presented the WASH Pledge in quarterly videoconferences for all employees in the region. In addition, videos, brochures, and other materials were used to raise employees' awareness in the individual sites. The WASH delegates played an important role in this process in encouraging employees and presenting the benefits of implementing WASH at the workplace.

The value of the WASH Pledge was also promoted in external communication in printed and social media. It helped Nestlé Central America highlight its work on water stewardship in the region. A [video was produced of a WASH employee awareness raising event](#) at the Matagalpa factory in Nicaragua.

Impact of rolling out the WASH Pledge

Beyond increasing productivity, the impact of WASH Pledge implementation was to have better educated employees about the human rights to water and sanitation and Nestlé's reasons for supporting this initiative.

In some factories, a WASH survey with local workers was performed to understand current access to safe water and adequate sanitation in their homes. In response to the survey, the Antigua Maggi Factory in Guatemala financed eco-filters for workers' home to ensure their access to safe drinking water. In addition, the Dairy Matagalpa Factory in Nicaragua created a WASH committee to develop water conservation projects with the community.



Lessons learned

It is very helpful to have company leaders involved, and for someone inside the management committee to strongly believe that WASH is part of overall company strategy and that the company will benefit from it. Furthermore, it helped to incorporate the WASH Pledge self-assessment tool into the factories' Operational Master Plan (OMP).

Beyond this, communication was key. In Central America, this was done through a powerful roll-

out plan in collaboration with the marketing/communications team, which helped get employees on board. The WASH delegates were crucial in this process; and it helped to have recruited delegates that have sensitivity for social/environmental goals, are doing this out of their personal motivation and support the wider positive impact of the cause.

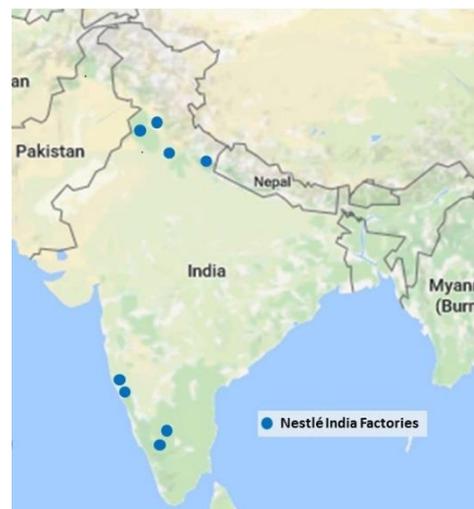
WASH Pledge implementation: Nestlé India in focus

Background

Nestlé's relationship with India dates back to 1912, when it began trading as the Nestlé Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company (Export) Limited, importing and selling finished products on the Indian market. In 1961, Nestlé set up its first factory in Moga, Punjab, where the Government wanted Nestlé India to develop the milk economy.

Today, Nestlé India has a workforce of over 7,400 permanent employees, and its activities in India facilitate direct and indirect employment to over one million people including farmers, suppliers of packaging materials, services and other goods.

Beyond the WASH Pledge, Nestlé India has also been active in WASH provision beyond the company fence. This includes the construction of clean drinking water facilities in schools around factories benefitting over 109,000 students, water awareness programs, as well as the construction of sanitation facilities for girls in village schools across all factory locations in order to increase school attendance of female students, benefitting over 80,900 girls.

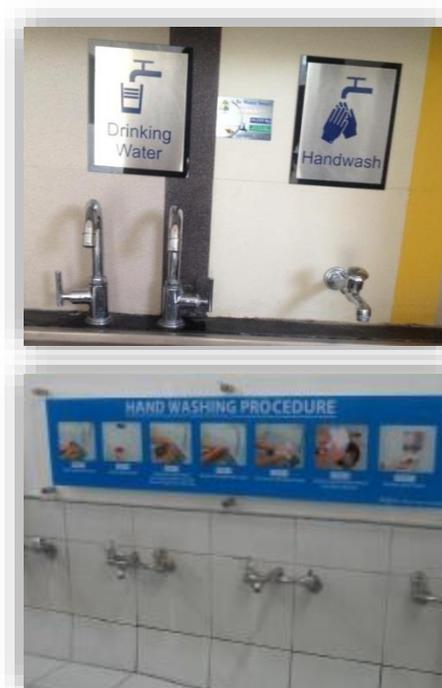


WASH Pledge implementation

All manufacturing facilities (8 in total) for Nestlé India used the WASH Pledge self-assessment tool to assess access to WASH services. The WASH assessment scores were included in the Safety, Health and Environment scores for the country.

A cross-functional team was essential to WASH Pledge implementation: a team of representatives from human resources, engineering and corporate affairs was set up for each factory and their responsibility in terms of gathering data to feed into the self-assessment was defined. Simultaneously, a WASH Pledge training session for all teams was organized to inform employees about the initiative, Nestlé's commitment, explanations and data required for the self-assessment based on existing Nestlé systems and processes in place.

Thereafter, each location conducted the assessments and shared proofs for their ratings. These were reviewed and action points identified. Nestlé India sites mostly meet and exceed the WASH Pledge provisions. For example, social blocks for factory workers have lockers, toilets and showers; trainings and awareness raising on hygiene are conducted regularly; and signs to promote hand washing behavior are provided.



Some areas were identified in terms of action points. This includes accommodation for the disabled and elderly: currently, facilities for the handicapped and the elderly are provided at all office locations, and this is now being rolled out to all factory locations as well.

Effect and impact of rolling out the WASH Pledge

Although access to water and sanitation projects were already being implemented in the community, conducting the assessments within the factory sensitized employees to the necessity and importance of WASH access to the highest standard.

Lessons learned

Rolling out the WASH Pledge is a time and resource intensive process and requires a mix of top management support and enthusiastic employees. Implementation was facilitated by the fact that the WASH Pledge was part of Nestlé's global commitment and driven by top management. As the plethora of activities conducted on-site fall under the purview of different departments, the relevance of the WASH assessment was not clear to the employees in charge of these activities at first. Using the WASH Pledge self-assessment tool as a guide, trainings were conducted explaining the criteria for WASH, how all these fragmented activities contribute to achieving the WASH Pledge provisions and their importance for the people working in the company. This training was very useful in providing the assessment teams the context and 'big picture' behind the activity.



Conclusion

The WASH Pledge has been a useful tool to raise awareness about WASH within the company. Even though it was challenging to communicate clearly about the implications and requirements to the staff members implicated in implementation globally, making the WASH Pledge part of Nestlé's existing Water Stewardship program proved to be effective, and has allowed for a link to our WASH engagement in communities. In addition, implementation has greatly benefitted from having a number of WASH champions within the company which have had an important impact in terms of awareness raising.

Nestlé has now reached the end of its three year implementation cycle, and as the WASH Pledge provisions are now integrated into internal reporting systems, any arising gaps will be identified and addressed. WASH continues to form an integral part of Nestlé's Water Stewardship strategy and the company will continue to support the WBCSD in its efforts of generating a business contribution to the achievement of universal access to WASH.