

# Embedding “best practice” into hearts and minds

## SuSanA: the “go to” source for Knowledge Management



sustainable sanitation alliance

Esther Shaylor – On behalf of the SuSanA Consortium

### Introduction

Guidelines, policy briefs, handbooks, design sheets and online resources available for WASH practitioners in the field (WEDC 2007, WASH Cluster 2013, Red Cross, Oxfam) are not always used by field staff: “best practices” not used.

SuSanA and Oxfam surveys tell us field practitioners prefer to learn and develop through workshops/training events and on the job training

Though not cost effective, face to face learning is preferred over use of written documents available online.

SuSanA's online platform is continually updated to offer KM to the Emergency Management sector. There is a dedicated Working Group for this focusing on Emergency and Reconstruction Situations (<http://www.susana.org/en/working-groups/emergency-reconstruction-situations>).

### Understanding the SuSanA operating environment

SuSanA is ‘an informal network of people and organisations who share a common goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG6 (SuSanA, 2018).

SuSanA's market environment includes what customers ask for (demand) and what sanitation experts can provide (supply). The market environment is described in Figure 1. The left side in blue summarizes categories of actors who provide similar/complementary products and services. The light pink oval just to its right includes all four areas of KM identified by Cranston and Chandack (2016).

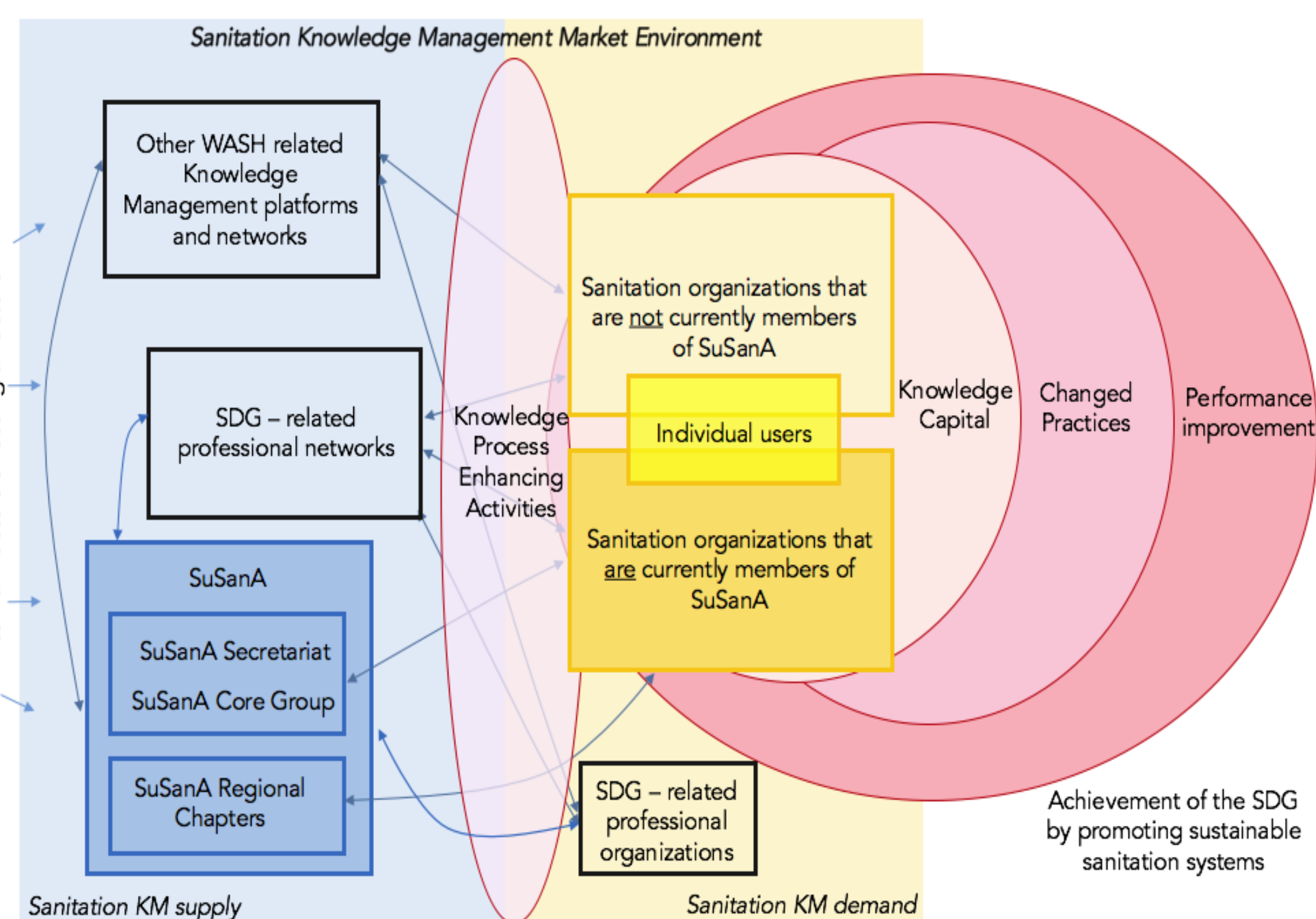


Figure 1 Sanitation Knowledge Management Market Environment and the ripple model for KM strategies within SuSanA

### Understanding user needs

To better serve its users, SuSanA is working to identify the whole range of ‘personas’ who use SuSanA. This will provide more differentiation of priorities for more specific categories of users.

The persona concept can be applied in various ways:

- **Persona-based user profiles:** provide discussion forum users profile options allowing them to state interests and needs and, if they wish, to identify with a persona
- **Persona-targeted communications:** tailor emails, discussion forum digests and notifications to specific interests.
- **Persona-oriented curation** of content: following analysis of user profiles, adapt website content, Working Group thematic discussions, webinars, and meetings to particular user categories
- **Persona-oriented website interface:** Develop new interfaces on the website that are geared to the interests of the different personas.

Personas	Learning method	Information management: 1. Prime topic not satisfied 2. Access method 3. Main bottleneck	Preferred knowledge sharing mechanism	Preferred communication channel	Preferred choice of social media
Government	workshop conference	1. financing 2. websites 3. cost of access	conference	email	Twitter
Donor	on the job	1. technical 2. websites 3. too much info	professional network	email	Facebook
Implementing NGO	on the job	1. links to other sectors 2. websites 3. too much info	professional network	colleagues and friends	LinkedIn
Consultant	on the job	1. financing 2. reports 3. too much info	professional network	email	Facebook
NGO	workshop conference	1. financing 2. websites 3. cost of access	local/regional meetings	email	Facebook
CBO	workshop conference	1. financing 2. website 3. cost of access	local/regional meetings	email	Facebook
Entrepreneur	on the job	1. financing 2. websites 3. too much info	professional network	websites	Facebook
Academic	on the job	1. financing 2. peer-reviewed journals 3. cost of access	conference	colleagues and friends	LinkedIn

Table 2 the personas created from the research findings

### SuSanA working for the emergency sanitation sector

SuSanA's Working Group 8 supports the emergency sanitation community, it has 2100 members with the lead members coming from, Malteser International, WASTE and BORDA. The online discussion forum focuses on the challenges of Emergency and Reconstruction Situations amongst other things. These modalities allow for discussion amongst the emergency sanitation community and collaboration over a digital platform, this has allowed contributions from SuSanA to the newly published Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies (2018).

SuSanA is utilising the persona concept to be better placed to support emergency sanitation activities on the ground, through well designed digital curation of appropriate information and resources.

### Next steps

Within the emergency sanitation sector, and to further develop the activities of WG 8, SuSanA will utilize the personas of the relevant actors to tailor the approach to KM that will best support activities on the ground. Through SuSanA and working closely with key partners such as Oxfam, SuSanA can explore how to break down topics, best practices and innovations in the sector into different media formats.

This will address the current development needs of emergency sanitation practitioners in engaging ways to find out what is most effective for triggering actual learning and better practice across the sector.

### Conclusions

SuSanA's newly developing strategy and website revamp includes improved search and filtering options. Work surrounding curation has been ongoing through 2017 and will continue into 2018. To enhance the quality of the KM products and features within SuSanA for the benefit of its stakeholders, the focus is on what is directly useful to practitioners. That includes:

- recommended readings on topics,
- calendar of sector events,
- case studies,
- webinars and thematic discussions on the Forum,
- top readings for the Working Groups,
- generating summaries in new formats such as short how-to videos, podcasts and infographics.

Content development through the library, project database, Working Groups, discussion forum and in-country and regional events will benefit from understanding user needs better. The demand driven approaches that SuSanA adopt will have a strong focus on mediating knowledge exchange between policy and research stakeholders on the one hand and the implementers on the other.

Developing a series of KM focused resources in an engaging format will build on the wealth of knowledge and materials already generated by the sanitation Community of Practice. Going forward, this work will be an additional multiplier for disseminating ‘best practice’ in the sector. The work will also contribute to a more efficient use of resources to address KM needs.



CRANSTON, P., and Chandack, A. (2016). Strengthening learning and knowledge management: Review of WaterAid's approach to knowledge management. Paper at 39th WEDC International Conference, Kumasi, Ghana. Online available from <<https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/strengthening-learning-and-knowledge-management-review-of-wateraids-approach-to>>  
GENSCH, R., Jennings, A., Renggli, S., Reymond, P. (2018) Compendium of Sanitation Technologies in Emergencies. German WASH Network (GWN), Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag), Global WASH Cluster (GWC) and Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA). Berlin, Germany. ISBN: 978-3-906484-68-6  
SUSANA (2018) About the SuSanA Network [online] available from <<http://www.susana.org/en/about/faq>>

For more information visit [www.susana.org](http://www.susana.org), or contact:  
Esther Shaylor (Oxfam) – [esther.Shaylor@Oxfam.org](mailto:esther.Shaylor@Oxfam.org)  
Arne Panesar (GIZ) - [arne.panesar@giz.de](mailto:arne.panesar@giz.de)  
Arno Rosemarin: (SEI) - [arno.rosemarin@sei-international.org](mailto:arno.rosemarin@sei-international.org)