

Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region (RiPPLE) is a DFID-funded Research Programme Consortium hosted by WaterAid Ethiopia

RiPPLE Information sheets introduce an aspect of RiPPLE, related issues and references to further resources.

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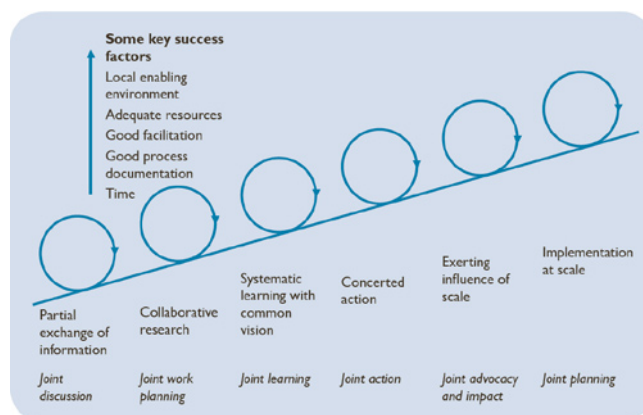
Information Sheet

Learning and Practice Alliances

What is a Learning and Practice Alliance?

A “Learning and Practice Alliance” (LPA) is a platform which brings together a range of stakeholders to **exchange knowledge** and **generate innovation**. The stakeholders are drawn from different interest groups, disciplines, sectors and organisations, and come together in an LPA to share experiences, develop joint agendas for change, and test new solutions to their common problems.

The **purpose of an LPA** is to link research closely to stakeholders in the sector; to ensure that it is driven by their needs and to act as a vehicle for learning and capacity building during the research process. Better links with institutions on the ground should enable faster uptake and scaling-up of research findings, as difficult realities and contextual factors are recognised and addressed from the start. This diagram shows the range of activities which an LPA can undertake, ranging from partial information exchange to full-scale joint implementation, and some of the factors which influence the success of an LPA.



What is the role of LPAs in RiPPLE?

RiPPLE will involve interconnected LPA platforms at four key levels: woreda; regional (in three regions of Ethiopia); national (Ethiopia); and Nile Basin-wide. The LPAs will identify research and capacity needs at their level, and drive RiPPLE’s activities and research agendas accordingly. At local level, the LPAs will undertake **Action Research** – an approach which involves stakeholders in identifying real-life problems, and developing and testing solutions to them. LPAs will involve **stakeholders** from government, civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector, with **different roles** in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene management, and from **different sectors** (e.g. water supply, health and agriculture).

In addition, the LPA approach aims to foster **improved horizontal and vertical communication** between stakeholders. The water sector in Ethiopia is currently highly fragmented, with many parallel planning and implementation processes. RiPPLE does not want to create further complication, but to build on existing processes and establish greater links between them.

Sources:

SWITCH Learning Alliance Briefing Note No. 3: A review of our own thinking on learning alliances
Smits, Stef; Moriarty, Patrick and Sijbesma, Christine (eds) (2007). Learning alliances: Scaling up innovations in water, sanitation and hygiene. Delft, The Netherlands, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. (Technical paper series; no. 47). 174 p.