



Gateway to Collaboration with GWOPA

Developing Capacities between
Water and Sanitation Service Providers
to Address SDG 6



What is this Gateway?

In its 15 years of operations, the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) has developed a suite of services to support governments and development partners. This gateway to collaboration showcases GWOPA's different support mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) to improve services for all. Each service is designed to tackle specific challenges in alignment with the development principles set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), New Urban Agenda (NUA) and UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for 2020–2024.

This guide highlights partnership opportunities with GWOPA, outlining the main mechanisms to foster effective and impactful cooperation with the Alliance on improving water and sanitation services.

Addressing the global water and sanitation challenge

None of the SDG 6 targets are on track. As of 2022, 2.2 billion people were without access to safely managed drinking water. Four out of five people lacking at least basic drinking water services lived in rural areas. The situation concerning safely managed sanitation remains dire, with 3.5 billion people lacking access to such services. Cities and municipalities have been unable to keep up with the accelerating growth of their urban population.

Local water and sanitation services providers are key actors in achieving the SDG. It is essential to ensure they have the skills to provide quality services which are easily accessible, affordable, and are sustainably managed.

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)

GWOPA, facilitated by UN-Habitat, supports water and sanitation service in achieving SDG 6. Through Water and Sanitation Operators' Partnerships, known as WOPs and SWOPs, the GWOPA network strengthens the capacities of water and sanitation operators through not-for-profit peer-to-peer exchanges. GWOPA was established in 2009 and is hosted in Bonn, Germany, leading global efforts to promote WOPs outlined in the [GWOPA Strategy 2020–2024](#).

GWOPA's **vision** is that water and sanitation service providers, connected in a solidarity-based network, are sharing and helping one another improve services for all to achieve local and global objectives.

GWOPA's **mission** is to work as an effective global alliance to inspire, mobilize support for, catalyse, guide, monitor and enable WOPs that improve lives.



Cover photo: Utility worker at Mumias Decentralization Treatment Facility in Kenya arranged by EU WOP partner KIWASCO. © Kevin Chrétien

Contributions to the SDGs

Through WOPs, GWOPA directly supports the local efforts to achieve the NUA and the SDGs. With the significant role local water and sanitation service providers in achieving SDG 6, WOPs enhance these providers' capacity and performance, including reaching underserved customers as part of realizing the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation.

GWOPA's work advocates for the explicit inclusion of sustainability objectives in WOPs and provides support throughout their conceptualization, planning, implementation and monitoring phases to achieve the Agenda 2030 vision for people, planet, prosperity and peace.

Core SDGs supported by GWOPA



- Enable and implement capacity building initiatives for water and sanitation utilities worldwide
- Advocate for safely managed water and sanitation services for all
- Advocate for water use efficiency, integrated water resources management, preservation of water ecosystems, transboundary basin cooperation
- Organize global fora for actors of the water and sanitation sector to exchange practices and lessons learned
- Leverage funds for water and sanitation operators' partnerships
- Contribute to SDG monitoring



- Promote and enable partnerships in the water and sanitation sector that specifically target services provision in low-income areas
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and knowledge management related to water and sanitation services for the urban poor
- Leverage funds for water and sanitation operators' partnerships



- Promote and enable partnerships in the water and sanitation sector
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and knowledge management in water and sanitation operators' partnerships
- Leverage funds for water and sanitation operators' partnerships
- Advocate for water and sanitation operators' partnerships to be high on the global development agenda
- Manage and sustain a dynamic Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance for the benefit of its members

Utilities and WOPs are contributing to the SDGs through a variety of initiatives and advocacy efforts.





We will work to **equip public water and sanitation utilities with the capacity to implement sustainable water management systems**, including sustainable maintenance of urban infrastructure services, through capacity development, with the goal of progressively eliminating inequalities and promoting both **universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all** and **adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all.**"

Article 120 of the NUA addressed by GWOPA



Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs)

What are WOPs?



The EU-WOP Programme



GWOPA helps design and implement effective WOP initiatives for different contexts. We provide expertise in:

- WOP project planning, design and implementation support
- Monitoring and reporting of WOPs
- Fundraising and linking with investments
- Advocacy, communication and knowledge management

Over the past 15 years, GWOPA has led global WOPs, supporting 500 utilities in over 70 countries, serving an estimated 50 million people, with over USD 1 billion in investments.



Wastewater engineer at SEDAPAL in Lima, Peru, showcasing one of the capital's wastewater treatment plants to their WOP partner utility Canal de Isabel II, Madrid, Spain.
© UN-Habitat/Julie Perkins

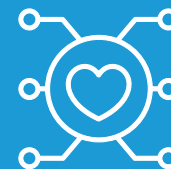


Developing the **capacity** of local staff to improve **performance**

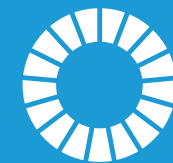


Partnerships take place between **peer** water and/or sanitation service providers

WOPs are **not-for-profit** partnerships between two or more water and/or sanitation **operators** carried out in the objective of strengthening their **capacity** to **sustainably** provide quality services to all.



WOPs are **not for money-making purposes**. WOP costs that need to be recovered should be done so on a cost-recovery basis only



Aiming to induce lasting change and contributing to the **SDGs**

2 Sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs)

The sanitation approach of GWOPA

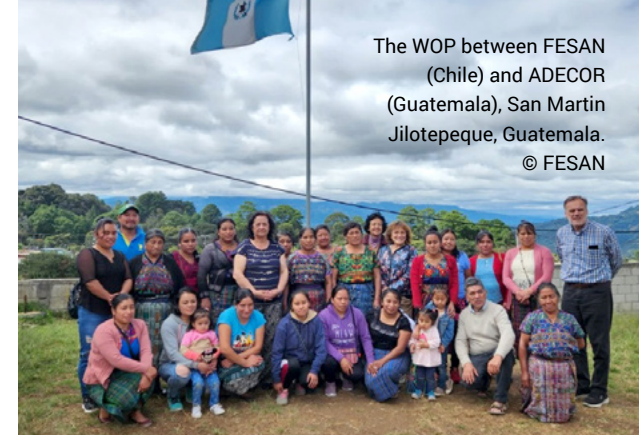
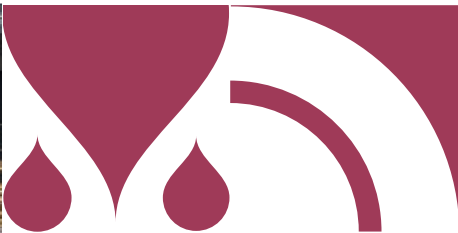


GWOPA develops tailored programmes for sanitation service providers through sanitation-focused WOPs, referred to as SWOPs. Our work encompasses sewered and non-sewered sanitation across utilities, municipalities and small private contractors for sanitation services. We advocate for SWOPs in the sanitation sector, matchmaking and developing training and creating an enabling environment for sanitation peer learning among service providers. SWOPs address various themes from wastewater management and reuse, sanitation data management to faecal sludge management. SWOPs follow the WOP concept and plan to include more stakeholders.



On-site innovation for desludging in a low income floating community in Banjarmasin, Indonesia supported by IWK Malaysia through the EU-WOP Programme

© UN-Habitat/Shobana Srinivasan



The WOP between FESAN (Chile) and ADECOR (Guatemala), San Martin Jilotepeque, Guatemala. © FESAN

3 Strengthen WOP Platforms

Regional and National WOP Platforms



Expression of Interest to become a GWOPA-affiliated WOP Platform



GWOPA supports public or non-profit utility networks, regional or national water and sanitation associations or networks to become official WOP platforms. The platforms are established at the national or regional levels. GWOPA builds their capacities to promote, facilitate and implement WOPs among their constituencies or members at the national or regional levels to help achieve the SDGs, specifically SDG 6. This is done in accordance with the GWOPA Charter and its guiding principles.



4 WOPs Management and Reporting

[GWOPA Portal](#)
To access the portal or contribute your WOPs data, please get in touch with GWOPA through unhabitat-gwopa@un.org



Global WOPs Observatory

GWOPA manages the Global WOPs observatory, which consists of global WOP data that informs partnership development and management, including serving partners in their match-making process. The observatory contains profiles for close to 500 different WOPs collected over 15 years. It enables users to explore the global WOP landscape, thematic areas and financial investments. It features an interactive dashboard to trace the collaboration patterns of WOPs. It highlights the contributions of WOPs towards achieving SDGs, promoting transparency and understanding of funding flows within WOPs.

The Partnership Management Platform

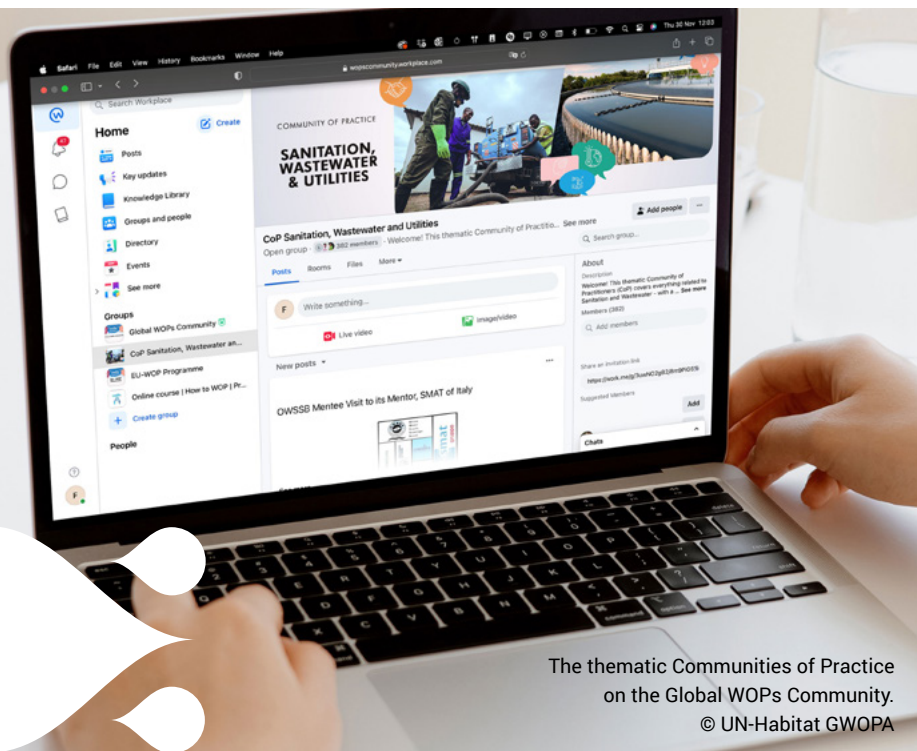
A tailor-made WOP monitoring platform, the Partnership Management Platform (PMP), enables partners to monitor and manage their WOPs more efficiently. The PMP supports partners by:

- Promoting accountability and participatory planning
- Organizing shared plans and ensuring commitments are met
- Facilitating communication on progress and challenges
- Capturing data and enabling knowledge sharing

The PMP includes a **dashboard interface** with infographics and tools to help managers make data-based decisions; an overview for easy tracking and managing partnership working areas; **planning and monitoring tools** to track project activities, performance outcomes, and partnership health; and **reporting features** to create custom reports for sharing and analysing.



The Global WOPs Observatory, with the integrated Partnership Management Platform.
© UN-Habitat GWOPA



The thematic Communities of Practice on the Global WOPs Community. © UN-Habitat GWOPA

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The Global WOPs Community

[The GWOPA Global WOPs Community of Practice](#)



GWOPA hosts an online peer community for knowledge sharing and capacity building, engaging nearly 2,000 participants. In partnership with the Dutch Water Operators' Partnerships Programme, WaterworX, the community hosts thematic Communities of Practice (CoP) engaging water and sanitation practitioners from across the globe in multilingual peer learning, knowledge exchange, co-creation

and capacity development to elevate the skills of its members and accelerate innovations and improvements towards SDG 6. The community is built on values of inclusivity and shared ownership, and participation is free of charge.

It also offers a variety of functionalities such as live streaming and events, groups and collaboration and a knowledge library repository.

Our current Communities of Practice (CoP)



Enabling Environment



Asset Management



Water Production



Water Distribution



Urban Sanitation



Low-Income Customers



Utility Organization and Strategy



Water resources resilience and Climate Change



Commercial Operations



Young Water Professionals



6 WOPs and Utility Knowledge

[BEWOP tool collection](#)



[Recent WOPs case studies](#)



GWOPA, in collaboration with academic institutions, sector organizations and practitioners from its network, provides thought leadership in the capacity development process by producing WOPs guidance and training to support implementation and technical knowledge and tools for water operators.

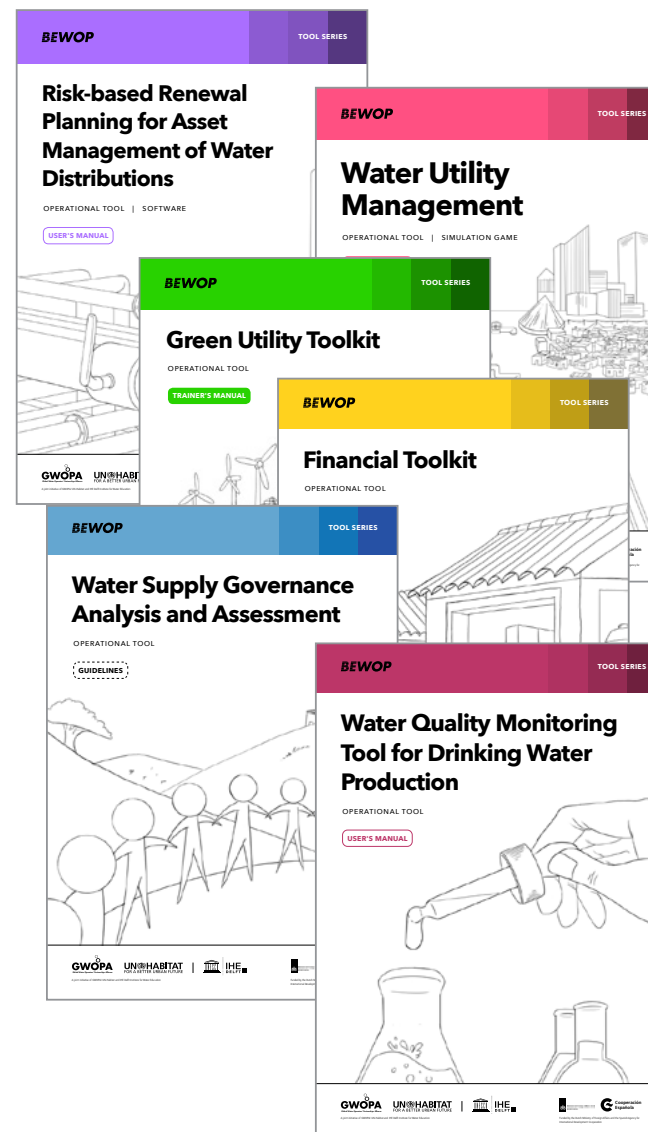
This includes guidelines, training packages and tools for operators to establish more effective partnerships and disseminate them to a broad audience of

water operators and civil society organizations. The topics of the guidelines and tools developed are demand-based and identified by water operators. Where possible, the tools are developed with the active involvement of water operators' staff.

The majority of tools are so far developed through the Boosting Effectiveness of Water Operators Partnership (BEWOP) programme, funded by the Dutch Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and implemented with the IHE-Delft.



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Advocacy and Awareness

[GWOPA at the UN 2023 Water Conference](#)



[GWOPA is core partner of the Water Pavillion at Climate COP Process](#)



[European WOP Enablers' exchanges](#)



GWOPA provides utilities with a voice in the UN system to advocate for improved political and legal context for utilities and solidarity-based peer-support partnerships to thrive

by advocating for WOPs as a cost-effective SDG accelerator within international, national and local policies, laws and frameworks. GWOPA participates in global water and urban

development events and facilitates dialogues for WOPs with diverse institutions to mobilize and improve the enabling environment for utilities to support WOPs globally.



Secretary-General addresses opening of UN 2023 Water Conference.
© UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



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The Global WOPs Congress

[GWOPA 5th Global WOPs Congress Report](#)



GWOPA biennially convenes its signature event – the Global WOPs Congress. The congress provides a platform for water and sanitation practitioners to discuss how collaboration between operators can help them navigate key challenges. It also provides networking opportunities, embarking on new partnerships and sharing knowledge and innovation to strengthen learning.



The 5th Global WOPs Congress in Bonn, Germany.



Governance

[GWOPA Governance](#)



[GWOPA Charter](#)



[GWOPA Strategy for 2020-2024](#)



GWOPA brings together a diversity of actors consisting of water and sanitation utilities, utility associations, development finance institutions, research and learning institutions, nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and national and sub-national governments, which constitute the GWOPA's Alliance Partners and Members.

GWOPA's governance structure and management is defined by the **GWOPA Charter**. The Charter is operationalized through the **Code of Conduct**, which translates its principles into operational guidelines for members and partners directly engaged in WOPs implementation.

Members participate in **GWOPA's Assemblies** and are eligible to run and vote in its **International Steering Committee (ISC)** elections. The ISC is the elected body that provides strategic guidance to the UN-Habitat Executive Director for GWOPA to implement.

The **GWOPA Secretariat** is institutionally anchored within UN-Habitat. The Secretariat is responsible for implementing the GWOPA strategy and activities in collaboration with Alliance Partners and Members and consultation with UN-Habitat and the International Steering Committee.



WOPs Code of Conduct

- Good Governance
- Integrity
- Social and Cultural Values
- Resolution of Conflicts
- Results Orientation
- Cost sharing and Not for Profit
- Shared Incentives



Participants of the 5th Global WOPs Congress at the quality assurance and training in Bonn wastewater treatment plants.
© UN-Habitat GWOPA

Join us

With the principle of solidarity at its core, GWOPA membership unites organizations and individuals worldwide to build awareness of the critical role of utilities, promote effective WOPs and maximize collective impact.

GWOPA membership is free of charge and open to institutions and individuals.

[GWOPA Membership](#)





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