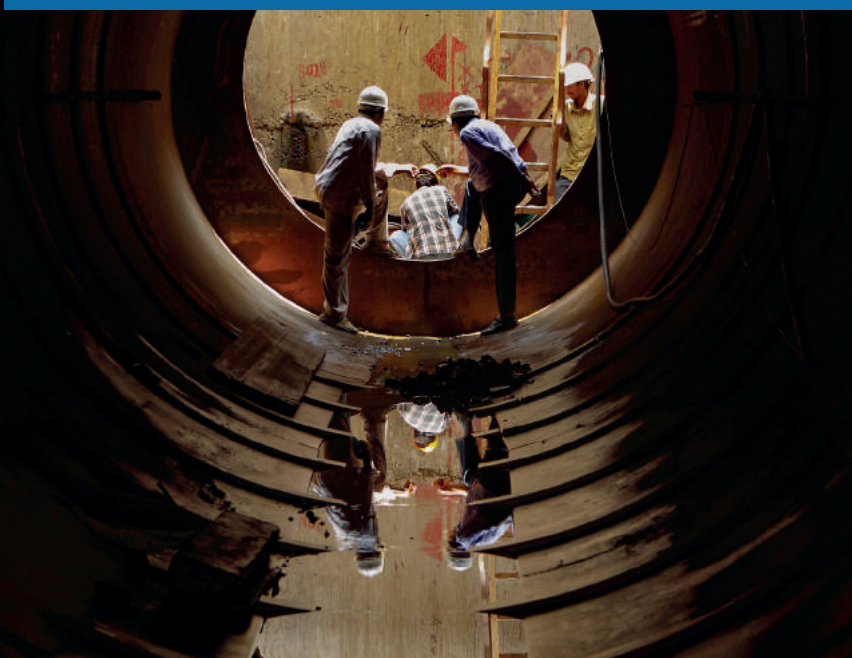


# CONNECTING WATER UTILITIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY



  
**GWOPA**  
*helping water operators help one another*

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**UN-Habitat** founded the **Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)** in 2009 to strengthen water utilities' performance globally through not-for-profit peer-support partnerships (WOPs).

About **GWOPA**  
[www.gwopa.org](http://www.gwopa.org)



**The Alliance** was the brainchild of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation who called for boosting water utility capacity through peer partnerships to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation. Former UN SG, Kofi Annan asked UN-Habitat, the UN agency championing urban basic services, to lead this initiative.

**Former Secretary General, Kofi Annan,  
on water and sanitation**

- <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/water/unsgab/finalreport>

**Through GWOPA, UN-Habitat has boosted the WOPs practice globally and increased the capacity of operators.**

Since GWOPA was founded in 2009, over **221 partnerships** have been registered and **320 million USD** has been mobilized, much of which comes from utilities themselves. These WOPs often attract, accompany or sustain much larger investments.

○ **Operator database**

[www.gwopa.org/en/operator-profiles](http://www.gwopa.org/en/operator-profiles)

○ **WOP profile database**

[www.gwopa.org/en/wop-profiles](http://www.gwopa.org/en/wop-profiles)

○ **Case Study: Belize Water Services**

[www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/belize-urban-water](http://www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/belize-urban-water)





## Sustainable Development Goals require strong water and sanitation utilities.

Utilities have leading roles to play in:

- Providing universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation **(6.1/6.2)**,
- Increasing wastewater treatment **(6.3)**,
- Using water efficiently and ensuring sustainable withdrawals **(6.4)**,
- Safeguarding water ecosystems **(6.6)**,
- Realizing climate resilient and adaptive plans for future water security **(11.5)**,
- Furthermore, strong utilities underlie the achievement of almost all 17 interrelated Sustainable Development Goals.

○ [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment)

Water Operators' Partnerships help build capacity for the SDGs through

“cooperation, participation and capacity-building” (6.a/6.b)

and support the realization of the New Urban Agenda by

“equipping public water and sanitation utilities with the **capacity to implement sustainable water management systems**, sustainable maintenance of urban infrastructure services, ... (and) the **universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water**, and adequate and **equitable sanitation and hygiene for all.**”

- **New Urban Agenda** paragraph 120  
<http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>
- **Recommendations for water in the New Urban Agenda**  
[www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/egm-urban-agenda](http://www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/egm-urban-agenda)



**The Water Operators' Partnerships** supported and tracked by **UN-Habitat** are a form of decentralized cooperation. **57%** of them are South-South.

Cities and their institutions are a growing source of both funds and human resources to development cooperation.





The Alliance, coordinated by UN-Habitat, is a growing network of some **490** water operators from all continents, as well as donors, regulators, NGOs, CSOs, unions and local, regional and national governments. The network is further amplified through regional and national platforms whose membership is made up of utility associations.



**○ Regional WOP Platforms**

<http://gwopa.org/en/wops-platforms>





Water scarcity is an acute challenge in more and more cities. Water utilities can take the lead in averting **'Day Zero'** with a range of technical, financial and communication strategies. In the past decade, over **100 WOPs** have helped utilities increase their water use efficiency.

**Interview with the Alderman Ian Neilson, Deputy Mayor of Cape Town, discussing drought, climate change and water resilience**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXJjIHJWpPA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXJjIHJWpPA)



**A quarter of the world's urban population live in slums** where they pay more for water services of unreliable quality, and where sanitation services are poor or lacking. UN-Habitat's GWOPA helps utilities **"leave no one behind"** by supporting them to establish dedicated units to address the unique challenges of informal settlements.

○ **Mapping Inequalities in Nairobi**  
<http://access-to-water-in-nairobi.gwopa.org>





**Over 10,000 water professionals' capacity has been improved through GWOPA's work.** In WOPs, increased staff capacity is progressively translated into improved practice and overall utility performance, as strong utilities mentor their partners to make sustainable change.

○ **Highlights from the Global Congress**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pqmWak3fW4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pqmWak3fW4)

GWOPA provides guidance for successful partnerships and has developed **over 30 different knowledge products** (case studies, reports, tools and training) to help water operators learn better from, and with, one another.

**Case Studies**  
[www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/1826](http://www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/1826)



**Water Operators' Partnerships** are increasingly being used as a means of strengthening water and sanitation utilities internationally. However National WOPs, or domestic WOPs, remain an underused opportunity for peer-led capacity development programs within countries.

Over the last 5 years, the WOP program Kemitraan Solidaritas, initiated and facilitated by PERPAMSI (Indonesian Association of Water Supply Companies), has established over 30 WOPs between Indonesia's operators.

Common traits between the utility partners – such as shared culture, language or institutional setup – increase the effectiveness of these peer-support arrangements in national contexts. The Indonesian case shows that operating within the same tight-knit institutional framework, they also create conditions that further support the potential of national WOPs as an effective capacity development mechanism. The Indonesian example suggests high potential for capacity development through National WOPs programmes elsewhere, although context may vary from one country to another.

**What are National WOPs?**

Like all WOPs, National WOPs are multi-utility peer support partnerships between utilities, however in National WOPs, the utilities operate within the boundaries of the same country. National WOPs are taking place in a number of countries, but as they are generally small in nature and self-funded, they often go under the radar of global WOPs reporting. Although few studies have been conducted on National WOPs, they are assumed to carry many of the advantages of south-south partnerships, such as easier knowledge sharing, owing to similarities in:

- Culture
- Language
- Laws and policies

National WOPs are when the partnering utilities operate within the boundaries of the same country.

**Water Supply Services in Indonesia**

In Indonesia, water and sanitation services for urban areas are the responsibility of local governments, provided mostly through public utilities called Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum (PDAM). Policy and regulatory responsibilities related to water supply are shared at the national level by a number of ministries, with the Ministry of Public Works most instrumental in the physical development of water services. At the regional and local levels, PDAMs are influenced and controlled by their owners (the mayor or chief of district), provincial government and regional regulatory bodies.

Many PDAMs face considerable financial challenges which make them dependent on funds from either local or provincial governments and, particularly

for infrastructure development, on funds from the Ministry of Public Works. The financial dependency has an influence on the WOPs. The Ministry often determines WOPs themes (if W is a favourite) and selects sectors, and the official results of WOPs often have consequences for whether a utility will receive funds. PDAMs are ranked in a nationwide benchmarking program<sup>1</sup> that distinguishes between 'healthy', 'less healthy' and 'unhealthy' utilities. The results of this exercise are widely used by governmental and non-governmental organizations as the basis for determining which utilities will be the recipients of support programs such as funds for infrastructure development. These results are also used to decide on the involvement of utilities in National WOPs as either a mentor or as a mentee.

1. Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum (PDAM) - Local Government-Owned Corporation for Drinking Water. PERPAMSI, 2013.



1. Dharma and Prahmana, 2005.

**UN-Habitat influences policy in favour of strong utilities and better local water management.**

The Alliance has been a consistent advocate for the **1%** water and sanitation solidarity levy, has helped shape the SDGs and their monitoring frameworks, the New Urban Agenda and global compacts such as the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Water Action for Sustainable Cities, among others, to mobilize the political energy for improving utilities.





There is a growing momentum among water utilities to localize  
the global sustainability goals and  
help utilities around the world to do the same.

**Do you want to be part of it?**

[www.gwopa.org](http://www.gwopa.org)

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