



Open call for proposals launched **The EU-WOP Programme** launches call for proposals for utility partnerships to advance progress on SDG 6

Peer support partnerships will boost public utilities' capacity, performance and access to finance, in support of sustainable water and sanitation services for all.

Bonn, Germany, 15 January 2021 – The EU-WOP Programme has launched a call for proposals for not-for-profit peer partnerships. This is the first step in a four-year Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by GWOPA UN-Habitat, supporting water and sanitation utilities through Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs).

Worldwide, 2.1 billion people are still without contamination-free water, available whenever they need it. Figures relating to sanitation are even more alarming with 4.5 billion still lacking safe services that protect them from disease. The COVID-19 crisis has driven home the life-saving value of water and sanitation service delivery systems.

For most of the world's population, local public utilities are their lifeline to water and sanitation services. But many struggle with basic technical, financial and managerial challenges. While some utilities are able to tackle challenges such as COVID, climate change and resource scarcity, others urgently need support.

Water Operators' Partnerships work by mobilizing the skills of professionals and workers in well-performing utilities to mentor their peers to improve. WOPs focus on capacity development and sustainability to foster service improvements that are inclusive and that aim to bring lasting local benefits.

With an estimated USD 1.7 trillion in funding needed to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.1 and 6.2 by 2030, building utilities' capacity to effectively access and manage investments for public benefit is critical. Since its creation, the GWOPA's global membership has been collectively advocating for increased support and financing for WOPs to accelerate sustainable development. The European Union, through DC DEVCO, committed in 2020 to support the ambitious EU WOP Programme (2020-2024) as a contribution to its EU Consensus on Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the EU Green Deal.

The Programme will fund between 20 and 30 not-for-profit peer partnerships with between USD 250,000 and 450,000, over three years. Projects will be selected on the basis of their likely contributions to improved capacity and performance of the beneficiary operator, their leverage of additional funds and links to investment finance, and other factors. One of the goals of the programme is to get more utilities, financiers and supporting actors involved in these solidarity-based partnerships, so new actors are encouraged to engage.

Proposals will be selected through an open call led by GWOPA UN-Habitat. WOP proposals can be North-South, South-South, or triangular in their formation, provided that the leading mentor operator or local government is from a European Union member state or an eligible beneficiary country. All projects must adhere to the principles of WOPs – namely be not-for-profit and seek to improve the capacity and operational performance of public water and sanitation operators – and be carried out according to GWOPA's [Code-of-Conduct](#). Full details of the call are available [here](#).

More about the EU WOP Programme

www.gwopa.org/EU-WOPs

More about Water Operators' Partnerships

www.gwopa.org/wops/about-wops

Call at UN-Habitat website

www.unhabitat.org/node/145078

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