

## WATER DIALOGUES FOR RESULTS



Accelerating cross-sectoral  
SDG 6 implementation

| BONN 2021



MAY 2021

# Outcome Document for the Expert Roundtable on Capacity Development

Turning the tide on *Capacity Development* – How to move from  
individual interventions to systemic capacity strengthening?



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

## Capacity development as accelerator for cross-sectoral SDG 6 implementation

The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework is a new, unifying initiative that aims to deliver fast results at an increased scale. It is part of the UN Secretary-General's Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030. Action is driven by five accelerators, one of them being capacity development. Capacity development, monitoring and evaluation are essential for improving service levels, operating, and maintaining technology, increasing job creation in the water sector, and monitoring performance, including at community level. Water education is necessary at all levels to develop a holistic understanding of the issues at stake, including for young people (UN-Water, 2020)<sup>1</sup>.

The Water Dialogues for Results are officially recognised as part of the preparatory process for the 2023 UN conference on the mid-term review of the International Water Action Decade. This Outcome Paper is the result of an International Expert Roundtable, co-hosted by GWOPA/UN-Habitat and Cap-Net/UNDP, with the aim of enriching the development of the policy messages arising from the Water Dialogues with technical and innovative contributions from academia, civil society, and public sector, in the area of capacity development.

### Participants of the Expert Roundtable

This outcome document has been prepared based on active participation of:

	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	Alaerts	Guy	Professor	IHE Delft International Institute for Water Education
2	Aureli	Alice	Chief Groundwater resources and human settlements section	UNESCO
3	Azab	Amel	Executive Manager and Chief of Board of Trustees	Nile Basin Capacity Building Network Foundation
4	Boys	David	Deputy General Secretary	Public Services International (PSI)
5	Franke	Nicolas	Sustainable Development Officer	United Nations Secretariat - Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
6	Furey	Sean	RWSN Director	Skat Foundation (on behalf of RWSN)
7	Jean	Ignatius	Executive Director	Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association (CAWASA) Inc
8	Mustafina	Vera	Network Manager	Central Asian Regional Water Network CAR@WAN
9	Rahmatulah	Adeba	Network coordinator	Central Asian Regional Water Network CAR@WAN
10	Malik	Sareen	Executive Secretary	African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS)
11	Usher	Sylvain	Executive Director	African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA)

<sup>1</sup> UN-Water, 2020, The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

12	Van Koppen	Barbara	Principal Researcher Rural Sociology and Gender	IWMI-South Africa
13	Verhoef-Cohen	Mariet	President	Women for Water Partnership

## Main findings of the Expert Roundtable

The roundtable was structured into three guiding questions:

### **Question 1: What is missing? How can the cross-sectoral ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and the importance of water and sanitation for other global agendas be strengthened?**

Capacity development initiatives need to enhance the focus on:

- Reorientation of water security as we adapt to climate change and reconcile the competing needs of SDGs on water resources and aligning policy with implementation.
- Ensuring that it is fully embedded in water projects and programmes, not as an afterthought or separate standalone output or outcome.
- Investment particularly in reaching out to grass root actors, practitioners, and organisations. Support is required in many developing economies to manage cross-sectoral water complexities.
- Planning based on future models and a long-term vision built in separate steps towards an iterative process to monitor and learn as we go.
- Democratizing financing tools and models is needed, including education of water professionals on financing issues and education of financiers about the crucial need of water in the future.

### **Question 2: What is already happening? What are concrete examples of how to implement in a cross-sectoral manner to speed up action and generate the highest impact?**

Current examples and lessons from capacity development initiatives indicate that:

- Integrated and cross-sectoral approaches are needed, whereby internal and external expertise and resources meet. Silos do not exist on the ground. For many people left behind, addressing gaps in service delivery and irrigation naturally demand a multi-disciplinary/cross-sectoral approach.
- The Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) approach has demonstrated results in building supporting bonds of solidarity; building confidence between different operators and utilities; improving performances of the respective utilities. Examples of such results include mentee utilities' improved health and safety system; certification programmes enhance personal development and standard operational procedures to respond to disasters; regional strategic action plan developed addressing aspects like non-revenue water.
- Regional organizations should be strengthened to make capacity development activities more impactful, given their strategic connections to relevant sub-regional, national, and local stakeholders. The UN can play a catalytic convener and guiding role involving financial and other supporting institutions and share local good practice.
- There is a need to prioritize monitoring and evaluation of capacity development to ensure long-term effectiveness and impact.

**Question 3: What can be done in the future? How can we jointly reinforce and support the accelerated implementation of Capacity Development?**

- Adopt a systems perspective for capacity development, enabling different moments and actions where stakeholders have an interface with water become a learning opportunity. This calls for continuity in training engagements, beyond the current traditional ad-hoc and sector-based practice.
- Involve local and regional partners from the early beginning of capacity development programmes in building a shared problem understanding and indicators matrix for monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen expert communities and knowledge networks as effective strategies to keep an active knowledge cycle, from knowledge generation to impact measurement and dissemination and awareness.
- Acknowledge that online learning has proven its capacity and it's here to stay. However, face to face learning will continue having a main role, especially when working on knowledge transfer at the institutional level.
- Adopt blended learning. For effectiveness it will be key to rely on online learning expertise and functional platforms.
- Enhance the cross-cutting role of water, as enabler of all SDGs and climate action. Gender inclusion, human rights, and a multi-discipline, multi-sector approach will remain central elements of the strategy.
- Take lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic and other shocks and incorporate for better adaptive capacity and resilience.

**Recommendations towards the policy message on capacity development**

1. Emphasize on water security as we adapt to climate change and reconciling the competing needs of SDGs on water resources.
2. Acknowledge that silos do not exist on the ground. An integrated and cross-sectoral approach to capacity development whereby internal and external expertise and resources meet, drawing on available knowledge at local level to bring sustainability to initiatives. Expert communities and knowledge networks are efficient strategies and should be strengthened.
3. Enhance the cross-cutting role of water, as enabler of all SDGs and climate action. Gender inclusion, human rights, and a multi-discipline, multi-sector approach will remain central elements of the strategy.
4. Adopt a systems perspective for capacity development, enabling different moments and actions where stakeholders have an interface with water become a learning opportunity. This calls for continuity and results-based approaches in training engagements, beyond the current traditional ad-hoc and sector-based practice.
5. Strengthen regional organizations to make capacity development activities such as Water Operators' Partnerships more impactful, given their strategic connections to relevant sub-regional, national, and local institutions.
6. Expand blended learning for increased effectiveness relying on online learning expertise and functional platforms.