



WASHDev Special Issue: Call for Papers
Water Operators' Partnerships: Principles and Practices
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Journal on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development Special Issue on

Water Operators' Partnerships: Principles and Practices

CALL FOR PAPERS

Water Operators' Partnerships are increasingly recognized as instruments to strengthen operational capacities of water utilities and to foster knowledge exchange between utilities with the ultimate aim of expanding and improving the provision of water services to consumers. Recent programmes like the [EU-WOP Programme](#), the [German Utilities Platform](#) or the [WaterWorX Programme](#) are illustrative of this growing recognition of WOPs. Contributing to the achievement of SDG target 6.1 figures prominently in these programmes.

At the same time, much of the literature on WOPs is either written in the context of the public versus private debate (where WOPs are presented as an alternative to PPPs) or have a strong case study focus. What is missing is a more critical, yet constructive, analysis focused at understanding different dimensions and phenomena of WOPs and how such partnerships work in practice. Such a, more critical, perspective is necessary in order to further the discussion on WOPs as an instrument for improving service provision and, ultimately, to contribute to making such partnerships more effective.

The [Journal on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development](#) (JWASHDev) is fully open access with no publication costs for authors. Submissions to this Special Issue will be free for everyone to access through a [Subscribe to Open \(S2O\) model](#), increasing the impact of water and wastewater publishing around the world. The special issue will also be widely disseminated under water and sanitation sector professionals, thus ensuring a large social impact of the articles.

In developing this special issue, we seek to identify teams of two or three authors that will focus on a specific topic or phenomenon related to WOPs. Each writing team will consist of a more academic member and a water utility or sector professional that has experience in working in WOPs. GWOPA and IHE Delft can play a brokering role in matching academics with practitioners working in WOPs. In particular we promote participation of practitioners from water utilities in developing countries engaged in WOPs.

Relevant topics include:

In this special issue, we are looking for papers that address either the concept/model of water operators' partnerships or operational experiences of these partnerships.

Model/Concept

Water Operators' Partnerships are defined as solidarity-based peer-support exchanges between two or more water operators on a non-for-profit basis aimed at strengthening capacity and enhancing performance, thereby enabling water operators to provide better services to more people, with emphasis on the poor.

1. Peer-to-Peer Partnerships – What is the relationship like between utilities involved in a WOP and what does the practice of a peer-to-peer relationship look like?
2. Solidarity-based - What does the concept of solidarity mean for utilities participating in WOPs?
3. Beyond peer-to-peer operators – Which actors, in the enabling environment, play a role in the establishment/facilitation of WOPs, what are their interests and how do they influence/impact the development of these partnerships.
4. WOPs and Performance – What are performance improvements that can be achieved and measured from WOPs? To what extent are WOPs able to reach the poor and particularly the most vulnerable?

WOP operations

5. Water Operators Partnerships and Finance – What are possibilities, challenges and limitations in accessing sources of funding. What is required for the WOP to allow for such financial linkages?
6. Sanitation Water Operators' Partnerships – What are the experiences with partnerships between sanitation operators in so-called SWOPs? How are they unique/different from WOPs?
7. Innovation/Nature-Based Solutions/Digitalization – How can WOPs promote innovative solutions like nature-based solutions or digitalization? What are challenges lessons learnt in doing so?
8. The anchoring of the WOP project – How is a partnership project anchored or institutionalized in the utility?
9. The Practice of Partnering – How does partnering occur in practice? Which steps does a partnership formation take and how does this formation impact the implementation of the partnership?
10. The Role of the Individual – The role/importance of the individual employee is frequently ignored when it comes to WOPs. What is the role of individual utility

employees and their (entrepreneurial) behavior in establishing water operators' partnerships and the implementation of the WOPs?

11. Decision-making in WOPs – How does decision-making in a WOP occur? Who makes decisions about project activities or interventions? How do different partner utilities interact to make decisions?
12. South – South WOPs – Most document and reports on WOPs revolve around a partnership between a utility from high-income country and a utility from a low-income country. Relatively few reports/documents engage with partnership between utilities from developing countries. What are experiences with partnerships between water utilities from the Global South?
13. WOPs and Culture - How do partners in a WOP engage with cultural differences between working environments. What are the challenges and benefits of experiencing different working cultures? How are these differences bridged? In looking at working cultures, different dimensions may be explored. On the one hand, it may relate to the operational realities that may be very different in different utilities. Another dimension would be the actual culture (language, habits, institutions, etc.)

Key dates:

Launch of the Call	1 July
Identification of Author Teams	1 October
Draft papers (for internal review)	1 April, 2023
Papers presented at 5 th Global WOP Congress in Bonn, Germany Draft papers for the special issue will be presented to a dedicated session at the Global WOP Congress. This can be done in person or online. The draft papers will not be published in the conference proceedings. Registration for the Conference is free. In the sessions authors contributing to the special issue will be asked to peer-review the articles of other authors contributing to the special issue.	23-25 May, 2023
Revision of second drafts based on comments at Global WOP Congress	1 September
Final papers submitted for review by JWASHDev	15 September
Publication of Special Issue (accepted papers)	1 February, 2024

Guest Editors:

Dr. Mireia Tutusaus (VEI Dutch Water Operators) – Rwanda

Dr. Klaas Schwartz (IHE Delft Institute for Water Education) – Netherlands

Julie Perkins, MSc (Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance/UN-Habitat) - Germany

Contributing to the Special Issue

In case you have a writing team and a topic for the special issue, please send an extended abstract of your article to Klaas Schwartz (k.schwartz@un-ihe.org) by September 15, 2022.

In case you are interested in being part of a writing team, please send an email to Veronika Sojkova (veronika.sojkova@un.org) by September 1, 2022. In this email, please provide some background information about your work experience and the topic you would like to work on. We will then try to match you to a suitable counterpart (either an academic or practitioner) for the article.