

Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance (GWOPA)

Emrah Engindeniz

Programme Management Officer,

Urban Basic Services Section

Global Solutions Division

UN Campus Bonn, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1

Bonn, 53113 Germany



About GWOPA

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) inaugural meeting took place in Nairobi in 2009.
Photo: Julie Perkins/GWOPA/UN-Habitat



15 years of GWOPA

Photo: Joseph Tweheyo Bayne



GWOPA celebrated its 15th anniversary during the GWOPA Assembly in Cairo, Egypt in November 2024. Over the past 15 years, GWOPA has supported more than 700 utilities in 117 countries, reaching 58 million people and linking to investments exceeding \$1 billion.

2009

GWOPA
Founded



2010

UN General Assembly
recognizes need for access to
water and sanitation

(A/RES/64/292)

2015

SDG
Alignment



2020

Move to Bonn



2026

New Strategy 2026-
2029

Impact

Over 17 years, GWOPA has driven measurable change across the global water and sanitation sector

770+

Utilities

119

Countries

492

WOPs

17,000

Staff with Strengthened apacity

63M

People with Better Services

17

Years of Solidarity

What is WOPs?

(Water Operators' Partnerships)

Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) are peer-support partnerships between water and sanitation service providers



Focus on **building capacity** of resident operator staff, rather than “doing it for them”. This way, the benefits last.



partnership

Peer partnerships, meaning that the support comes from professional counterparts with hands-on experience.



Not-for-profit

WOPs as a peer support exchange and carried out on a **not-for-profit basis**

EU—WOP PROGRAMME



- Resident Partners
- Lead Partners
- Lead and Resident Partners

Phase I – 2022-2025

- 22 WOPs involving over 50 partners (utilities +)
- Avg grant appx 350,000 Euros (+ 75% leverage)
- 36 months' implementation (2022-2025)



Phase II – 2026-2030

- 30 WOPs involving (utilities +)
- Avg grant appx 350,000 Euros
- 48 months' implementation
- Focus on Africa,
- Digitalization, Human Rights, Finance

UN-Habitat/GWOPA Roles



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



1. Manage WOP Project Proposal Call Design,
Mobilization & Selection Process

2. WOP Programme Management, Monitoring
and Reporting

3. Programme Communications

4. Knowledge Management

5. Advocacy



**EU—WOP
PROGRAMME**



From Waste to Watts

Zambia · LpWSC × Stadtentwässerung Dresden · EU-WOP Phase 1



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



EU-WOP PHASE 1 · ZAMBIA



9k → 20k

Water connections
(2021–2024)

93%

E.coli checks
passed

Biogas

Self-generated electricity
from sewage sludge

The challenge & the partnership

- LpWSC in Mansa, northern Zambia served only 9,000 connections and faced chronic NRW, aging infrastructure, and total reliance on a strained national grid.
- Under EU-WOP Phase 1 (2021–2024), LpWSC partnered with three German utilities led by Stadtentwässerung Dresden for NRW reduction, asset management, and wastewater innovation.
- The centrepiece result: Mansa's new wastewater treatment plant now generates its own **electricity via biogas** — methane captured from sewage sludge — ending dependence on national hydropower.
- Active **water connections doubled to 20,000 by 2024**; **systematic leak detection introduced**; 93% of required E.coli checks completed.

"We saw the challenges of climate change and energy insecurity and chose to respond with innovation. By turning waste into power, we are showing that a Zambian utility can lead the transition to clean, reliable and homegrown energy solutions."

Golden Manyanga, Senior Manager Engineering, LpWSC

MENTOR

Stadtentwässerung Dresden GmbH
+ Fernwasserversorgung Elbaue-
Ostharz
+ Zweckverband Wasser & Abwasser
Vogtland

MENTEE

Luapula Water Supply &
Sanitation Company (LpWSC)
Mansa, Zambia

EU-WOP Programme | Phase 1 | 2021–2024 | EUR ~280,000

Focus: NRW · Wastewater · Asset Management · Energy

20-22 May 2026 / Sofia, Bulgaria

Source: GWOPA/UN-Habitat, 2025 · EU-WOP Programme Phase 1 · waterdiplomat.org Dec 2024

Rising Tides, Renewed Hope

Tunisia · SONEDE Gabes × MM Spa Milan



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



45%

Water lost through
leaks before WOP

Digital mapping

Distribution network
now GIS-mapped

Flood resilient

Sustainable urban
drainage installed

The challenge & the partnership

- Gabes, a coastal city in southeastern Tunisia, faced a dual crisis: 45% of water was lost through leaks in an ageing network, while overexploited aquifers were drying up and flooding from extreme weather caused repeated disruption.
- The WOP between MM Spa (Milan, Italy) and SONEDE Gabes focused on leak detection, digital network mapping, sustainable urban drainage, and improved water governance — all funded under EU-WOP Phase 1.
- GIS-based mapping of the entire distribution network was completed, giving SONEDE its first comprehensive digital infrastructure picture and enabling targeted investment planning.
- Investment in sustainable urban drainage systems has measurably reduced flood disruption for residents. Community testimony documents improved daily water reliability and reduced flood damage in previously affected neighbourhoods.

"There is more reliability in our water supply now. And when it rains, the streets do not flood as badly as before. It makes a difference in our daily lives."

Afef, resident of Gabes, Tunisia — GWOPA case story 2025

MENTOR

MM Spa (Milan Metropolitan
Municipal Utility)
Milan, Italy

EU-WOP Programme | Phase 1 | 2021–2025

Focus: NRW · Flood resilience · Digital mapping · Governance

MENTEE

SONEDE Gabes
(Société Nationale d'Exploitation
et de Distribution des Eaux)
Gabes, Tunisia

Current GWOPA Programmes



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



European Union Water Operators' Partnerships (EU-WOP) Programme

DG INTPA

EU-WOP I ending 2026 · EU-WOP II 2026–2030

Ongoing → renewal

Boosting the Effectiveness of Water Operator Partnerships (BEWOP)

IHE Delft · Government of the Netherlands

Jan 2025 – Jun 2026

Active

Citywide Inclusive Sanitation

Bill Gates Foundation (BGF)

Jan 2021 – Dec 2026

Active

Equitable and climate-resilient sanitation services for low-income urban communities in South and Southeast Asia (Lao PDR & Nepal)

UN Development Account (DA17)

Jan 2025 – Jun 2028

Active

Strengthening the capacity of three Ukrainian water and sanitation utilities through WOPs

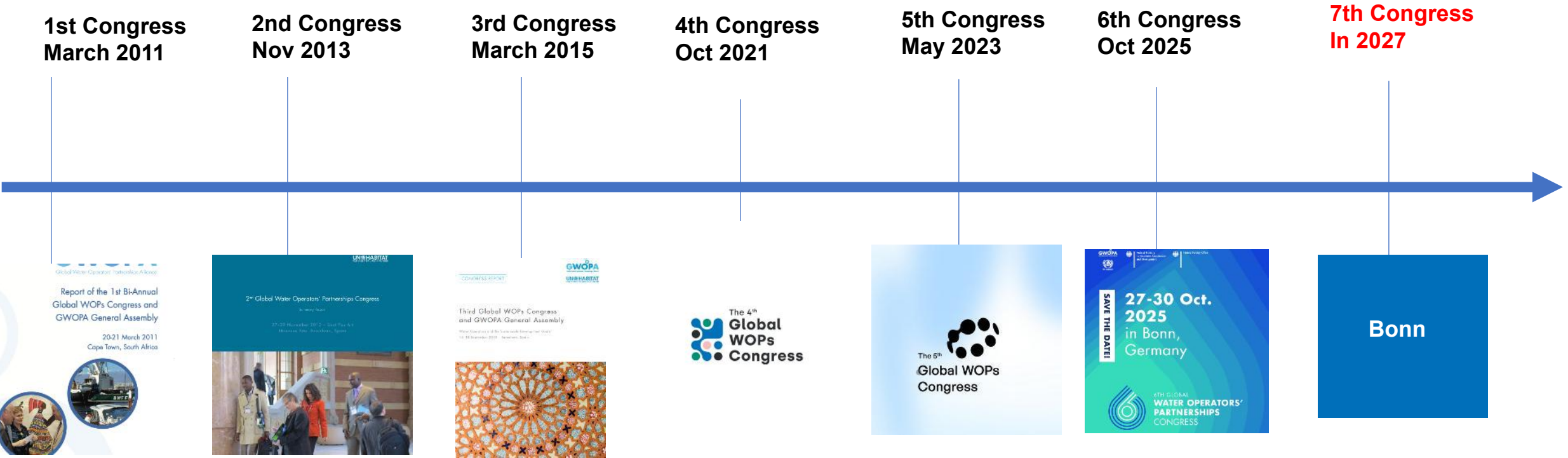
UNICEF Ukraine Country Programme

Jun 2024 – Dec 2026

Active

Flagship Global WOP Congress

Flagship platform for global community to share knowledge and exchange learning



Engage in Global WOPs Community of Practice

2,300+

Members

850+

Utilities

135

Countries

40%

Young Professionals



Enabling
Environment



Asset
Management



Water
Production



Water
Distribution



Urban
Sanitation



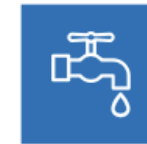
Low-Income
Customers



Utility Organization
and Strategy



Water resources
resilience and
Climate Change

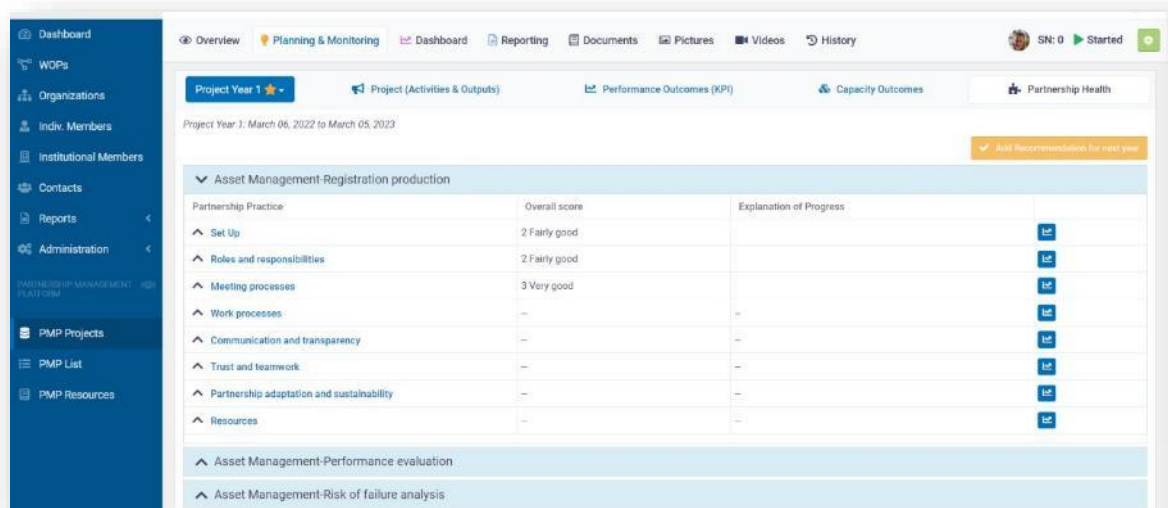


Commercial
Operations

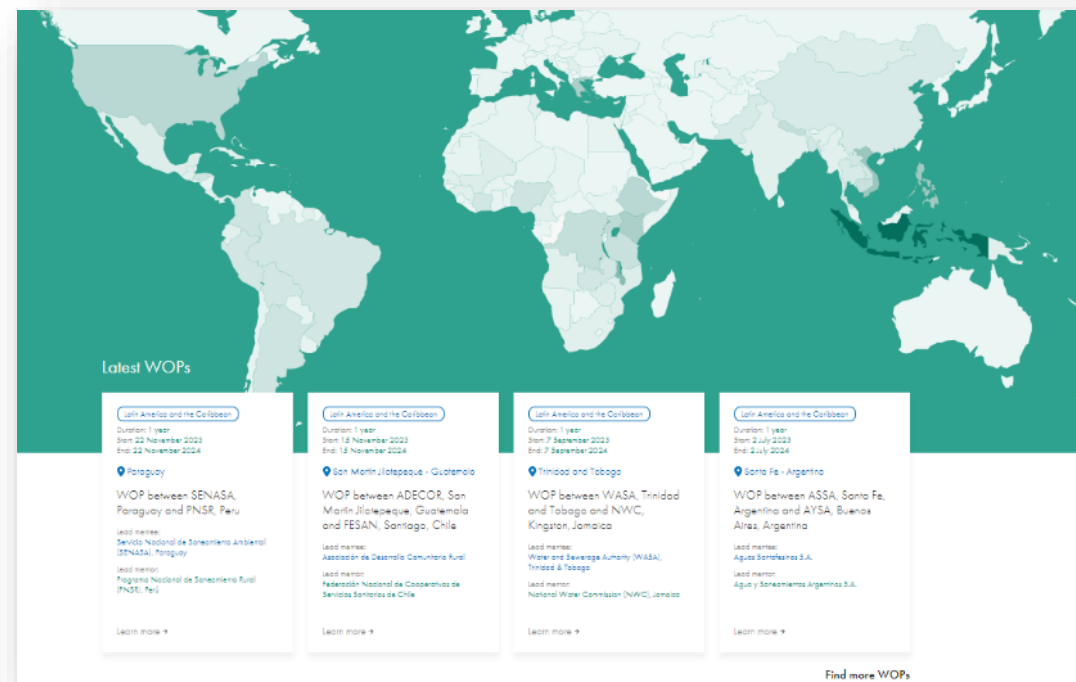


Young Water
Professionals

■ Partnership Management Platform



■ WOPs Observatory

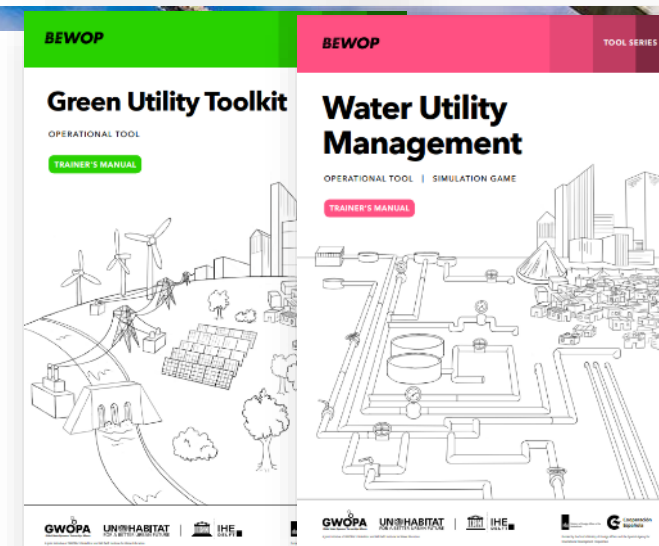
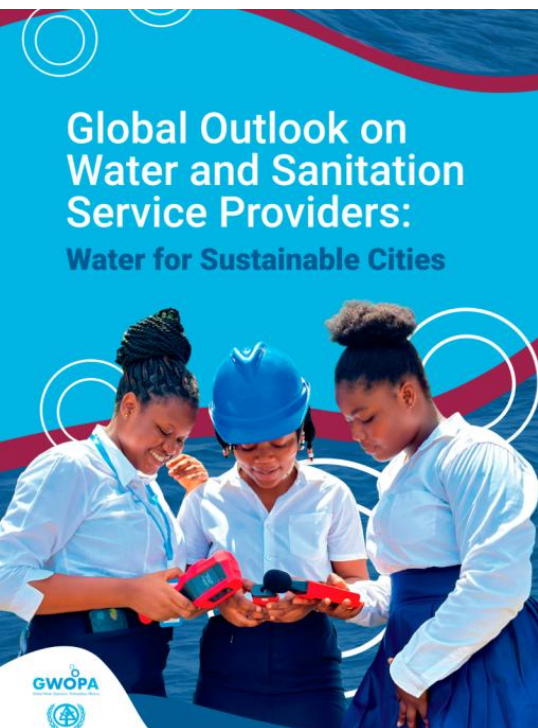


- **Streamline WOP management** through standardized yet adaptable workflows
- **Enhance reporting quality and consistency** across partners and programmes
- **Enable evidence-based advocacy** to scale up WOP approaches
- **Support partners with the right setup** (technical, operational, and institutional)
- **Improve visibility of results & impacts** to attract funding and partnerships

Resources for WOPs` Knowledge /Tools



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



Become a GWOPA Member



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



Peer learning

Share your expertise as Peer learning/mentorship opportunities between utilities through WOPs/SWOP



Knowledge network

Actively engage in Global WOP community, share your knowledge and experience



Global Exposure

Participate in the Global WOPs Congress and regional and/or national advocacy events on Water, supporting advocacy on SDGs



Policy shaping

Contribute to global/national/local level policy shaping and processes addressing the work of utilities



Governance

Engage in GWOPA supporting strategic direction and systems: GWOPA Assembly, International Steering Committee



Resources Mobilization

Contribute in fundraising and resource mobilizations efforts for WOPs/SWOPs

GWOPA membership is free and open to institutions and individuals committed to water and sanitation solidarity.





Be part of the Global WOPs Alliance

South- East Europe : Strong Utilities - Sustainable Services



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



- Global and Regional Networks
- Shared vision
- **ENHANCING CAPACITY OF UTILITIES THROUGH WATER OPERATOR PARTNERSHIPS (WOP) IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

WOPs Regional/National Platforms and Programmes



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



<https://gwopa.unhabitat.org/>



International
Association of Water
Service Companies
in the Danube Region



Thank you very much

Хвала вам

köszönöm

Hvala vam

ευχαριστώ

Благодаря ти

teşekkürler