Evaluation Report/2023/7

Mid-Term Review of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) Strategy 2020-2024

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Mid-Term Review of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) Strategy 2020-20249

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First published in Nairobi in December 2023 by UN-Habitat.

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Produced by the Independent Evaluation Unit

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www.unhabitat.org

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Acknowledgements

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Photos: Cover Page: © WaterWorx, Zimbabwe
Design and layout : Andrew Ondoo

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In Bashantek, the Dhaka slum area, residents now have access to legal and safe 24/7 treated tap water in their homes. The community-managed maintenance of the service has been rated very highly by customers, and bill collection is impressively efficient, with a rate of 98%.
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ACRONYMS

BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
BEWOP	Boosting Effectiveness of Water Operators' Partnerships
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CAWASA	Caribbean Water and Waste Water Association
CoP	Community of Practice
CWIS	City-wide Inclusive Sanitation
EC	European Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
GWOPA	Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance
HRtWS	Human Right to Water and Sanitation
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Criteria
OFID	The OPEC Fund for International Development
OPEC	The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PMP	Partnership Management Platform
RF	Results Framework
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIP	Sustainability Improvement Programme
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNFCC	UN Framework Convention for Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Physical conditions of Bhashantek, the Dhaka slum area, Bangladesh.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and context

The Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) is an initiative of UN-Habitat with the aim to promote and support effective water operators' partnerships (WOPs)[1] to strengthen water and sanitation utilities. Formally set up in 2009, GWOPA is a membership-based global solidarity network with 129 institutional members by May 2023. The Secretariat is currently implementing GWOPA's second 5-year strategy (2020-2024), for which it receives core funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, totaling to 5.75 million Euros for the five-year implementation period.

The GWOPA strategy has two strategic objectives: (i) to scale up WOPs, and (ii) WOPs to contribute to water and sanitation service providers' improved capacity and performance, and local realization of the SDGs. The Strategy has four specified Outcomes:

i. WOPs are well known, supported, adopted, and adequately funded.

ii. WOP actors make use of the knowledge products and services produced or co-produced by GWOPA

iii. GWOPA is a strong and fruitful water solidarity network.

iv. GWOPA is efficiently and effectively managed and governed.

The achievement of the two strategic objectives and four outcomes are measured and monitored by indicators of achievement provided in the Results framework of the Strategy in Annex 2.

This mid-term review (MTR) was specified in the Contribution Agreement of UN-Habitat with the Government of Germany. It is also in line with UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy where projects with value of over 1 million USD and cover 4 years or above should have a mid-term evaluation conducted by an external evaluation consultant. The MTR was conducted by external evaluation consultant Ms Katharina Welle and its key audiences are the GWOPA Secretariat, Government of Germany, other GWOPA donors, UN-Habitat Management, the GWOPA General Assembly, the International Steering Committee and GWOPA Alliance Implementing partners.

Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

This MTR of GWOPA's 2020-24 Strategy was commissioned by UN-Habitat in order to (i) support accountability by providing information on whether the strategy is on track to achieving its strategic outcomes and objectives by 2024 and to (ii) to enhance learning of what is working well and what is not working well, identifying challenges, lessons learned and providing recommendations that inform course correction for the remaining strategy period.

The MTR covers the first three years of the GWOPA strategy implementation, from January 2020 to December 2022 and assesses all of GWOPA's activities and progress towards results over that period. The review covered both the strategy and the operational level with a view of drawing lessons and recommendations to inform improved implementation.

All the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria served as the core reference for evaluating the strategy.

1 WOPs are "peer-supported exchanges between two or more operators, carried out on a not-for-profit basis with the objective of strengthening their capacity, enhancing their performance and enabling them to provide a better service for more people"(GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019).

Approach, methodology and limitations

The MTR was utilization-focused and participatory, via stakeholder engagement activities throughout the review process. The review was clustered into three areas examining (a) strategy direction, assessing its relevance and coherence, (b) strategy results, examining its effectiveness, impact and sustainability and (c) strategy delivery, assessing its efficiency and effectiveness, organized in an evaluation matrix.

The MTR employed ***a mixed method approach***, with a heavy focus on qualitative methods. ***Data collection activities*** included (i) document and data review of GWOPA's programme and core portfolio and of relevant sector documentation , (ii) a focus group discussion with GWOPA Secretariat staff and a participatory Theory of Change workshop and (iii) key informant interviews with GWOPA and UN-Habitat staff, Alliance members, partners and representatives from similar initiatives. The **data was analyzed** against the areas of investigation specified in the evaluation matrix in order to answer the evaluation questions. To do so, evidence from the different sources was synthesized to make evaluative judgements. Collaborative workshops with key internal evaluation stakeholders served to jointly make sense of findings, validate conclusions and co-create recommendations.

Limitations encountered during the MTR process are (i) ambition and budget of the evaluation were limited to 45 working days, (ii) inconsistent quality of data and evidence across the programme, particularly for assessing the likely contributions to higher level results, and (iii) capturing different perspectives, in particular from platforms and institutional members.

Main findings

Strategy direction – in this area, the MTR assessed to what extent the strategy direction is on course for achieving its objectives, via the evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence (evaluation objective b) and identified any developments in the external environment that require changes to GWOPA's strategy areas (evaluation objective d)**.**

Relevance: The MTR findings confirm that the strategy remains relevant to current global water and sanitation challenges, and is in line with major international frameworks. In addition to the continued relevance of traditional WOP work areas such as non-revenue water, new trends that GWOPA actively engages in include climate change adaptation, sanitation, support with change management and with digitalization in utilities. Areas that require further engagement from GWOPA are WOPs in emergencies and the wider urban planning context. In terms of international frameworks, GWOPA's Strategy aligns well with the SDG framework via its strategic objectives but its Theory of Change could better capture the New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat's Domains of Change. Members' needs are not well documented by GWOPA; anecdotal evidence collected for the MTR indicates that members have a strong interest in further support with fundraising for WOPs worldwide.

Coherence: GWOPA's strategy is in synergy with existing and emerging programmes in the field of water and sanitation operator capacity building. GWOPA retains a comparative advantage and niche via its set-up as a UN mechanism to support peer-to-peer partnerships worldwide but the ecosystem of actors has been growing over recent years and there is some concern over GWOPA's continued visibility within this larger field of actors. Since the office's hosting in Bonn, GWOPA has created positive ties with local German stakeholders and also shows good synergies in collaborating with important partners such as WaterWorX, via funded programmes. Beyond that, GWOPA's approach to leveraging partnerships not well articulated and could be more deliberate.

Strategy Results – findings in this area assessed the extent to which the strategy is on track for achieving its objectives, outcomes and outputs (evaluation objective a) via the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability (evaluation objective b). This section also refers to adequacy of partnerships and support to WOPs (evaluation objective c).

Effectiveness and impact outlook: Overall, GWOPA has shown satisfactory progress against its strategic objectives in two out of three of its key outcome areas (being well known and supported, and its knowledge services) but less on the third (the strength of its network). The fourth, supportive outcome area (efficient and effective governance), has seen good progress over the first three years of strategy delivery.

Under outcome 1 (WOPs are well known, supported, adopted and adequately funded), GWOPA's engagement showed strong performance on the communications side, expressed through a communications plan and a wide range of outreach activities. Progress on advocacy for WOPs is satisfactory and mobilizing resources for WOPs via GWOPA-funded programmes was strong but weak in terms of non-GWOPA managed resource mobilization for its global network more widely, with these areas requiring attention going forward. Advocacy and fundraising strategies for the WOPs practice globally are not clearly elaborated and the documentation of activities in annual reports do not communicate a clear narrative. This notwithstanding, there is evidence of a wide range of advocacy activities over the first three years of strategy implementation. Some external stakeholders, in particular partners and members, expressed a need for more clarity and direction in advocacy and more pro-active engagement on mobilizing resources for the global WOPs practice.

Under outcome 2 (WOP actors make use of knowledge products and services (co-) produced by GWOPA), GWOPA has made good progress in all three activity areas; in particular the continued documentation, research and guidance production on WOPs enables GWOPA to showcase its thought leadership on WOPs. In terms of WOPs monitoring, the Secretariat is in the process of making its global observatory accessible to members online and has developed a WOPs results monitoring tool, the partnership management platform (PMP). There are some concerns about the quality of these tools, namely questions about the completeness and accuracy of the voluntary self-reported data feeding into the WOPs observatory and (to be expected) teething problems with the PMP in terms of its user-friendliness. In the work area of knowledge tools, the Secretariat has excelled in the set-up of an interactive online platform, the Community of Practice (CoP), which enables peer-to-peer exchanges also progressed well with guidance and training materials; however, there are indications that reach and uptake of these remain low.

Outcome 3, (GWOPA is a strong and fruitful solidarity network), is least developed in the strategy document, providing statements of intent on several work areas rather than setting out specific activities. Overall, progress is slower than in the other two key outcome areas. Despite concerted efforts from the GWOPA Secretariat in developing and implementing a membership campaign following revisions to the membership section in its Charter, the total institutional membership remains relatively low with a total of 129 members. Potential reasons for the slow membership growth relate to a lack of clearly presented benefits for future members. GWOPA's activities on 'leveraging partnerships' are not fully articulated and require further direction. The Secretariat's collaboration with regional platforms is progressing via the drawing up of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and targeted efforts to support the set-up of additional platforms in regions not yet represented. GWOPA has no clear approach on how to support the set-up of and collaboration with national platforms. Work on thematic hubs, whilst not systematically reported, is progressing well via thematic CoPs, assessed under outcome 2.

On supporting outcome 4 (GWOPA is efficiently and effectively governed), the Secretariat has made good progress via reviewing its governance framework in the Charter and through successful fundraising. Both activities are assessed further below under 'strategy delivery'.

UN-Habitat's cross-cutting topics of gender, climate change, youth and the HRtWS are generally well mainstreamed in WOPs, elevated in the Secretariat's communications work, represented in moderated thematic CoPs and via themes and sessions at global WOP congresses, and across knowledge products and services; amongst all cross-cutting topics, GWOPA's work on gender and climate change is most visible, with its work on youth and particularly the HRtWS being less observable to external stakeholders and recording fewer activities in total.

Sustainability: The MTR found that there is currently no systematic evidence base to assess the likely sustainability of GWOPA's strategy. This notwithstanding, there is strong scope and several entry points for scaling up and replicating GWOPA's approach in the future.

Strategy Delivery - findings in this area assessed to what extent the strategy delivery facilitated or hindered achievement of objectives via the evaluation criterion of efficiency (evaluation objective b). This area also examined the external factors, in particular Covid-19 (evaluation objective e), and internal factors affecting strategy implementation, the implementation status of recommendations related to the previous strategy (evaluation objective e) and adequacy of resources (evaluation objective c).

Efficiency: Over the first three years of strategy implementation GWOPA has shown strong resilience and progressed well in strengthening the Alliance's foundation to grow and thrive. Overall, the strategy implementation is progressing well across GWOPA's core work areas and funded programmes. GWOPA is also actively contributing to the implementation and coordination of WOPs via managing operational WOPs programs through its online Community of Practice platform and the biennial WOP Congress, which has a good take-up. Internal and external stakeholders were generally happy with GWOPA's overall performance over the current strategy period and external stakeholders provided constructive feedback related to a need for stronger leadership and direction in ongoing collaborations.

The Secretariat coped well with Covid-19 and actively supported its members in coping with the pandemic, the most important external factor adversely effecting strategy delivery. The Secretariat also successfully managed to overcome staffing issues, the most important internal factor affecting the Secretariat. In this context, it is very positive that GWOPA is now fully staffed, including a new 'head of office' who started her position at the end of 2022.

GWOPA has comprehensively responded to the recommendations of the previous strategy evaluation, first and foremost by reviewing its Charter and implementing related governance reforms, which, in turn, have increased the legitimacy of the Alliance.

A process of establishing regional platforms across not yet represented geographies and establishing MoUs is underway but there are no concerted efforts yet to engage with national platforms. Anecdotal feedback indicates that some platform representatives would welcome clearer and more frequent communication. GWOPA currently has low visibility within UN-Habitat, its parent agency, and internal collaboration remains limited; there is nonetheless a strong recognition on both sides of the potential for GWOPA's further integration into Habitat.

GWOPA's ability to track and adjust strategy objectives is weakened by the limitations of its internal compass, the Theory of Change, and its results framework. The internal logic of GWOPA's ToC does not fully unpack the causal pathways to impact and there is a disconnect with the results framework which lacks a clear hierarchy of results and strong intermediate outcome indicators. Judging from data sources, the reported impact data is likely to be inaccurate and GWOPA should not be expected to regularly report on impact because improvements in water and sanitation service levels is outside its control. Instead, GWOPA could implement impact evaluations of any of its large operational WOP programme, the EU-WOP.

Finally, GWOPA has excelled in its fundraising activities for GWOPA-managed programmes, securing over 14 million USD via additional funded programmes since the last reporting period, with a strong focus (86% of funded programmes) on supporting operational WOPs. GWOPA has, to some extent, diversified its donor base but its funding base remains vulnerable because of the dominance of two donors, BMZ via Secretariat funding and EC via the operational EU-WOPs programme.

Conclusions

Over the first three years of strategy implementation GWOPA has shown strong resilience and progressed well in strengthening the Alliance's foundation to grow and thrive. The Secretariat excelled by substantially increasing its funding base and carrying out a wide range of activities across all work areas and funded programmes whilst also progressing internal reforms.

The strategy remains highly ***relevant*** to external challenges; there is now an opportunity for revisions to make it more outward-oriented and more aligned with UN-Habitat. In practice, this involves reviewing its theory of change, results framework and narrative, and, based on that, developing sharper advocacy and stakeholder engagement goals.

In terms of ***coherence***, GWOPA occupies a clear niche in the sector and is valued by its members. The Alliance now needs to reassert its global thought leadership of WOPs as a key tool to contribute to the SDGs and urban transformation. To do so, GWOPA needs to move outside its comfort zone to engage with all relevant stakeholders in the field of utility capacity building.

GWOPA has made good progress against its ***strategy objectives and results*** overall, with stronger performance against the key outcomes of (i) WOPs being well known and supported via a high level of communications and advocacy activities and (ii) knowledge services via continued WOPs research and guidance, progress in WOPs monitoring and in developing WOP knowledge tools. Compared to this, the third outcome area of strengthening its network is less well developed in the strategy and showed slower progress overall. GWOPA has made good progress against the supporting outcome of improving the network's governance via the review of its Charter and the implementation of a set of reforms. This means that, overall, GWOPA has strengthened its foundation to further grow, serve and monitor its membership; it now needs to double its efforts to increase its membership base and continue to put governance reforms into practice.

In terms of ***partnerships and supporting WOPs***, GWOPA has strengthened its foundation to further grow, serve and monitor its membership via the successful review of its Charter and development of a set of WOP monitoring and engagement tools. It now needs to double its efforts to increase its membership base and continue to put

Low income community water facilities at an EU-WOP project site in Dhaka, Bangladesh. © UN-Habitat /Julie Marechal Perkins

governance reforms into practice. GWOPA's has engaged widely but not always with a sharp enough agenda to maintain and further grow its thought leadership on WOPs. It implemented a wide range of communications and advocacy activities with a tendency to focus on quantity over quality. This is partially due to the inward-looking character of the current strategy, coupled with a lack of thematic grounding in the wider urban agenda. This has led to a focus on the technical side of implementing WOPs at the expense of upstream engagement with the wider enabling environment for WOPs.

In delivering the strategy ***(efficiency)***, the GWOPA Secretariat has been able to respond and adapt to changing circumstances, including Covid-19, progressed on key outcome areas whilst coping with and addressing internal challenges**.** GWOPA has proven high levels of resilience in the face of Covid-19 and pro-actively supported its members in coping whilst continuing to make progress against strategy outcomes. The Secretariat successfully took remedial measures to overcome staff shortages and is of the opinion that any remaining skills gaps can be filled through upskilling staff or via the use of external consultants. It also ***comprehensively implemented the recommendations*** of the previous strategy review. To further improve efficiencies, GWOPA needs to be better integrated within UN-Habitat and this can be achieved via a constructive dialogue (by both GWOPA and other parts of UN-Habitat) to overcome any bottlenecks and find ways to use existing collaboration mechanisms.

In terms of ***impact outlook***, GWOPA's results framework does not sufficiently unpack the results chain between outputs and intermediate outcomes that is within GWOPA's sphere of influence, which makes it harder to understand whether GWOPA is effective. A revision of the results framework and further elaboration and application of the Partnership Monitoring Platform will remedy this.

Looking at ***sustainability***, GWOPA is missing opportunities to think through and measure how its approach could be replicated and scaled up. Until now, GWOPA does not track how sustainable its approach is and what the prospects are for scaling up WOPs both of which can be easily remedied.

GWOPA has made excellent progress with ***securing and expanding its resource base*** and now needs continue efforts to secure core funding. Based on the successful increase of its portfolio for operational work, most notably via the EU-WOP programme, GWOPA needs to in parallel retain a focus on strategic engagement to further support and grow the WOP's practice beyond the programmes directly managed by the Secretariat.

Lessons learned

The following lessons emerged via the MTR process

- GWOPA has shown strong resilience over the implementation of the strategy period adjusting well to challenges related to Covid-19 and coping and overcoming internal staffing issues.
- The focus on the network governance and tools has come at the expense of serving the membership and platforms.
- The successful acquisition of funded programmes may have taken away attention from more upstream, strategic work.
- A 5-year rhythm in change of host country and core funding consumes staff energy and resources.
- The administrative processes involved in being part of a UN-organization have, at times, affected the Secretariat's ability to respond to internal changes and slowed basic processes.

Recommendations

The MTR identified 10 recommendations, which are listed in table format below.

Recommendation	Responsible for implementation	Timeframe
1. Review the 2020-24 strategy and extend to 2025; reconstruct the ToC to ensure they become more outward looking and closely aligned with the SDG Acceleration agenda, UN-Habitat's Domains of Change, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant international frameworks.	GWOPA Secretariat, with support from UN-Habitat management	Within 3 months
2. Build on GWOPA's convening power as a UN-based network to extend GWOPA's international reach and assert its thought leadership on the value of the WOPs practice as an instrument for water utility capacity building worldwide.	GWOPA Secretariat, SC members, with support from institutional and individual members	Within 12 months
3. Redouble efforts in growing and servicing the membership	GWOPA Secretariat, SC and WOPs platforms	Within 12 months
4. Raise the knowledge, communication and advocacy profile of GWOPA with a view to increase visibility and support scaling.	GWOPA Secretariat and Communications Unit at UN-Habitat	Within 6 months
5. Operationalize the SDG Acceleration commitment to grow the WOPs practice by 2030	GWOPA Secretariat, WOPs platforms	Within 6 months
6. Leverage the urban agenda to sharpen GWOPA's strategic engagement	GWOPA Secretariat	Within 12 months
7. Where necessary, fill skills gaps in the GWOPA Secretariat in response to strategy needs	GWOPA Secretariat, with support of UN-Habitat management	Within 12 months
8. Reinvigorate the practical governance of GWOPA	GWOPA Secretariat and WOP platforms, with the support of UN-Habitat management	Within 12 months
9. Strengthen internal ties between GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat	GWOPA Secretariat, Urban Basic Services Branch, Urban Planning, regional and field offices, Human Resources	Within 12 months
10. Secure ongoing Secretariat and programme funding	GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management	Within 12 months

Treatment Wetlands Training in Martinique June 21 - 24, 2022.
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Sanitation activity under the EU-WOP programme.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and mandate of the evaluation

UN-Habitat has commissioned a mid-term review (MTR) of its 2020-2024 strategy (see Annex 1 for the Terms of Reference) to take stock of strategy implementation at the midpoint of the funding cycle. The purpose and mandate of the MTR is to (i) provide evidence on whether the project is on track towards achieving the strategies' outcomes and objectives and (ii) enhance learning, and identify constraints and challenges, which may need corrective measures and improvement. The MTR is designed therefore to identify areas for course correction during the remaining strategy implementation period and to support decision making for the hosting of the initiative beyond 2024.

What is being evaluated: the GWOPA 2020-2024 Strategy

The Global Water Operator Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) is an initiative of UN-Habitat with the aim to "promote and support effective water operator partnerships (WOPs)[2] to strengthen water and sanitation utilities" (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019). Formally set up in 2009, GWOPA is a membership-based global solidarity network. The Secretariat is currently implementing GWOPA's second 5-year strategy (2020-2024), for which it receives core funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The evaluation focuses on the first 3 years of the GWOPA 2020-2024 Strategy implementation period. It covers both the strategy and the operational level with a view to drawing lessons to inform further implementation.

Evaluation users

The primary **internal audience** for this evaluation is a set of GWOPA stakeholders, namely the GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat Management, the GWOPA General Assembly and International Steering Committee (SC) and GWOPA Alliance implementing partners. They will use the evaluation findings to shape the remaining implementation period of the global strategy and to set the direction for the next strategy phase.

The primary **external stakeholder** of this MTR is the Government of Germany represented via BMZ who provides core support to the current strategy implementation period. BMZ has a keen interest to understand how well GWOPA is progressing in implementing the strategy overall and specific synergies achieved with German WOP efforts. The MTR findings will flow into future funding decisions.

Report Structure

For ease of reading, cohesiveness, and logic, the report is organized as follows: After the Executive Summary, which is a stand-alone section with a clear structure of the key elements of the main report; and introduction section 1;

- Section 2 provides an overview of GWOPA and its current strategy including its history, Theory of Change (ToC), the context in which it operates and linkages to other programmes;
- Section 3 sets out the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation;
- Section 4 describes the MTR approach and methodology and any limitations encountered;
- Section 5 presents the MTR findings organized by MTR questions and sub-questions;
- Section 6 sets out the overall conclusions
- Section 7 highlights lessons learned, and
- Section 8 provides overarching recommendations.

2 WOPs are "peer-supported exchanges between two or more operators, carried out on a not-for-profit basis with the objective of strengthening their capacity, enhancing their performance and enabling them to provide a better service for more people"(GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019).

A woman washing her hands at the newly built water supply and handwashing facilities at Ward K Tamale, Ghana. © UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu

2. OVERVIEW OF GWOPA AND THE 2020-2024 STRATEGY

This section provides an overview of GWOPA and of the current strategy and the wider context in which it operates. It also identifies the strategy's key stakeholders and its implementation status. Reference is made to other relevant evaluations and reviews. The section mainly draws on GWOPA documentation.

2.1 Strategy overview

GWOPA's history and development: After a first official recognition of WOPs as a potentially effective mechanism for building the capacity of water operators in 2006, GWOPA was officially established in 2009 as an initiative of UN-Habitat. It is an international, member-based multi-stakeholder alliance with the aim to scale up effective WOPs for inclusive water and sanitation services. After a four-year foundational period between 2009-2012, GWOPA's first strategy cycle ran from 2013-2017 and was implemented with core support from the Government of Spain. Towards the end of the first strategy cycle GWOPA experienced an upheaval in part caused by a lack of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the Alliance's governance bodies, which prevented it from carrying out effective fundraising and from identifying a host government in time for the next strategy implementation (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2018). This crisis was overcome, Germany was confirmed as the new host government and GWOPA is now well underway in implementing its second five-year strategy from 2020-2024.

GWOPA is a membership-based solidarity network. GWOPA is a membership-based organization with 129 institutional and over 800 individual members as of May 2023 (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023a). The Alliance operates based on eight global principles[3] and a related code of conduct, and membership is open to all interested organizations and individuals that share them (Gwopa.org, 2023). GWOPA's governance structure reflects that it is a global network institutionally anchored in UN-Habitat: it consists of an General Assembly, an International Steering Committee (SC) and a Secretariat that is affiliated with UN-Habitat (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2022). The Secretariat reports to the SC, which advises its chair, UN-Habitat's executive director (see Box 1 for a description of GWOPA's governance bodies and their key functions). The SC has at least 30 seats, indicating the global nature of the network and its design as an organization with scope for a large membership base.

Box 1:
GWOPA governance bodies and their functions

GWOPA's institutional and individual members come together in a **General Assembly**, held every two years, during which they elect SC members and review, guide and discuss the strategic direction of the Alliance. The Assembly Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the institutional members.

The **Steering Committee** (SC) is comprised of representatives from the different stakeholder groups making up the Alliance and its constituents reflect the Alliance's focus on public utilities, and its geographic and institutional diversity. The SC is chaired by the UN-Habitat Executive Director and meets annually to provide strategic guidance to the Chair and Secretariat. SC members also further GWOPA's mandate and represent GWOPA at local, regional and international fora.

The **Secretariat** is institutionally affiliated with UN-Habitat and located at the host country funding GWOPA, currently in Bonn. The Secretariat currently has eight staff members and is supported by external consultants, interns and volunteers (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2023). It administers the network, implements GWOPA's strategy and coordinates activities to support WOP Platforms in collaboration with its members and partners.

Source: GWOPA Charter (2022)

3 The principles are: inclusiveness, non-for-profit partnerships, supporting efforts worldwide, mutual benefit, transparency, building on the past and others, fostering sustainable change and creating a culture of solidarity (Gwopa.org, 2023).

GWOPA's key stakeholders are public water and sanitation utilities and the people for which they provide services. GWOPA's core mandate is to support public utilities in peer-to-peer exchanges and capacity building with the aim to extend and improve access to water and sanitation services, particularly the poor. The beneficiaries of GWOPA's strategy are the constituents of public utilities and GWOPA's goal is to facilitate improvements that enable people to fulfil their human right to water and sanitation (HRtWS).

GWOPA's mandate is firmly rooted in the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda and other related international frameworks. GWOPA was conceived during the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) because of the strong potential seen in peer-to-peer partnerships for strengthening water and sanitation utilities which, in turn, could help countries in improving access to water supply and sanitation services. Now, at the time of GWOPA's second strategy cycle, the MDGs have been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the ambition to achieve sustainable access to water and sanitation for all (SDG6). SDG6 puts a strong emphasis on stepping up the service ladder from basic to improved access and on making services equitable and affordable (UN, n.d.). GWOPA's mandate is also firmly rooted in the New Urban Agenda, which provides a vision for realizing the SDGs in urban areas and other relevant frameworks such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

GWOPA's Theory of Change (ToC) articulates its vision, mission and objectives and how to achieve them. GWOPA works towards achieving its vision and mission through a ToC accompanied by a strategic results framework (RF) (see Annex 2) set out in its 2020-24 Strategy (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019). The strategic objectives of GWOPA are that (1) "WOPs are scaled up" and that (2) "WOPs are contributing to water and sanitation service providers' improved capacity and performance and local realization of the SDGs, to the benefit of all, particularly the poor". These objectives are supported by three intermediate outcomes:

© Odisha India, EU-WOP programme

Table 1: Overview of GWOPA-funded programs 2018-2025

Donor	Program	USD equivalent	% of total	timeframe	type of work
MFA Netherlands	BEWOP 3	330,000	2%	2018-2021	normative
MFA Netherlands	BEWOP 4	950,000	7%	2022-2025	normative
EC	EU-WOP	11,000,000	76%	2020-2024	operational
OFID	SIP	900,000	6%	2019-2022	operational
UNICEF Ethiopia	Ethiopia WOP	573,000	4%	2022-2024	operational
Abu Dhabi Department of Energy	Abu Dhabi	138,838	1%	2020-2023	normative
BMGF	CWIS	500,000	3%	2022-2025	normative
Total funded programmes		14,391,838			

Source: GWOPA programme documentation and communication with GWOPA staff

1. WOPs are well-known, supported, adopted and adequately funded;

2. WOP actors make use of the knowledge products and services produced or co-produced by GWOPA; and

3. GWOPA is a strong and fruitful water solidarity network.

The Strategy also sets out a fourth supporting outcome, namely that "GWOPA is efficiently and effectively operated and governed". The RF contains 20 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reporting progress against GWOPA's higher level and intermediate strategy outcomes (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019).

GWOPA's funding base combines core funding from a host government with program-specific funding: Unlike other member-based organizations, GWOPA is not financed by contributions from its members but through core funding from a host government combined with program-based funding. The host government provides support to the Secretariat during a given five-year strategy cycle. This includes contributions to core costs such as office space and staffing and to the implementation of core functions, including the organization of the biennial WOP Congress, advocacy, communications and global monitoring of WOPs (The Federal Government of Germany, 2019).

GWOPA currently has a portfolio of seven funded programs. In addition to core funding from BMZ, GWOPA currently holds a portfolio of seven active programs from six different donors, as shown in Table 1. GWOPA's active programs run between 2018-2025 with the bulk of activities falling in the current reporting period of 2020-2024. The total funding available to GWOPA amounts to an equivalent of around 14.4 million USD. The bulk of activities are predominantly operational, namely managing the implementation of WOPs via the EU-WOP program funded by the European Commission (EC), the Sustainability Improvement Program (SIP) funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), and the Ethiopia WOP program, financed by UNICEF Ethiopia; normative programs contribute to GWOPA's knowledge management activities, advocacy and communications work and include the Boosting Effectiveness of Water Operators' Partnerships (BEWOP) 3 and 4 programs funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Netherlands[4], a small amount of funds remaining from a previous program funded by Abu Dhabi's Department of Energy and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's (BMGF) contribution to a three-year staff position under the City-wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) program.

GWOPA's strategy implementation is past its mid-point. At the point of this MTR, in the first half of 2023, GWOPA is well into the second half of its strategy implementation period, which runs from January 2020-December 2024.

4 Funds for this program are channelled via the Institute for Water Education (IHE) Delft.

2.2 The global context in which GWOPA operates

A number of contextual developments have taken place over the strategy period, with implications for GWOPA:

Many utilities, already ill-equipped to provide sustainable and affordable water and sanitation services, face additional challenges related to urban population growth, climate change and conflict. Many urban utilities face additional challenges on top of the financial, technical, management and governance problems that WOPs are designed to help address. These challenges include dwindling water availability and quality due to climate change, natural disasters and other human activities and rapid population growth. Some cities have further been affected by conflict either directly, or through the influx of internally displaced populations or refugees thus putting further pressures on utilities (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019).

There is an increased recognition of the need to professionalize water supply management to improve services. The last decade has witnessed an increased awareness in the sector of the need to professionalize water services (SWS Learning Partnership, 2021; USAID, 2020). Activities include the clustering of smaller independent water operators under larger utilities or privately run operators to formalize management structures, achieve economies of scale and expand piped networks and services. Under the New Urban Agenda, there is a stronger recognition of water and sanitation operators as important contributors to basic services. In several countries, reform efforts are underway to strengthen national and sub-national regulation and oversight of water operators.

Since the set-up of GWOPA as a global mechanism in 2009, more initiatives have emerged with similar aims. There are now more initiatives and programs that have similar goals to GWOPA than there were when the Alliance was formally established. For example, in Germany, the German Water Partnership developed a model of 'sustainable utility partnerships' to enable international know-how transfer (The Federal Government of Germany, 2019). In March 2023, Germany and the Netherlands, with other partners, have launched the Urban Water Catalyst Initiative[5] to support urban utility turnarounds and mobilize finance for performance improvements. The Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation approach foresees partnerships between Danish authorities and partner authorities to achieve the SDGs, including capacity building of urban utilities (MFA Denmark, n.d.).

2.3 Relevant analytical reports

This MTR draws on the following analytical reports:

- The GWOPA 2013-2017 strategy evaluation (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2018);
- a global evaluation of the WOPs practice worldwide commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (PEM A/S, 2023);
- a Results-Oriented Monitoring mission (ROM) of the EU-WOP programme carried out in 2022 (EC-INTPA, 2022); and
- a recent UN-Habitat staff survey carried out as part of an internal dialogue series on the reinvention of the organization's global programmes (UN-Habitat, 2023).

5 https://www.urbanwaterci.org/about-uwci

3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

This section covers the purpose and specific objectives for carrying out the MTR, the evaluation stakeholders (beneficiaries) and overall scope of the assignment.

3.1 MTR purpose and objectives

The purpose of the MTR as provided in the TOR (Annex 1) is to (i) assess whether the strategy is on track to achieving its strategic outcomes and objectives by 2024 and to (ii) identify lessons and provide recommendations that inform course correction for the remaining strategy period.

The MTR has six specific **objectives**, which have been re-ordered and grouped, as agreed in the inception report. They are as follows:

i. **Strategy direction:** assess whether strategy continues to be relevant, coherent and providing clear direction to achieving the strategy's objectives, including implementation of previous recommendations (TOR objectives b, d, e);

ii. **Strategy results**: assess progress towards achieving outputs, outcomes and sustainability and related challenges and opportunities (TOR objectives a, b);

iii. **Strategy delivery:** assess adequacy of resource allocation, partnerships, and changes in implementation in response to internal and external challenges (i.e. Covid-19) (TOR objectives c, d, e).

The MTR has a strong focus on learning for course correction. Lessons and recommendations from this MTR (ToR objective f) will be used to shape the remaining implementation period for the strategy until the end of 2024 and help set the direction from 2025 onwards.

3.2 MTR stakeholders (beneficiaries)

The primary internal audience for this mid-term review is the GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management and executive director, and the GWOPA SC and General Assembly who will use the MTR findings to shape the remaining implementation period of the global strategy. The primary external audience for this MTR is the Government of Germany. The MTR findings will flow into the Government's decision making process on future funding.

The secondary audiences for the MTR include current and prospective donors and partners of GWOPA, regional and national WOP platforms and individual member organizations, in particular public utility members of GWOPA. They may use the findings to decide how to engage with the Alliance going forward.

3.3 Scope

The MTR covers the first three years of the GWOPA strategy implementation, from 2020 to 2022, also taking into consideration key activities in early 2023 where relevant. It assesses all of GWOPA's activities and results reporting during the three-year period. The MTR design covers six OECD Development Assistance Criteria (DAC)[6] with a focus on the continued relevance of the strategy direction and the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategy implementation. This means that the achievement of results to date are assessed through primary and secondary data. Primary data collection also focuses 'how' and 'why' questions to bring out lessons for course correction.

6 The criteria are: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

Trucks from small private operator downloading fecal sludge, the EU-WOP project ONEE (Morocco)- ONAS (Office National de l´Assainissement du Senegal), Senegal. © Anne Bousquet

4. MTR APPROACH, METHODOLOGY, PROCESS AND LIMITATIONS

This section explains the approach and methodology used, including stakeholder engagement, outlines the evaluation process and points out any limitations encountered during the process. For a full description of the MTR design, approach and methodology, see Inception Report.

4.1 MTR approach

The MTR is utilization-focused and participatory, using stakeholder engagement activities throughout the review process. Figure 1 depicts the overall approach for this MTR. The review topics are clustered into three areas: (a) strategy direction, assessing its relevance and coherence, (b) strategy results, examining its effectiveness, impact and sustainability and (c) strategy delivery, assessing its efficiency and effectiveness. An overall evaluation matrix was developed during the inception phase, reformulating the evaluation questions in the ToR to specify a refined set of evaluation questions and sub-questions, assessment criteria and data sources (see Annex 3).

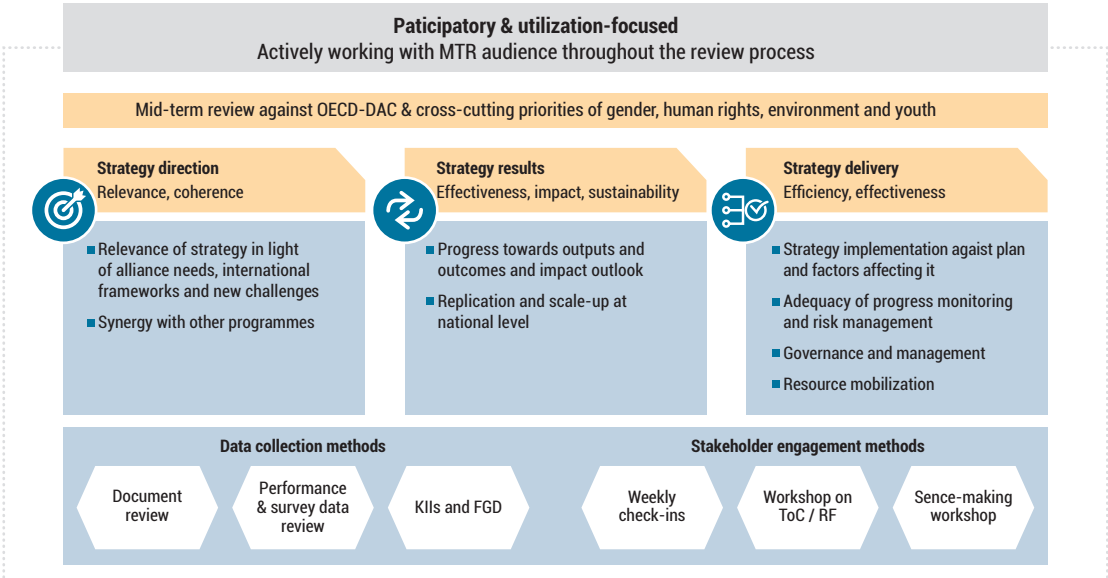
4.2 Methodology

The review uses ***a mixed method approach***, with a strong focus on qualitative methods.

Data collection activities and sources include:

i. **a document and data review** of GWOPA's strategy-related documentation (e.g. strategy annual reports, communication and advocacy outputs, programme documentation, event reports, knowledge products and tools and the website), of GWOPA's monitoring, performance and financial data (e.g. KPIs, WOP database, funding information) and of relevant external sector documentation and analytical reports (e.g. sector literature on international frameworks, analytical reports and documentation on similar initiatives to GWOPA).

Figure 1: MTR approach



ii. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a focus group discussion (FGD):** in total, 37 KIIs were held (see Annex 4 for a list of interviewees); the sampling approach was purposive, with the main focus to capture a diversity of perspectives. Types of interviewees represented GWOPA Secretariat staff and consultants, UN-Habitat management, alliance partners and funders, SC members and platforms and institutional members. One FGD was held with GWOPA Secretariat staff on the topic of the management and governance of the network.

iii. **A participatory workshop with GWOPA Secretariat staff:** the workshop examined the ToC and RF of the current strategy in order to arrive at a common understanding of these key documents and to identify key gaps and areas for improvement.

Data analysis included the following elements:

i. **Coding and descriptive analysis:** the documentation reviewed and interview and FGD data were coded against the assessment criteria in the evaluation matrix; KII and FGD data were coded using a software called Dovetail whilst the document data was coded using MS Office and KPI and funding data was analyzed using MS Excel. A simple descriptive analysis was carried out of all the data from the individual data sources.

ii. **Data synthesis**: the data from the different sources (KII, FGD, document analysis, KPI data analysis, ToC workshop) were then triangulated for individual assessment criteria of the evaluation matrix. Findings against each assessment criterion were synthesized to answer sub-evaluation questions and these were then summarized to answer the evaluation questions.

iii. **Collaborative sense-making and co-creation of recommendations:** during a first remote workshop in May 2023, emerging findings were discussed in a collaborative workshop with the key internal evaluation stakeholders (GWOPA staff and UN-Habitat management) and made sense of using the categories of surprises, themes and outliers. In a second workshop in June 2023, draft conclusions and recommendations were jointly modified to arrive at an actionable and practical set of recommendations for GWOPA to take forward.

Table 2: MTR workplan

MTR Timeline	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23
Inception phase						
Deliverable 1: Submission of inception report						
Data collection phase						
Data analysis and reporting phase						
Deliverable 2: submission of draft MTR report						
Deliverable 3: submission of final MTR report						

4.3 Evaluation process and involvement of stakeholders

The MTR was carried out by an independent evaluator and managed by UN-Habitat's independent evaluation office. Evaluation stakeholders, in particular GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management were involved throughout the evaluation process, including a participatory ToC and RF workshop, consultation via FGD and KII during data collection, and via collaborative sense-making of findings and co-creation of recommendations during the data analysis phase. External evaluation stakeholders also contributed their perspective via KIIs and via their participation in the Evaluation Advisory Group, which reviewed draft MTR deliverables. All draft deliverables were quality assured by the UN-Habitat evaluation office.

The MTR ran from 20th February until the end of July, with the inception phase ending on 6th March, the data collection phase stretching till mid-May and data analysis and reporting from May until July 2023, as shown in Table 2. The full workplan for this MTR can be found in the Inception Report.

4.4 Limitations

The following limitations were encountered during the MTR process:

1. ambition and budget of the evaluation were limited to one external consultant over 45 working days which limited the scope of reviewing a global programme;

2. quality of the data and evidence were inconsistent across the programme, and especially in relating to reporting on results;

3. measuring contribution, let alone attribution, of the programme to tangible results;

4. access to stakeholders and different perspectives and interpretations, in particular from platforms and institutional members; this limitation is related to limitation (1), the budgeted days for this MTR.

Sanitation activity under the EU-WOP programme.
© Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company Limited

Interaction of mentors with the staff of CWASA and visit to the Sheik Russel Water Treatment Plant to better understand current situation in CWASA (November 2019)

5 FINDINGS

This section sets out the MTR findings. The findings are organized by the evaluation questions, sub-questions and evaluation assessment criteria in the evaluation matrix (Annex 3).

5.1 Strategy direction

The findings in this section focus on the evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence (evaluation objective b). Findings respond to two sub-questions related to (i) whether the strategy direction responds to external developments and internal needs**,** and (ii) the extent to which the strategy is implemented in synergy with initiatives that have similar objectives. Under (i), findings also identify any developments in the external environment that require changes to GWOPA's strategy areas (evaluation objective d).

5.1.1 How relevant is the strategy in light of new external global water and sanitation challenges and internal needs?

The GWOPA strategy remains highly relevant to new global challenges and the needs of its members, although the latter are not sufficiently well documented. In terms of external challenges, WOP work areas continue to address traditional water utility challenges such as non-revenue water and other technical operational issues. Stakeholder interviews and data from the global WOPs observatory point to an increased trend to focus on topics related to change management and digitalization in utilities, climate change adaptation and sanitation, which GWOPA actively works on. Trends that require further engagement from GWOPA are WOPs in emergencies and the wider urban planning context.

In terms of international frameworks, GWOPA's strategy aligns well with SDG6 via its strategic objectives. Other relevant international frameworks and UN-Habitat Domains of Change[7] are referenced in the strategy document but are not clearly integrated into its ToC and results framework, in particular the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. There is also room for GWOPA to engage with the UN Development Reform Process, which is a relatively recent development within the global UN system.

When it comes to members' needs, interviews and SC meeting minutes indicate that water utilities are most interested in support with fundraising for WOPs, exposure to other WOP contexts and in the ability to access data for matching mentee and mentor utilities for future WOPs. However, a lack of documented analysis by the GWOPA Secretariat of members' needs means that there is no comprehensive picture of their requirements. Given that the Secretariat has formalized its membership policy only during the current reporting period and is still in the middle of its membership campaign (see also section 5.2.1), acquiring a more comprehensive picture of members' needs could be the next step going forward.

The strategy has responded to evaluation recommendations with a focus on 'governance and management' expressed as a 4th supporting outcome during this strategy period.

1.1a) To what extent have global urban water and sanitation challenges changed over the last 2.5 years and is there a need for updating the strategy direction?

7 The four domains are: (1) 'reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum', (2) 'enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions', (3) 'strengthened climate action and improved urban environment', and (4) 'effective urban crisis prevention and response'. (UN-Habitat, n.d.)

Table 3: Thematic work areas targeted by WOPs between 2019 and 2022

WOP work area	2019	2020	2021	2022
Partnership Management				
Asset Management	4			5
Billing & Collection Efficiency	4	1		9
Business Planning	6		1	3
Catchment Management/ Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM				3
Climate Change Adaptation				6
Customer Relations	2			**12**
Emergency and Risk Management				6
Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Mitigation	5			3
Faecal Sludge Management				
Financial Management				5
Gender Mainstreaming				**10**
Governance & Institutional Relations	4			9
Human Resources/ Organizational Development	5			7
Information & Technology (GIS, IMIS, Smart Systems…)	**7**		1	4
Investment Projects				9
Job Safety & Welfare				
Non-Revenue Water (NRW 1): Commercial Losses Management	**13**	4	**6**	**7**
Non-Revenue Water (NRW 2): Physical losses management			**7**	7
Operation & Maintenance	5		1	2
Policy & Legal Support				
Production Processes & Service Quality & Water Safety (Drinking Water)	**7**	**5**		**15**
Sanitation & Hygiene Services				6
Service in Low-Income Areas	2		1	**12**
Social Inclusion				1
Stakeholder Engagement				
Storm Water Management			1	1
Tariff Setting				
Waste-water Collection & Treatment	5	1	2	4
Water Demand Management/Scarcity Planning				
Water Safety Planning				
*Other	**10**	**6**		
Total WOPs initiated that year	**32**	**11**	**9**	**43**

Source: GWOPA internal database

Traditional WOP themes such as non-revenue water remain high on the agenda in the global WOPs practice. An analysis of existing WOPs by thematic work area from GWOPA's WOPs database between 2019-22 is shown in Table 3, which depicts the total number of WOPs initiated each year at the bottom of each column and the total number of thematic work areas addressed each year in the intermediate rows. An analysis of this database and of stakeholder interviews shows that classic challenges such as 'non-revenue water' and 'water production processes' still remain the most frequently addressed issues by WOPs between 2019 and 2022.

New global trends during this reporting period include non-technical management aspects, support with digital systems, climate change and sanitation. Both WOP data and interviewees point to some new trends, namely an increased interest in supporting emerging aspects of utility management such as support with business and financial planning, governance and institutional relations, customer relations and human resources management, including gender mainstreaming. Interviews and WOP data also referred to an increased interest in support with issues related to digitalization in utilities, including support to ensure they are transparent, safe and support inclusion. Several interviewees highlighted the need to adapt to extreme weather events such as dealing with stormwater or prolonged droughts as an area of increased importance for WOPs. This trend is starting to be picked up in the global practice – seven [8] out of 43 globally recorded WOPs starting in 2022 chose this as a thematic area according to GWOPA records (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2023). According to external stakeholders, engaging with climate change will require a different way of working: with aspects of integrated water resources management coming into the picture, WOPs will need to engage with a wider set of stakeholders such as farmer associations and the wider urban planning process. Several stakeholders, the WOPs database and a recent WOP evaluation (PEM A/S, 2023) point to an increased trend in sanitation WOPs (six new WOPs on this topic in 2022), and stakeholders note GWOPA's engagement in this area as positive.

There is an increased interest in strengthening WOP across the global South and 'triangular' WOPs. Some interviewees point to a need to actively further the implementation of more South-South and 'triangular' WOPs, which refer to WOPs that include mentors from the North and South. GWOPA has been monitoring the regional distribution of mentee-mentor relationships in its latest two annual reports and is actively supporting South-South cooperation and triangular WOPs through recent and ongoing funded programmes (OFID SIP, EU-WOP, UNICEF Ethiopia WOP).

WOPs are formed in times of emergencies. Several stakeholders referred to the implementation of WOPs as a peer-to-peer mechanism in times of need, be it when natural disasters strike (e.g. hurricanes in the Caribbean) or in response to infrastructure damage due to armed conflict (e.g. Ukraine). In 2022, six out of 43 WOPs identified 'emergency and risk management' as a work area (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023b). WOPs in emergencies is an area of growth amongst WOPs in Germany, where half of the mentees supported by the German utility platform are utilities in Ukraine.[9] To date, GWOPA's advocacy and communications work does not have a specific focus on WOPs in emergency situations, in particular in the context of capacity building for disaster prevention and preparedness.

GWOPA's engagement with the urban agenda is perceived as weak. Several internal and external stakeholders found that GWOPA doesn't fully explore the link between WOPs and city-wide planning, particularly given its institutional affiliation with UN-Habitat. They pointed out potential entry points for engagement: The German utility platform is based on the wider concept of 'kommunale Daseinsvorsorge' or 'communal basic services' and hence uses city partnerships to kindle WOPs.[10] Others referred to addressing factors in the enabling environment such as more effective utility regulation, or forging linkages with important decision makers, for example through political city representatives who sit on utility boards. One stakeholder noted that rooting GWOPA more firmly in the urban agenda would help it tell its story more convincingly, by linking up with a wider development topic.

8 Of these, 1 WOP works on storm water management and 6 WOPs on climate change adaptation.

9 Betreiberplattform (utility-platform.de)

10 City-twinning is not a core concept in UN-Habitat, and does not fit naturally with GWOPA's mandate.

1.1b) Do international frameworks provide new foci for GWOPA's strategy direction i.e. the UN-Habitat work programme, UN Reform, COP 27?

The GWOPA strategy aligns well with SDG6. GWOPA's strategy is well aligned with SDG6, the international framework for achieving universal access to water and sanitation by 2030. This ambition is expressed in the strategy's strategic objectives, which are central to its ToC and reported on at impact level against the RF. Since the strategy was formulated, the United Nations (UN) identified the need for concerted, accelerated action to achieve the 2030 agenda (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.) and GWOPA has launched an initiative to support acceleration via at least 100 water and sanitation service providers signing up for WOPs (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.).

Other relevant international frameworks are acknowledged in the strategy. The GWOPA strategy also makes reference to other relevant international frameworks, in particular to UNFCCC, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as central to WOPs. Contrary to SDG6, these frameworks are not inherently integrated into the strategy's ToC and work areas.

The UN-Habitat's Domains of Change are referenced in the strategy but only partially reflected in GWOPA's ToC. Of UN-Habitat's four Domains of Change and related agency-wide outcomes, GWOPA directly contributes to the first domain, and here to the outcome of 'increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility and public space'. Whilst GWOPA actively works in some of the other UN-Habitat Domains of Change and reports on these to UN-Habitat, GWOPA's ToC does not provide an explicit link to them.

There are opportunities for GWOPA to align itself with the UN Development System Reform process. The UN Development System Reform Process involves changes to reposition the UN as a stronger partner to countries in the delivery of the 2030 agenda, inter alia through a strengthened position of the UN-Resident Coordinator in country, and the need of all UN agencies to actively align and coordinate their activities under this post (UN, 2019)[11]. The start of this reform process in 2019/20 coincided with GWOPA's strategy publication and is therefore too recent to have been incorporated at the time. This important UN-reform process provides an opportunity for GWOPA to integrate the implementation of operational WOPs in overall UN country frameworks via enhanced collaboration with UN-Habitat regional and national offices.

1.1c) Do Alliance members' needs and priorities point to areas of strategy adjustment?

GWOPA has a growing and diverse membership, with the majority being public utilities, other water operators and utility associations. GWOPA is in the process of formalizing its membership base, with registrations of individual and institutional members currently underway. A snapshot of GWOPA's institutional membership in May 2023 (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023a) suggests that the alliance's membership base is diverse, with 87 of 129 institutional members, or 67%, being public utilities, water operators or utility associations.[12] The second largest group consists of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations (19), followed by governmental organizations, including regulatory bodies (11).

Members look to GWOPA for support with fundraising; other needs are less clear due to a lack of documented evidence. Anecdotal evidence from interviews with members and steering committee minutes (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2021a) suggests that utility members and their representatives are particularly interested in support with raising funds for WOPs and in GWOPA facilitating links with development banks in different regions to this end. Other needs relate to being able to access information on existing and past WOPs to facilitate the matching of water operators for new WOPs, and to exposure to the WOPs practice worldwide. At present, the GWOPA Secretariat has not yet undertaken a systematic enquiry of members' needs and there is not much documentation available to understand what their needs could be. This may be due to the membership only having been formalized in the current strategy period and the still ongoing membership campaign process. In terms of German utility members' needs, interviews suggest that German utilities struggle to identify viable financial resources for WOPs based on the unique policy context in Germany, which does not allow utilities to use

11 UN development system reform 101 | United to Reform

12 67 public water and sanitation utilities, 7 community water and sanitation operators, 3 private water and sanitation utilities and 10 water and sanitation utility associations.

tariffs for WOPs. In addition, there is a keen interest to benefit from GWOPA's global outreach and advocacy to glean insights that could be applicable in the German policy arena and support with identifying new mentors.

1.1d) To what extent does the strategy respond to previous evaluation recommendations?

GWOPA's current strategy has a strong focus on the effective governance and management of the network, expressed in a supporting outcome area in the 2022-24 strategy. The key recommendations from the previous evaluation (2018) focus on the implementation of reforms to strengthen the alliance's governance and management in response to a governance crisis experienced towards the end of the last strategy period in 2017. The current strategy includes the supporting outcome of 'effective governance and management of GWOPA'. As requested in the ToR, a review of the 2018 evaluation's 11 recommendations and actions taken suggests that all recommendations have been or are in the process of being implemented unless they are not relevant (see also Annex 4 for a full list of recommendations and actions taken). In particular, GWOPA has revised its charter and is in the process of formalizing its membership base (this is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.3).

5.1.2 To what extent is the Strategy implemented in synergy with other programmes of similar objectives?

GWOPA's strategy is in synergy with existing and emerging programmes with similar objectives. It retains a comparative advantage in representing WOPs worldwide, but may not be sufficiently known by all relevant actors. Whilst there is a growing ecosystem of capacity building initiatives for water and sanitation utilities with a peer-to-peer character or element, GWOPA retains a unique mandate in representing the WOPs movement worldwide. The network is valued by its members and partners for (a) its ethos of solidarity, (b) its approach being practical and low-cost and (c) its global convening and advocacy role but it is not clear how well known it is amongst the growing number of actors involved in sector utility capacity building. The GWOPA strategy identifies 'leveraging partnerships' as a means to developing a strong and fruitful solidarity network but the Alliance has not made explicit how it goes about this, evidenced in the absence of a systematic approach on this topic such as a stakeholder analysis. In practice, the Secretariat has forged some positive partnerships such as strong local-global connections in Bonn and good synergies with important partners such as WaterWorX through funded programmes. The high attendance of its global WOP Congresses (see section 5.2.1) also points to strong partnerships in practice.

1.2a) What is the added value of GWOPA compared to other initiatives with similar objectives?

External stakeholders describe GWOPA's added value in being a not-for-profit, solidarity partnership for water and sanitation utilities that facilitates capacity building and knowledge exchange and globally advocates for WOPs. When external stakeholders described GWOPA, the alliance's core mandate as an international not-for-profit solidarity alliance for water and sanitation utilities came across very clearly, as shown in the word cloud in Figure 2. External stakeholders also had a clear understanding of GWOPA's core outcome areas of support to peer-to-peer capacity building, knowledge exchange and global advocacy. The outcome areas of fundraising support for WOPs and of serving its membership featured less often in their descriptions implying that these were areas less visible.

Figure 2: Word cloud based on descriptions of GWOPA by 12 external stakeholders

Source: evaluation interview data

There are indications of an expanding ecosystem of sector capacity building initiatives with a peer-to-peer character or elements thereof, but none of them have a global coordination or convening function similar to GWOPA, which gives it a comparative advantage. Examples of other initiatives given by interviewees and a recent review of WOPs as part of a GIZ-commissioned evaluation (PEM A/S, 2023) indicate a growing number of actors that implement WOPs or capacity building initiatives with WOP elements. Specific examples of other initiatives include the German utility platform set up in 2019, which currently runs as a pilot programme and supports the implementation of 10 WOPs[13], the Dutch-funded WaterWorX Programme, which implements 28 WOPs via a consortium of 10 Dutch utilities,[14] the WB-managed Utility of the Future Programme, which has connecting 'utilities with peers globally to facilitate knowledge exchange and know-how" as one of its core objectives and involves 70 utilities from across 27 countries[15] , the Danish Government's strategic sector cooperation[16] which includes peer-to-peer capacity building activities between Danish water utilities and utilities in the global South (e.g. in Ethiopia and Ghana) and a WOP pilot initiative in Finland launched in 2020[17]. These initiatives all implement WOPs or elements thereof but none of them have a global mandate of advocating for or serving WOPs globally.

There are indications that GWOPA's global WOPs observatory does not paint a comprehensive picture of active WOPs worldwide. Data from GWOPA's global WOPs observatory, displayed in Table 4, has recorded between 60 and 100 active WOPs per year over the last five years. There are indications that these figures underestimate the real numbers of active WOPs worldwide: first, currently active WOPs from three initiatives, the EU-WOP, WaterWorX and the German utility platform, amount to 60 active WOPs in e.g. 2022 / 23. Second, several interviews stated that they were not asked to report or had not reported their WOPs to GWOPA, which the GWOPA Secretariat is aware of; third, a database of current utility capacity strengthening activities in just one country, Ethiopia, based on unofficial records, contained at least 30 capacity strengthening activities that involve mentor and mentee utilities

Table 4: Active WOPs between 2018-2022

Year	Active WOPs
2018	78
2019	97
2020	78
2021	64
2022	63
2023	51

Source: GWOPA internal records

although some through commercial contracts, which can therefore not be classified as a WOP (see Annex 6).

GWOPA occupies a clear niche role as the only UN-body representing peer-to-peer partnerships between public water and sanitation utilities. Internal and external interviewees pointed out the unique position that GWOPA has by virtue of being a UN-based alliance with a clear mandate for peer-to-peer exchanges between public utilities in the sector. GWOPA is seen to give legitimacy and a voice to WOPs in a way that no other organization can, which gives it a strong potential for transformative changes in urban water supply and sanitation services. Interviewees appreciated the following aspects:

- **A solidarity approach:** several interviewees valued GWOPA for its ethos of solidarity fostering mutual support, which was seen as distinct from other forms of utility capacity building. For example, according to one interviewee in Ethiopia, the first WOP diagnostic visit by national mentors to mentees led to an invitation by one of the mentors for an immediate training of mentee utility staff members on operational and financial management, including covering the travel costs of the mentee.

13 Betreiberplattform kommunaler Unternehmen weltweit: https://www.utility-platform.de/

14 WaterWorX (vei.nl)

15 Utility of the Future Program (worldbank.org)

16 https://thetradecouncil.dk/en/services/growth/strategic-sector-cooperation

17 https://gwopa.org/finland-launches-wops-pilot-initiative/

- **Practical and low-cost:** other interviewees liked the fact that WOPs, particularly triangular or South-South partnerships, leverage local knowledge and expertise that are tailored to the local context, e.g. by introducing accounting tools tailored to the skill sets of local staff rather introducing sophisticated digital tools. Because of the non-for-profit approach, WOPs are attractive to donors and to utilities alike because of the lower costs involved compared to other capacity building activities.

- **A convening role:** GWOPA is valued for its strong network with a critical mass of utilities and as a platform for learning and exchange on WOPs across different countries and regions. This role is seen as being distinct from water operator and utility associations. In its convening role, GWOPA is also seen the guardian of the WOP principles in light of a more crowded WOP landscape described above.

- **A global advocacy role**: finally, stakeholders pointed to a clear role in global advocacy for WOPs worldwide, including in mobilizing funding for WOPs. In this context, some stakeholders referred to GWOPA's success in establishing WOPs as an accepted tool for capacity building and to the need to uphold a strategic focus in advocating and raising funds for WOPs worldwide.

In light of the recently acquired EU-WOP funding, some stakeholders expressed a concern however about GWOPA being drawn too much into the operational details of implementing WOPs and emphasized the need for GWOPA to maintain and strengthen its strategic focus.

1.2b) What steps does the strategy spell out and does the Alliance implement to achieve synergy with similar initiatives i.e. German stakeholders?

The strategy aims to leverage partnerships with relevant stakeholders but annual reports indicate that implementation thereof, whilst actively pursued, lacks a strategic approach. The GWOPA strategy intends to leverage partnerships under its third outcome of being a "strong and fruitful solidarity network" (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019). However, GWOPA's strategy and internal documentation does not contain a systematic stakeholder analysis or approach on who to work with and how to achieve synergies in practice. The GWOPA annual reports document frequent and active forging of new partnerships based on arising opportunities, in particular outreach to a new set of stakeholders based in Bonn (GWOPA Secretariat / UN-Habitat, 2020). This is confirmed by GWOPA staff who find that leveraging partnerships is part of the Secretariat's DNA. Yet, who are strategic partners and why and to what end GWOPA engages with them is not clearly articulated.

There are strong local-global connections in Bonn and some good synergies across funded programmes but no strategic synergies beyond that. The Secretariat has forged positive local-global connections with partners in Bonn by collaborating with the City of Bonn and the Bonn Water Network around relevant events. For example, at the fifth GWOPA Congress, the City of Bonn and the Bonn Water Network participated in one of the panel discussions and organized an excursion for congress participants. This collaboration helps GWOPA to anchor its global work locally and strengthens the City of Bonn's global outlook. There is also evidence of GWOPA achieving synergies with partners through funded programmes. For example, the operational EU-WOP programme is complemented by a long-term partnership with WaterWorX, funded via BEWOP 3 and 4, which provide knowledge and exchange services for EU-WOP partners and beyond through the Community of Practice (CoP) platform set up during this strategy period (see also 5.2.1 for further analysis). However, more widely, it remains unclear how GWOPA defines strategic partners, who they are, and strategic areas of collaboration.

GWOPA is well aligned with German sector development cooperation priorities and initiatives, but there is room for improving partnerships with German-based WOP-related initiatives. The German sector portfolio is almost exclusively related to work in urban areas and the German government is currently financing the pilot phase of a national utility platform, which is closely related to the mandate of GWOPA. A second initiative, the Urban Water Catalyst Fund officially launched in March 2023 provides a further entry point for future strategic collaboration. There are also strong synergies related to the New Urban Agenda with GWOPA Secretariat's current base in the UN-city of Bonn, which sees itself as a frontrunner in implementing the 2030 agenda according to interviews. GWOPA is well set up for forging collaboration in practice through a Junior Professional Officer post at the Secretariat who attends meetings of the German Utility Platform and supports information exchange and collaboration.[18]

5.2 Strategy results

The findings in this section focus on the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, prospects for Impact and sustainability (evaluation objective b). Findings respond to two sub-questions related to (i) progress towards achieving objectives and outcomes, and (ii) the likelihood of GWOPA's approach to be maintained and developed in future. The findings in this section also assess the extent to which the strategy is on track for achieving its objectives, outcomes and outputs (evaluation objective a). Findings in 5.2.1 assess the adequacy of partnerships and support to WOPs, which form part of the strategy outcomes (evaluation objective c).

5.2.1 To what extent are the objectives and outcomes of the strategy being achieved?

Overall, GWOPA has shown satisfactory to good progress against its strategic objectives in two out of three of its key outcome areas (being well known and supported, and its knowledge services) but less on the third (the strength of its network). The Secretariat showed good progress on the forth supporting outcome (effective governance). Under outcome 1, 'WOPs are well known, supported, adopted and funded', progress is strongest on the communications side with a clear strategy and a wide range of activities though mixed outreach; GWOPA's advocacy activities are also wide ranging but lack clarity and leadership; the area of mobilizing funding was very successful for GWOPA-managed programmes (i.e. the EU-WOPs programme), but had relatively fewer dedicated activities for the WOPs practice widely despite this potentially representing an important member need. Under outcome 2, on knowledge services and products, GWOPA has continued to conduct and publish research, made progress in global WOPs monitoring by taking steps to make its global observatory accessible to members, although it may not be comprehensive (see section 5.1) and via developing WOPs results monitoring through the Partnership Management Platform (PMP), which experiences some teething problems and lacks documentation explaining the logic behind it. The Secretariat has also developed further guidance and training materials on WOPs, albeit potentially limited outreach. Finally, the network has actively contributed to the implementation and coordination of WOPs, e.g. via improvements to peer-to-peer exchanges via an online CoP platform and well-attended GWOPA biennial WOP Congresses. Outcome area 3, 'GWOPA is a strong and fruitful solidarity network' is least developed conceptually in the strategy and progress is weakest here. Of particular concern is GWOPA's relatively low institutional membership base, which stood at 129 members in May 2023 after a two-year campaign. There is an open question related to how big the membership should grow and which stakeholders need to be targeted in the campaign to strengthen the network. Given that WOP platforms are GWOPA's 'operational arm' according to the Strategy, actual collaboration with regional platforms could be intensified and GWOPA's approach to working with national platforms is not sufficiently developed. The Secretariat made good progress against outcome 4 by successfully revising its Charter and taking steps towards implementing related governance reforms such as planning SC elections and preparing MoUs with platforms. The Secretariat excelled in raising its operational funding base to a total of 14 million USD over the current reporting period.

UN-Habitat's cross-cutting topics of gender, climate change, youth and the HRtWS are generally well mainstreamed in the strategy implementation. The MTR found no negative repercussions as a result of

18 During the MTR this person was on maternity leave and some German stakeholders noticed a drop in communication, which the GWOPA Secretariat suggests is temporary and mitigated by other linkages with the German utility platform.

GWOPA's strategy implementation but some positive side effects for stakeholders involved in WOPs. GWOPA's ToC and RF are not well set up to capture the entirety of GWOPA's work – they are not well aligned and whilst the ToC does not fully unpack the lower level of the causal chain – activities and outputs - the RF has some gaps in measuring the upper levels – intermediate outcomes - in particular those that further GWOPA's understanding of its outreach.

2.1a) To what extent is there evidence of progress against the three core programme outcomes and UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities since the start of the strategy implementation?

Outcome 1: WOPs are well known, supported, adopted and adequately funded.

GWOPA's strategy includes three activity streams of (a) communicating with a wide audience, (b) WOP advocacy and c) mobilizing resources.

Strong performance on communicating with a wide audience: at the start of the strategy period, the GWOPA Secretariat developed a communications strategy which differentiates between 10 different target audiences, specific core messages and communication tools and channels and also contains an initial workplan (GWOPA Secretariat, 2020). GWOPA annual reports (2020-22) document a wide range of activities and targeting of different audiences, including the publication of 3-4 newsletters per year (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023c) with a reach of just under 2,700 subscriptions, the maintenance of a dedicated website (though website views did not consistently increase over the reporting period), representation at multiple relevant international events[19], the (co-) organisation of WOP-specific webinars, podcasts and publications in academic journals. External stakeholders mostly confirmed their awareness of GWOPA's communications. Some pointed to areas for improvement in key communication tools such as improving the accessibility of information on the GWOPA website.

Although there are numerous advocacy activities, there is a lack of a clear and cohesive advocacy plan. GWOPA does not have a dedicated advocacy plan and the annual reports covering the strategy period do not convey clear advocacy goals. Annual reports document a wide range of advocacy activities, which partially overlap with wider communications activities. For example, in 2020, GWOPA reported the representation of WOPs in 30 local, regional or global events (GWOPA Secretariat / UN-Habitat, 2020). Representation at events is complemented by contributions to UN-wide policy briefs on topics relevant to WOPs, and the organisation of dedicated events, with a focus on advocacy in Europe that complements the operational EU-WOP programme, funded by BEWOP 4. From 2020 onwards, the Secretariat organized a series of European WOP advocacy meetings, which reportedly contributed to the launch of the EU-WOP programme and to joint sessions at conferences. In December 2022, the Secretariat organized a European Enabler event as the first in a series of events aiming at improving the enabling environment for WOPs in Europe, which was accompanied by a publication on the topic (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2021b). Feedback from partners indicates the need for more clarity and direction around advocacy going forward: some were not clear about GWOPA's advocacy approach or felt communication around advocacy could be more transparent whilst others expressed a desire for more joined-up and action-oriented advocacy, for example on the EU-enablers dialogue, that others can rally around.

A need for proactive engagement on mobilizing funding for WOP's practice beyond funded programmes implemented by the Secretariat: this aspect of GWOPA's strategy, which is understood to refer to mobilizing funding for the WOPs practice worldwide rather than fundraising for GWOPA-managed programmes, is not further elaborated internally and annual reports suggest fewer activities compared to GWOPA's communications and advocacy work. According to annual reporting, the main dedicated event on the topic during the strategy period was a consultation process with 16 WOP financing organizations (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2021c); the EU-enabler dialogue in 2022 also touches on the topic of WOP financing. Members and partners viewed the financing of WOPs as an important area of support (see also finding 1.1c on members' needs) and some

19 E.g. representation at Conference of the Parties on Climate Change in 2021 and 2022, co-organization of sessions at Stockholm World Water Weeks and World Water Forum, attendance of the High Level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and active participation in preparatory meetings for the UN Water Conference in 2022.

expressed a concern that GWOPA does not sufficiently reach out to important players, in particular financial institutions. Approaching different international financial institutions also featured strongly at the 2021 SC meeting when discussing the strengthening the WOPs practice in the regions (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2021a).

Outcome 2: WOP actors make use of GWOPA (co-) produced knowledge products and services

This outcome area includes activities on (a) WOPs documentation and research, (b) global WOPs monitoring and (c) knowledge and tools for effective WOPs.

Continued documentation and research enabling GWOPA to showcase its thought leadership on WOPs: GWOPA's strategy foresees collaboration on case studies and research that support WOPs and their enabling environment. During the strategy period, annual reports document that GWOPA prepared six case studies under BEWOP 3, which focus on various aspects related to implementing WOPs, that it contributed to the production of a book documenting how utilities responded to Covid-19 and that the Secretariat is currently involved in the process of producing a peer-reviewed special issue on the future of WOPs in collaboration with the International Water Association. The content of GWOPA's knowledge work picks up topical issues and helps GWOPA showcase its thought leadership role on WOPs.

Uneven but steady progress on Global WOPs monitoring to make it more accessible and user-friendly: the strategy aims at enabling GWOPA to lead global monitoring, documentation and analysis of the WOPs practice worldwide, including results monitoring, with the ambition to robustly report on the contribution of WOPs to SDG6. According to interviews with internal stakeholders, the Secretariat advanced this area via two key activities: first, it is in the process of developing a global WOPs observatory with the intention to making this information accessible online to its members so they can use it for WOP matchmaking purposes, and to increase transparency and information of past and present WOPs worldwide. The observatory is in an advanced stage of development but has not yet gone public. Interview data suggests that not all members feed into the global database and that some find it cumbersome to make their WOP data available to the Secretariat (see also section 5.1.2).[20] This is a potential concern as the strength of the WOP observatory depends on the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the underlying data. The second activity related to WOPs monitoring relates to improvements in WOPs results reporting, which GWOPA tackled by developing the PMP, an internal programme monitoring framework which is currently rolled out across all 25 GWOPA-managed operational WOPs. The PMP is a systematic measurement framework that includes self-assessment of capacity development and the quality of partnerships as a step towards achieving longer-term results, assessed via 65 KPIs related to operational and service improvements. The PMP represents a valuable alternative to other sector monitoring frameworks focusing on the financial sustainability when assessing utility capacity building efforts i.e. the utility turnaround framework developed by the World Bank and used by WaterWorX (see also box 2). That said, a review of the documentation available related to the PMP (capacity outcome areas and KPIs) does not convey a clear picture of which capacity building concept the framework is based on and how capacity progress will link to the achievement of KPIs. External stakeholders using the tool reported various teething problems and did not find it user-friendly[21] whilst one partner had concerns that it was too complex to be of practical use for the type of WOPs they implemented.

Box 2:
WaterWorX WOP monitoring frameworks

WaterWorX's WOP monitoring framework is based on similar, if not the same, KPIs but interim steps towards achieving these are measured via monitoring maturity levels of sub-processes related to KPIs. For example, improvements in asset management are subdivided into six working processes with related indicators namely: asset registration production, asset registration distribution, asset performance evaluation, risk of failure analysis, optimizing total cost of ownership and investment planning. This approach is based on the concept of utility benchmarking, developed under the World Bank Utility Turnaround Framework.

20 The data is currently collected via annual questionnaires sent to members and platforms, complemented by online searches by GWOPA. The intention is that, in future, members will fill in the information via the online membership portal.

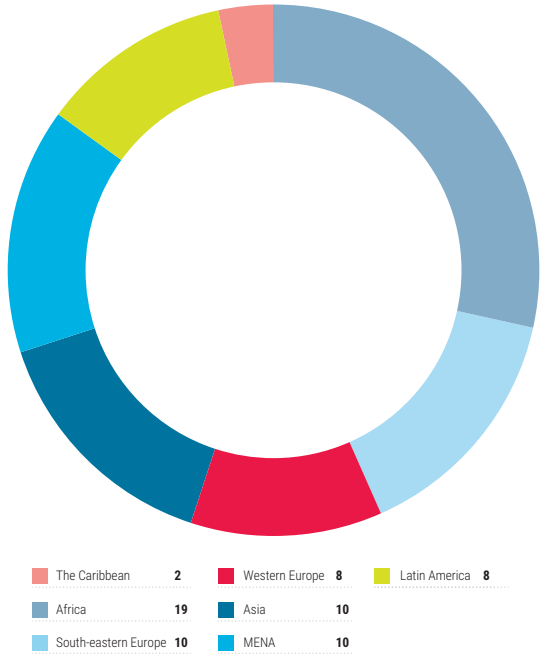
21 The GWOPA Secretariat has received user feedback and is aware of issues with the first iteration of the tool.

Strong progress in setting up peer-to-peer exchange mechanisms and knowledge tools for effective WOPs; but relatively low uptake to date: in this activity area, the strategy aims to produce and disseminate WOP guidance and tools for establishing, implementing and monitoring WOPs in different formats and languages. At the start of the strategy period, activities focused on the production and updating of various 'how-to' materials, namely a 'sustainability improvement roadmap' guidebook (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2019), which sets out the main methodological approach for designing and planning WOPs, complemented by a shorter 'how-to' guide (GWOPA / UN-Habitat & IHE Delft, 2021) and online learning programme. Guidance on implementing WOPs is currently under preparation. In addition to basic WOP guidance, GWOPA also co-produced various operational tools on specific topics with IHE Delft under the BEWOP programme, organised webinars and shared good practice on relevant topics such as such as responding to Covid-19 and to climate change and on under-represented issues related to WOPs, namely gender inclusion or transparency and integrity. GWOPA internal monitoring data reported in its annual reports documents a high level of satisfaction with knowledge services (4.5 out of 5) between 2019 and 2021.

More recently, under BEWOP IV, GWOPA and IHE Delft launched an interactive Community of Practice (CoP), an online workspace that enables WOP peers globally to connect and communicate with each other. The online platform, which is presented in a similar way to Facebook, includes 10 thematic, expert-moderated CoPs with a membership of 78-330 individual users each[22] in addition to closed groups related to operational WOP programmes managed by GWOPA and WaterWorX. Since its launch, the total CoP userbase grew to just over 1,000 members by June 2023 (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023d).

GWOPA also developed and conducted various training courses. In addition to the basic 'how to WOP' course, GWOPA ran a course on water safety planning and is currently developing content on a training related to serving low-income areas. The total outreach of training content is currently low with around 20 participants having benefitted from the water safety planning training. Anecdotal feedback from interviews indicates that, beyond participants of GWOPA-managed operational

Figure 3: Regional representation of GWOPA membership



Source: GWOPA internal data, May 2023

WOP programmes, members tend to use their own WOP guidance materials rather than materials produced by GWOPA. The Alliance's internal monitoring data presented in its annual reports also indicates that reach of knowledge products remains below the target of a yearly increase of 5% additional views per year, which, in itself, is not an ambitious target (see also 5.3.2).

Outcome 3: GWOPA is a strong and fruitful solidarity network.

In this outcome area, there are four activity areas, namely to (a) grow the GWOPA membership, (b) leverage partnerships, (c) work with WOP platforms and programmes and (d) develop thematic hubs.

Despite concerted efforts from the GWOPA Secretariat, there has not been an unexpected growth in institutional membership which remains relatively low: In this work area, GWOPA intended to collaborate with WOP platforms to consolidate and further expand its membership with a focus on public utilities. The

22 The current themes and membership numbers as of June 2023 are: (1) commercial operations – 160 members, (2) enabling environment – 148 members, (3) low income customers – 158 members, (4) water resources resilience and climate change – 117 members, (5) young water professionals – 78 members, (6) water production – 206 members, (7) asset management – 217 members, (8) water distribution – 213 members, (9) sanitation, wastewater and utilities – 330 members, and (10) utility organization and strategy – 118 members.

membership drive was preceded by an update of GWOPA's Charter, which formalized the process of becoming a member and introduced a distinction between individual and institutional membership. The Secretariat developed a membership outreach strategy, which it implemented from mid-2021 onwards ahead of the 4th WOPs Congress and accelerated in 2022 / 23 ahead of the 5th WOPs Congress (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023a). Despite consolidated efforts, the total membership of 129 institutional members in May 2023 remains below internal expectations of welcoming 100 institutional members in the first year, followed by a year-on-year 10% increase set out in the RF. Amongst institutional members, there is a good representation of public utilities (67), community operators (7) and utility associations (10) making up 65% or 84 of 129 members. There is a fair regional representation of members (see figure 3), with the caveat that, to some extent, this may mirror GWOPA's past implementation of operational WOPs through funded programmes and / or the depth of activity of regional platforms. Stakeholder interviews highlighted a lack of clarity around the benefits of becoming a member of GWOPA as an important potential reason for the slow membership growth.

There is a lack of strategy and direction on leveraging partnerships: this work area is not well defined in the 2020-24 Strategy beyond the intention to collaborate with partners to achieve GWOPA's objectives (see also 5.1.1). The Secretariat monitors the number of active partnerships per year but what makes an organization a 'partner' is not clearly spelled out in the Strategy and the addition of 57 members in 2019 and of 29 members in 2021 according to annual reports indicate a focus on quantity over quality. Activities in annual reports refer to the successful forging of collaborations with Bonn-based local and international organizations with positive feedback from these stakeholders who value GWOPA's physical presence in Bonn.

WOPs regional and national platforms and programmes have grown organically but unevenly: the strategy refers to platforms and WOP programmes as the "operational arm of GWOPA" (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019) and foresees the formalization of GWOPA's relationship with them during the strategy period. Given that regional and national platforms have grown organically in response to past active WOP programmes and dependent on regional actors willing and able to manage them, WOP platforms are not equally represented geographically, have taken on different forms of management and also differ in the number of activities they support. Over this strategy period, GWOPA has clarified the definition of a regional platform, specified their representation via observer seats at the SC and specified their role in relation to the network in the updated Charter (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2022). The Secretariat is in the process of rolling out MoUs with individual platforms. Further, the Secretariat organized various exchange sessions with regional platforms on an *adhoc* basis and based on demand. According to internal interviews, the Secretariat is also in the process of supporting the set-up of additional platforms in regions that do not currently have one i.e. in the Middle East and North Africa Region, South East Europe and in the Austral-Asia region.

Compared to regional platforms, GWOPA has been less active in the support to the setting up and management of national WOP platforms. In 2022, GWOPA recorded a total of seven national platforms (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2023). Interviewees working in countries with several active WOPs expressed a desire for further guidance and support from the Secretariat in setting up and providing guidance to national platforms.

GWOPA's WOPs programmes have grown substantially and are progressing well overall, but this aspect is not well enough integrated into the strategy. With regard to WOP programmes, the Strategy is seeking synergies with existing initiatives and, within the UN system, with UN-Habitat with related projects and branches. Whilst GWOPA has developed good synergies with some independent WOP programmes i.e. WaterWorX (see section 5.1.2), its integration within UN-Habitat is less advanced (see section 5.3.3). That said, the Secretariat has acquired a strong portfolio of funded programmes, which contribute to various aspects of the strategy implementation. Overall, this GWOPA's support to operational WOPs is not integrated into the ToC despite it representing approximately 86 percent of GWOPA's funded programmes (EC, OFID and UNICEF Ethiopia, see also table 1) and thus being a key activity area.

Thematic hubs: in this work area, the Strategy intends to leverage the network in order to "increase the pace at which utilities are tackling sustainability challenges" (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2019) Actual activities are under-reported in annual reports but in practice this work area refers to GWOPA's 10 thematic CoPs. Thematic work revolves around expert-moderated online peer-to-peer exchanges, complemented by other knowledge-focused activities such as sessions at WOP congresses, trainings (e.g. on serving low-income areas) and other events.

Outcome 4: GWOPA is efficiently and effectively operated and governed

This outcome area focuses on (a) a review of the Charter to make the network's governance more effective and (b) grow the Alliance's annual budget.

The Charter review was successfully completed; resulting reforms are being implemented. The Secretariat successfully completed a participatory review of its Charter which clarified the network's membership base and how the Secretariat relates to its implementing arms, the platforms. Covid-19 meant that SC meetings were slightly less frequent and remote compared to before the pandemic and slow membership growth over the last 1.5 years led to postponing SC elections, which are planned for mid-2024. The process of developing MoUs with platforms to streamline collaboration is still ongoing. Section 5.3.3 contains more detailed findings related to GWOPA's governance.

GWOPA excelled in growing its funding base. Whilst the Strategy contained ambiguous funding targets (the narrative aimed at an annual budget of 2-2.5 million USD whereas the results framework aimed at a 20% increase in funding over the strategy period), the Secretariat was very effective in increasing its programmatic funding base during the first three years of implementation to a total of 14 million USD with average annual budgets of around 6 million USD. Section 5.3.4 contains more detailed findings related to the Secretariat's resourcing.

There is good incorporation of UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities of gender, climate change, youth and the HRtWS across GWOPA's work areas. The four cross-cutting priorities feature differently in the Strategy – while climate change and the HRtWS are intertwined with GWOPA's overall objectives, as discussed in section 5.1.1, gender and youth have more of a typical 'cross-cutting' characteristic. GWOPA has succeeded in mainstreaming all four priorities into its work over the implementation period, as discussed below.

- **Gender is being mainstreamed despite the lack of a strategy**: Whilst GWOPA does not have a documented approach to gender and inclusion, gender is well represented across all aspects of GWOPA's work. Gender is picked up in its communications activities through webinars (e.g. tools for diagnosing gender, diversity and inclusion in water and sanitation utilities)[23], podcasts featuring women's voices and blogposts on International Women's Day; GWOPA also encourages gender diversity at its global congresses by requiring a diversity of speakers and external stakeholders commented on the high visibility of GWOPA's gender work in interviews.

- **Climate Change is increasingly mainstreamed:** this topic is also well represented in GWOPA's work across communications e.g. a webinar series on the topic, in its advocacy work by actively engaging with the COP process, as a topic in funded programmes and through its internal knowledge work e.g. at global congress sessions and as a moderated thematic CoP.

- **Youth issues are highlighted if not visible in the strategy:** Whilst 'youth' is not specifically mentioned in the Strategy, GWOPA supported this cross-cutting priority in its communications work, e.g. through a recent documentary sharing the stories of young water professionals[24] and in has fostered practical collaboration by providing a separate 'young professional' CoP on its peer-to-peer online collaboration platform.

23 https://gwopa.org/webinar-tools-for-diagnosing-gender-diversity-and-inclusion-in-water-and-sanitation-utilities/

24 EC AV PORTAL (europa.eu)

- **HRtWS is recognized but requires further attention:** this aspect is closely linked to SDG6 in the strategy and implemented by GWOPA's work to support the servicing of low-income customers, via a separate CoP; an online training on the topic is currently under preparation. In light of GWOPA's overall objective to work towards SDG6, this area could receive further attention, including in its operational work. There are opportunities to focus on the implementation of the HRtWS under GWOPA's EC-funded work because this is an area of particular interest to the EU, including the monitoring of HRtWS results.

2.1b) How strong is the internal logic and causal chain of evidence between achieving outputs, outcomes and objectives i.e. improved water supply and sanitation service levels?

GWOPA's ToC does not clearly unpack the causal pathways from activities to achieving impact. GWOPA's ToC (see Annex 2) focuses on higher level outcomes and does not sufficiently unpack how the Secretariat aims to achieve them through a set of activities and outputs. The level of impact is expressed as objectives and as 'mission and vision' and key assumptions underlying the ToC logic are not articulated. Sanitation-related WOPs are missing as a separate pathway to impact and there is currently no reference to the enabling environment for WOPs to be successful.

The ToC could be better rooted within the urban agenda and integrated with UN-Habitat. Thematically, the ToC could be more firmly situated within the wider urban agenda and clearer links could be established with UN-Habitat-wide outcomes expressed as 'Domains of Change' and the agency's cross-cutting priorities.

There is a disconnect between the ToC and the RF. The ToC mostly capture the higher-level outcomes whereas the RF indicators focus on GWOPAs work areas but tend to neglect intermediate results, namely intermediate and longer-term outcomes.

There is potentially a gap in capturing GWOPA's success in being a 'strong and fruitful solidarity network' and its global influence. As a membership-based organization, the reach and vibrancy of the WOP network is key to enabling a strong WOPs practice worldwide. In light of this, GWOPA has currently not developed strong indicators to monitor how well it is doing in supporting its members and the strength of connections between them. It does also currently not have the means to understand its global outreach and influence, which is key to GWOPA to effectively represent the WOPs practice.

The RF data does not provide sufficient supporting evidence to demonstrate the contribution of GWOPA to having impact on SDG6; this is outside GWOPA's direct sphere of influence. The results framework reports impact data collected from WOPs platforms and WOPs implemented via funded programs. The reported impact data via WOPs platforms in the RF is likely to be inaccurate and / or unreliable.[25] Given the fact that GWOPA's direct mandate is to grow and support the WOPs practice worldwide, the contribution of specific WOPs to SDG6 is clearly outside GWOPA's direct influence unless it is directly involved in their implementation via a funded programme. Furthermore, the measuring of the causal chain from a WOP to improved access to water and sanitation services is acknowledged as a difficult undertaking in the sector (see also box 2). In addition to regularly reporting on impact figures, there are alternatives available to GWOPA to demonstrate the contribution of WOPs to SDG6, e.g.

Box 3:
Challenges related to WOPs results reporting

A recent evaluation of WOPs practice worldwide found that past results reporting of WOPs was highly variable (PEM A/S, 2023). The evaluation also found that, where results reporting was reliable, 30-40% of cases showed direct, measurable operational improvements. The evaluation pointed to the importance of the timeframe and nature of the WOP in determining the type and extent of results that can be achieved, quoting evidence that WOPs of a duration beyond three years are able to translate into "operational, financial and service-related performance improvements".

25 The data is currently reported by regional platforms who receive this information from their members. Members are not likely to accurately track changes in service levels. A recent meta review of WOPs' results quoted in a global evaluation of the WOPs practice (PEM A/S, 2023) found that only 30-40% of WOPs were able to demonstrate operational improvements, let alone increasing access to services.

via impact evaluations of funded programmes or via research activity under the Alliance's knowledge work.

2.1c) To what extent is GWOPA contributing to the implementation and improved coordination of WOPs through and beyond funded programmes?

GWOPA's portfolio of operational WOP programmes progresses well and the Secretariat has set up mechanisms to foster communication within them. During the current strategy period, GWOPA implements several operational WOP programmes, which have either been completed (OFID SIP) or are progressing well according to programme documentation and stakeholder feedback (EU-WOP, UNICEF Ethiopia). The online CoP workspace provides a programme-specific space for exchange and collaboration within funded programmes, which is reportedly well used.

GWOPA actively supports collaboration across WOPs beyond funded programmes. A key tool for collaboration between WOP stakeholders beyond funded programmes are the 10 thematic online CoPs, which are moderated by technical experts from within the community and managed by GWOPA. A potential concern here is that this online platform may be biased toward younger stakeholders with a stable internet connection. GWOPA's organization of the biennial WOP Congress also provides a key space for informal exchanges and collaboration across WOP practitioners. The Congress has a strong uptake with over around 500 in-person participants during the 5th Congress in 2023 and over 3,000 online visits during the previous online event in 2021.

2.1d) Are there any other positive or negative repercussions not captured by the strategy results framework?

The evaluation did not uncover any negative repercussions. There is no indication in the reviewed documentation or from interviews of any negative repercussions related to the implementation of GWOPA's 2020-24 strategy.

German stakeholders value GWOPA's presence in Bonn. In terms of positive repercussions, German stakeholders emphasized that GWOPA being located in Germany provides a boost to German-based WOP initiatives in that they feel part of a worldwide movement. For example, one interviewee referred to the closeness of GWOPA as an argument they use to motivate not yet active German utilities to engage in WOPs. GWOPA's presence in Bonn also reinforces the City of Bonn's status as an international hub and fosters local-global connections e.g. via the City's active participation in GWOPA's congresses and GWOPA's participation in event invitations from the City of Bonn.

Mentors value the opportunity to work with a UN-agency and the international exposure. There is also anecdotal evidence that mentors value the ability to engage with a UN-body and the opportunity that mentoring provides to collaborate with utilities around the world. This is confirmed by the findings of a recent evaluation of the global WOP practice that mentor utilities are motivated by contributing to international solidarity and that WOPs contribute to a motivating work environment and increase staff skills (PEM A/S, 2023).

5.2.2 How likely is the GWOPA approach going to be maintained and developed in future?

While here is currently no systematic evidence base to assess the likely sustainability of GWOPA's strategy, there are entry points to indicate the GWOPA approach could be replicated and scaled up in the future. For example, GWOPA does not consistently track the continued performance of mentees or the progression from mentee to mentor. The Secretariat does not systematically engage in supporting the replication of or national scale-up of any of the WOP programmes it manages. That said, there are entry points for furthering and monitoring the likely sustainability of GWOPA's strategy going forward e.g. through already existing data that enables tracking of mentee to mentor progression, by tracking the number of new WOPs that apply GWOPA's principles and through actively supporting the scale-up of its WOP approach via national platforms.

2.2a) To what extent is there evidence that previous mentees continue to perform well and progress to become mentors themselves?

GWOPA currently doesn't consistently monitor the extent to which mentees continue to perform or become mentors. In its funded programmes, GWOPA only reports on mentee results until the end of the project cycle and the Secretariat does not currently monitor the progression from mentee to mentor. This said, there is anecdotal evidence in GWOPA documentation that mentees do progress to become mentors (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2023; GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2021b; GWOPA Secretariat, 2022a), and GWOPA's WOP database contains the necessary information to track this information going forward according to GWOPA staff.

2.2 b) To what extent is there evidence that WOPs been replicated or scaled up at national and local levels?

GWOPA does not currently work towards or collect data to assess national replication and scale-up of WOPs. GWOPA's current portfolio of operational WOP programmes does not explicitly aim at replication or scale-up of WOPs at the national level and the Secretariat does not collect data on this topic. Internal stakeholders are aware of the potential of opportunities for scaling up WOPs at the country level, in particular in Ethiopia. This is evidenced, for example by the GWOPA Secretariat having co-organized a session on this topic with Ethiopian stakeholders at the 5th WOPs Congress.

5.3 Strategy delivery

The findings in this section focus on the evaluation criteria of efficiency and Effectiveness (evaluation objective b). Findings respond to four sub-questions related to (i) strategy implementation and factors affecting it, (ii) the extent to which internal monitoring and risk management enables setting, tracking and adjusting the strategy, (iii) to what extent management and governance arrangements enabling strategy implementation and (iv) GWOPAs progress in mobilizing resources. In section 5.3.1, findings examine how external factors, in particular Covid-19 (evaluation objective e), and internal factors affected strategy implementation. The implementation status of recommendations related to the previous strategy (evaluation objective e) is discussed in section 5.3.3 and adequacy of resources (evaluation objective c) in 5.3.4.

5.3.1 Is the strategy being implemented as planned and what factors affect delivery?

Overall, strategy implementation is progressing as planned and delivery of funded programmes is progressing well, albeit small delays. The Secretariat demonstrated strong resilience against external and internal challenges As reported under 5.2 there is sufficient progress on strategy outcome areas 1 and 2 compared to outcome area 3, related to GWOPA being a strong and fruitful solidarity network which is seen as having weaker progress. Implementation of funded programmes is also on track, if somewhat delayed for some programmes. Internal and external stakeholders were generally happy with GWOPA's overall performance over the current strategy period and external stakeholders provided constructive feedback related to a need for stronger leadership and direction in ongoing collaborations and a concern related to a perceived low visibility of the network amongst utilities globally.

Covid-19 had the most important adverse external influence on programme implementation, causing delay and disruption to GWOPA's funded programmes and general strategy work. Despite some setbacks, the Alliance demonstrated resilience by moving swiftly to online collaboration. The most important internal factor affecting implementation cited by internal and external stakeholders was staffing related to staff turnover, several uncovered maternity leave staff absences and a high reliance on external consultants. Recent revisions to GWOPA's Charter have provided further clarity on the roles and responsibilities of platforms vis-à-vis the GWOPA Secretariat but have not clarified the relationship between national and regional platforms. A process of establishing regional platforms across not yet represented geographies and establishing MoUs is underway but there are no concerted efforts to engage with national platforms. Anecdotal feedback indicates that some platform representatives would welcome clearer and more frequent communication.

3.1.a) How is the strategy implementation progressing?

Strategy implementation is progressing as planned, with communication work being strongest and member mobilization being the weakest area. The findings in section 5.2 show that progress against GWOPA's three outcome areas is advancing in a satisfactory manner in outcome areas 1 and 2, and that outcome area 3, 'GWOPA is a strong and fruitful solidarity network', is lagging behind the other areas, in particular the Secretariat's progress in its membership drive and systematic support to and collaboration with WOP platforms.

Documentation suggests that the implementation of funded programmes is progressing well, albeit somewhat slower than anticipated in some cases. A review of programme documentation related to funded programmes confirms that their implementation is progressing well, with some delays across some programmes. There are small delays in implementation timelines in the EU-WOP programme (EC-INTPA, 2022), initial delays with start-up due to contracting issues in the UNICEF Ethiopia WOP programme according to interviewees, and under BEWOP 3, which originally ran from 2018-21, some deliverables are still being finalized via a no-cost extension. The CWIS programme implementation is currently stalled due to the recruited GWOPA staff member being on maternity leave.

3.1b) What aspects of strategy implementation work well and which do not according to staff, members and partners, and why?

According to staff, strategy implementation has progressed well overall. Staff refer to GWOPA having stabilized its funding base and to the implementation of important governance reforms in response to the previous evaluation in 2018. Staff also highlight the build-up of a strong evidence base showing that WOPs can be an effective mechanism for strengthening water and sanitation operators, accumulated through successive BEWOP-funded research and lessons from other funded programmes. Slow progress in the membership drive is recognized as an area requiring attention. Staff also noted a challenge related to resourcing the Alliance's advocacy work.

GWOPA finds itself at a crossroads, needing to decide how much and how strategically to engage in operational WOPs. The Strategy outlined an ambition to move away from operational WOPs to GWOPA moving fully into a convening, coordinating and catalysing role. With the successful acquisition of the EU-WOP programme in addition to UNICEF Ethiopia and OFID SIP, however, GWOPA instead finds itself in a highly operational role, which also changes the relationship between GWOPA and some of its members and partners from a convener to a funder. In the internal ToC workshop, staff highlighted both, the challenges and the opportunities related to retaining a stake in WOPs implementation: on the one hand, the continued engagement in operational WOPs enables the Secretariat to keep its finger on the pulse and facilitates the dissemination of lessons and good practice. On the other hand, managing operational programmes consumes staff resources and channels the attention away from necessary upstream and strategic work.

Partners and members are generally happy with GWOPA's strategy implementation; but they refer to internal communication and external visibility as two areas for improvement. GWOPA partners and members interviewed for this review were generally happy with the Secretariat's performance in implementing the strategy. Two areas of feedback emerged: first, several partners felt that GWOPA's consultative engagement style, which was generally appreciated, sometimes lacked direction and leadership, for example in the preparation for joint event sessions or in the development of knowledge exchange activities, which was perceived as time-consuming and therefore off-putting in some cases. Similar messages emerged in relation to GWOPA's advocacy work where some stakeholders felt that GWOPA did not provide sufficient drive and direction, in particular related to the European Enabler Dialogue. Others suggested that advocacy messaging and engagement could be more strategic, better anchored in the urban agenda and less technical. Second, some stakeholders were concerned that GWOPA did not have sufficient visibility at the international level; that it was not well known across utilities worldwide, which potentially limits GWOPA's influence.

3.1.c) Which contextual and internal factors affected implementation most and how was strategy implementation adapted in response?

Covid-19 was the most important external factor affecting implementation during the current strategy period. Not surprisingly, the pandemic was the most important external hindrance to GWOPA's strategy implementation, particularly at the start of the implementation period. Travel restrictions led to delays and a certain down-scale of operational WOPs managed by GWOPA, i.e. in the ongoing OFID-SIP programme implementation. One of the WOPs was discontinued while the other WOPs switched from face-to-face exchanges to online meetings. Still, the final programme report found that the WOP model proved resilient overall, particularly because initial diagnostic visits had already taken place (GWOPA / UN Habitat, 2022). Covid-19 also meant that the 4th Congress was postponed from early 2021 to October 2021 and moved online and that SC meetings were postponed, shorter and less interactive than usual due to their online nature. The pandemic also impacted the tracking of WOPs, with the number of new WOPs registered down from previous years (GWOPA Secretariat / UN-Habitat, 2020). On the positive side, Covid-19 prompted the Secretariat to switch to online collaboration and training. The Secretariat used its convening power to proactively engage with the crisis, for example by organizing a series of well-documented regional and global solidarity webinars that highlighted how utilities responded to Covid. These activities were strongly taken up by the network, evidenced by the increase in outreach of GWOPA webinars recorded a compared to its annual targets and numbers reached previously.

Language was sometimes cited as a barrier for engagement. This was felt to be a problem amongst stakeholders engaging with German, Swiss and French-speaking utilities. However, other stakeholders interviewed for the MTR did not find that this was a significant problem.

An internal factor positively affecting implementation is the collaborative nature and approachability of the GWOPA Secretariat team. External stakeholders referred to the GWOPA team as approachable, committed and pleasant to engage with. In particular, local stakeholders in Bonn noted the openness of the team for collaboration upon their office move, despite this process being hampered by the pandemic. The friendly and open nature of the Secretariat was seen to facilitate collaboration. For example, interviewees said they felt that they could pick up the phone and ask staff members for advice if needed.

Both internal and external stakeholders stated staffing issues as the strongest factor negatively affecting implementation. Externally, the GWOPA Secretariat was perceived to have a high staff turnover with some commenting that they 'do not know who GWOPA is anymore' whilst others reported of staff being overstretched and commented on uncovered gaps due to maternity leave. There was also a perception that GWOPA relies strongly on external consultants, which can be disruptive when points of contacts change. A few external stakeholders commented on the predominantly female composition of the team and one stakeholder noted a lack of technical expertise in the team in the 'nitty-gritty' of implementing WOPs. Amongst GWOPA staff and consultants there was a feeling of being overstretched and of being pulled into different directions and into operational work at the detriment of more strategic engagement. There was also a concern that some of GWOPA's backbone work related to global WOPs monitoring was vulnerable because it being mostly shouldered by external consultant positions.

Staffing issues have been addressed by the GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management. Where possible, the GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management responded to staffing shortages through recent hires, including a P5 officer to fill the vacant post of GWOPA's head of office and of a head of programmes, and has succeeded to fully staff the Secretariat as of July 2023. These hires were undertaken within UN rules and regulations which does not provide maternity cover and has lengthy recruitment procedures for permanent positions and other specific management constraints related to positions in funded programmes e.g. the BMGF-funded CWIS staff member. According to the Secretariat, any remaining skills gaps can be addressed via trainings and working with external consultants.

3.1d) How consistently was the strategy implemented across multiple platforms?

The revised Charter provides more clarity on the Secretariat's collaboration with platforms. The recently revised charter clarifies the relationship between the GWOPA Secretariat and WOP platforms and sets out areas of collaboration. Platforms with an active MoU are entitled to an observer seat at the SC. The main areas of collaboration with GWOPA are support the WOPs practice in their geographic areas through advocacy, communications and knowledge work (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2022). The Charter does not currently set out what support the Secretariat provides to platforms, nor does it clarify the inter-relationship between national and regional platforms.

In practice, the collaboration with platforms is currently in flux. The Secretariat is currently launching a process whereby platforms can express an interest in formalizing or setting up a formal relationship with GWOPA via MoUs. This process is accompanied by efforts to identify potential platform hosts in regions that are not yet covered, and interviews suggest that the Secretariat is linking the identification of additional hosts with the mobilization of resources for operational WOPs programmes. The focus is on the regional- or sub-regional level, whilst GWOPA's collaboration with national-level platforms has not yet been fully worked out.

There is mixed feedback from platform representatives on practical collaboration. Anecdotal evidence from interviews with platform members paint a mixed picture of practical collaboration on communications, advocacy and knowledge work. One platform representative reported a good flow of two-way communication between GWOPA and the regional platform and its members while a different representative expressed their frustration about a lack of communication and about the time taken to formalize the relationship via an MoU, implicating that this also hampered the platform's active support to the current membership drive. There is no documentation of regular communication between the Secretariat and platforms to triangulate these points of view but internal stakeholders also expressed a frustration of currently not being able to adequately serve regional platforms as a result of competing priorities.

3.1e) To what extent is there evidence that the strategy implemented gender-sensitive and human rights approaches, and that it considered climate and youth?

See section 5.2.1 on this finding.

5.3.2 To what extent does the internal monitoring and risk management enable setting, tracking and adjusting the achievement of strategy objectives?

GWOPA's ability to track and nimbly adjust strategy objectives is currently limited because of a limited chain of evidence tracked via KPIs and an absence of a formal risk mitigation process. GWOPA's internal monitoring framework does not provide a consistent chain of evidence from outputs to impact. Most of the current KPIs are at the right level of ambition, internally valid, relatively easy to measure and use sound data sources with some areas for improvement. The KPIs do not track UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities and the PMP, whilst having the potential to track some cross-cutting priority areas, only applies to a small number of WOPs and not all indicators are tracked across all of them. The strategy has set out a risk management framework but this has not been regularly reviewed and updated and there is no mechanism for GWOPA to adjust activities swiftly in response to new risks or emerging needs.

3.2a) How well were strategy output and outcome indicators defined and contributions tracked towards achieving objectives?

To assess the quality of RF indicators, the MTR assessed their level of ambition, validity, measurability and reliability. The detailed analysis is captured in Annex 6.

Level of ambition: in some cases strategy targets for specific indicators do not correspond well with Alliance's overall mandate. For example, the yearly target of initiating 26 WOPs appears low compared to the Alliance's overall objective of 'scaling up WOPs' worldwide. This target also reflects GWOPA being at a crossroads where it needs to decide whether to focus more on strategic efforts or operational implementation of WOPs.

Validity[26]: Most indicators reflect the results they refer to well but there is a need to distinguish more clearly between outputs and outcomes in the indicator framework (see also finding 5.2.2). The outcome area 3 'GWOPA is efficiently and effectively managed' refers to the enabling environment / an assumption rather than representing an outward-oriented results area. Indicators related to GWOPAs communications work indicate reach but are less useful for understanding meaningful engagement. This concerns the current metrics related to 'web- and social network engagement' of 'website and social media views', which can be dictated by search engine algorithms and therefore be misleading. The expression of this indicator in terms of percentages instead of total figures can also be misleading as the reader loses track of the total figures on a year-on-year basis.

Measurability: most indicators can be easily measured except for impact level indicators (see also finding 5.2.2) and 'the number of new international, national or local frameworks, policies, laws or mechanisms that support WOPs-type work', which cannot be easily attributed to GWOPA's work.

Reliability: Most of the data can be reliably collected via GWOPA's internal data collection mechanisms, with the exception of impact level data (see also finding 5.2.2) and the level of 'total new funds dedicated to the WOPs practice per year'. These data sources are currently unlikely to yield comprehensive data based on issues found with the current self-reporting by platforms.

3.2b) To what extent are cross-cutting priorities (gender, human rights, climate and youth) monitored?

The integration of UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities in GWOPA's work is not consistently monitored by the GWOPA Secretariat. Whilst GWOPA has shown good progress in incorporating UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities across its work areas (see finding 5.2.1), GWOPA's RF does not monitor related results, nor does it disaggregate results by gender, youth or other relevant categories.

Whilst the PMP can be used to track some cross-cutting priority areas of UN-Habitat, programme monitoring is not set up to track them comprehensively. Under the PMP, GWOPA's results tracking framework for operational WOPs, GWOPA is, in principle, able to track some aspects of cross-cutting priorities via its KPIs. For example, gender can be tracked via the 'number of female employees' (KPI 53) and the 'percentage of female employees in management positions' (KPI 54). Contributions to the HRtWS can be tracked – albeit indirectly – through KPI 14 on estimated increases in the 'coverage of low income area populations' (GWOPA Secretariat, 2023e). However, WOPs are currently able to self-select the KPIs they intend to report on based on the operational areas the WOP covers, which means that there is unlikely to be comprehensive data on this topic.

Box 4:
GWOPA 2020-24 strategy risks

1. Low interest of key actors and obstacles in the institutional frameworks to allow and promote the use of funds for WOPs;
2. International Finance Institutions fail to allocate sufficient funds for WOPs;
3. The products and services are not applied or used
4. Low willingness of relevant organizations to enter into partnerships with GWOPA
5. Lack of collaboration of WOP platforms and programs with GWOPA
6. Lack of secure host country and/ or sufficient financial resources compromise GWOPA's ability to effectively deliver
7. GWOPA's host institution (UN-Habitat) fails to provide adequate administrative and institutional support to GWOPA to operate in an effective and efficient manner
8. GWOPA's governance structure fails to support the Alliance activity.

26 'Validity' refers to whether the indicator is a true reflection of the result

3.2c) To what extent were risks identified, tracked and mitigated?

The GWOPA strategy identifies key risks and mitigation strategies but there is no formal mechanism for updating them and tracking remedial action. GWOPA's 2020-24 strategy sets out a risk management framework and related mitigation measures. The strategy assumes that risks are regularly reviewed by the SC, the Secretariat and UN-Habitat and updated annually, but this has not happened in practice. Reportedly, an internal, non-documented review of risks is carried out periodically.

The key risks identified in the strategy document remain relevant. The risks identified in the strategy document (see Box 4) resonate with the reflections from internal and external stakeholders in interviews and from workshops conducted as part of the review. A key risk that GWOPA needs to address is its continued relevance as a global thought leader of WOPs. Another more practical concern is mitigating the risk related to continued core funding, which is currently dependent on a host government willing to provide this.

5.3.3 To what extent are management and governance arrangements enabling strategy implementation?

GWOPA's management and governance arrangements have been strengthened through the revision of its Charter; but in practice, the governance still needs reinvigorating and the Alliance remains relatively isolated within UN-Habitat The revision of its Charter has put GWOPA in a stronger position for effectively managing the Alliance. However, the SC has not met frequently over this reporting period and a re-election of its members remains outstanding. Despite a thematic good fit with its parent organization, the network is isolated within UN-Habitat with low internal visibility and no substantial active programme-based collaboration at headquarter level or in the field. This notwithstanding, UN-Habitat management and the GWOPA Secretariat recognize the strong potential of better integration.

3.3 a) How effective is the working relationship between UN-Habitat, SC and GWOPA Secretariat? How are challenges addressed?

The clarifications of governance arrangements in the updated Charter and recent recruitments have strengthened the tripartite relationship between the Secretariat, UN-Habitat and the SC. At the start of this implementation period GWOPA carried out a thorough review of its governance arrangements and updated its Charter. This review provided the necessary clarifications to enable constructive working relationships. The filling the longstanding vacancy of the position of GWOPA's head in 2022 also contributed to strengthening the relationship between the Secretariat and UN-Habitat management.

Whilst there continue to be cordial relationships with individual SC members, the SC has not met frequently as a body and re-election of SC members are outstanding. Individual relationships between key SC members and the GWOPA Secretariat remain strong. This notwithstanding, as a body, the SC met only twice and online during the current reporting period, namely in June 2020 and March 2021. Due to the still ongoing membership campaign and the relatively low institutional membership achieved so far (129 members), SC member elections have not yet taken place since the revision of the Charter. There are indications that some SC members are somewhat 'out of touch' with the Secretariat; for example, two members were not aware of the current status of Charter revisions; although this finding needs to be treated with caution because of relatively few interviews having been conducted with SC members as part of the MTR.

3.3b) What is the progress in implementing governance recommendations and what opportunities and challenges do updates to the Charter offer for WOP platforms and members?

GWOPA has duly implemented all recommendations set out in the previous evaluation. The evaluation of GWOPA's 2013-2017 strategy (GWOPA / UN-Habitat, 2018) identified 11 recommendations, all of which were duly implemented unless not relevant any more (see Annex 4 for the full list of recommendations and actions taken). The most substantial recommendation was a participatory revision of GWOPA's Charter (recommendation 6) with the aim to clearly delineate mandates, roles and responsibilities for all parties involved.

Revisions to the Alliance's Charter have increased GWOPA's legitimacy. The updated Charter has made important steps in clarifying the Alliance's membership base, governance arrangements of the network, the roles and responsibilities of platforms and introduced conflict resolution procedures. These revisions have significantly increased the legitimacy of the Alliance's governance. This is an important achievement because a previous lack of clarity contributed to a rift in relations between the Alliance's chair and SC members.

The review process is not yet complete and the re-elections of governance bodies is still outstanding. The revised Charter has been approved by GWOPA's chair and SC but still needs to be adopted by the General Assembly. Due to a slow growth of institutional members entitled to vote at the General Assembly, SC committee elections have not yet taken place, which means that the current committee members have been in place for over five years. SC elections are currently planned for 2024, during the World Urban Forum.

The revised charter provides a solid basis for effectively engaging with platforms and members. The clarification of GWOPA's membership base and of the role that platforms play within the network provides a sound entry point for the Secretariat to engage with its constituents. The Secretariat has started making use of the Charter's provision for 'task forces' to actively engage with platforms and members around specific events. The network governance needs to be consolidated in practice by finalizing MoUs with existing and new regional platforms and by clarifying how to support and bring in national platforms. GWOPA also needs to put further efforts into growing the membership base (see section 5.2.1) so it reaches a critical mass of organizations that represent it around the world.

The nature of the network is determined by its anchoring in a UN-body. The governance of the network is anchored in the UN-system which sets out that GWOPA is ultimately accountable to Member States. This means that decisions are taken by the Alliance's chair, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, with the SC taking on an advisory function. As decision making power remains firmly with UN-Habitat even though GWOPA is a membership-based organization, the GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat have a delicate balancing role to play to ensure members feel their needs are adequately acknowledged. In practice, it will be important that the SC chair is seen to actively engage with and listen to the SC and General Assembly and that the Secretariat has a thorough understanding of members' needs.

3.3c) To what extent does GWOPA use the institutional anchoring in UN-Habitat to achieve its objectives?

GWOPA is fairly isolated and/or lacks profile within UN-Habitat. A recent internal survey related to the reinvention of UN-Habitat's global programmes found that only 55 out of 80 UN-Habitat respondents were aware of the Alliance and only 12 respondents showed an interest in joining future dialogue sessions related to GWOPA (UN-Habitat, 2023). There is a feeling from GWOPA staff that the physical distance from Nairobi contributes to the Alliance's isolation within UN-Habitat and hinders internal communication. There is no regular collaboration between GWOPA and regional or country offices, including in countries where GWOPA actively supports WOPs.

GWOPA's institutional anchoring in the urban services branch is a good thematic fit, but practically, collaboration with other staff in the branch remains limited. Despite monthly coordination meetings between GWOPA and UN-Habitat's WASH section, there are currently no examples of active areas of collaboration or any integration of GWOPA into programmes or the capacity building unit within the branch. This weak anchorage is also shown in the limited integration of the current ToC and RF within the wider UN-Habitat strategy despite a good thematic fit of the WOPs practice within

basic urban services. External stakeholders also perceive GWOPA to be poorly integrated within UN-Habitat despite the thematic fit with the urban agenda and basic urban services.

UN-Habitat management values GWOPA and sees a strong potential for further integration. UN-Habitat management and the GWOPA Secretariat both believe in the potential that GWOPA offers to the agency because of the preponderance of basic water service providers within the urban environment and their strong transformational potential in relation to the SDGs.

5.3.4 How is GWOPA progressing in mobilising resources for its strategy implementation?

GWOPA has made excellent progress in increasing its funding base with over 14 million USD secured during the current reporting period, in addition to the direct funding to the Secretariat from the German Government. The Secretariat has progressed well in bolstering its programmatic funding and is on course to overachieve against its funding targets for the strategy period. As shown in Table 5, just under two thirds of GWOPA's overall funding is tied into the implementation of operational WOP programmes in specific geographic locations, which has the potential to distract attention from important normative work that GWOPA needs to carry out as part of its mandate. GWOPA has achieved some further diversification of its donor base but over three quarters of its funding comes from two sources: the German Government via direct funding of the Secretariat and from the EC, via the operational EU-WOPs programme. This leaves GWOPA potentially vulnerable to any changes in donor priorities. Discussions are underway regarding extending Germany's hosting of GWOPA for another strategy period but the time required for the German Government to confirm its commitments may leave the Alliance exposed to the risk of losing its core funding.

3.4a) What is GWOPA's progress in achieving funding targets, diversification of activities and of its donor base?

The strategy's ambitions related to funding targets and diversification were not clearly set. According to the RF, GWOPA's target to securing its funding base for 2020-24 is to increase the availability of programmatic funding available to the Secretariat by 20% by the end of the reporting period (GWOPA Secretariat, 2022b) whereas the strategy narrative aimed at an average annual operational budget of 2-2.5 million USD. The Secretariat actually worked towards a more ambitious target of a 20% year-on-year increase in programme funding during the strategy period. The RF did not contain a baseline figure but according to GWOPA staff the programmatic funding stood at 400,000 USD in 2018. The strategy does not contain an ambition to diversify GWOPA's donor base.

GWOPA is comfortably reaching and likely to overachieve against its financial strategy targets. According to its financial reports from 2020 and 2021 GWOPA has increased the yearly programmatic funding it manages from just over 1 million USD in 2019 to 6.252 million in 2020, 6.181 million USD in 2021. GWOPA's total external programme funding secured for the current reporting period amounts to over 14 million USD in addition to 5.75 million USD core funding from the German Government (see also Table 5). In addition, at the UN Water Forum in March 2023, the EC verbally announced its intention to dedicate an additional 14 million Euros to the EU-WOP programme from 2024/25 onwards.

Table 5: Total funding sources over strategy period, as of June 2023

Funding sources over strategy period	USD equivalent	% of total
Funded programmes with operational focus	12,473,000	61%
Fund programmes with normative focus	1,918,838	10%
BMZ core funding	5,750,000	29%
Total funding	20,141,838	100%

Source: GWOPA internal programme data and communication with GWOPA staff

Over two thirds of GWOPA's funding for the current strategy period is dedicated to operational WOPs. A high percentage, 61% of GWOPA's total funding (core and programmatic funding) is currently allocated for managing operational WOPs. This compares to 10% dedicated to normative work from funded programmes and 29% of direct Secretariat funding from BMZ for the current strategy period. This high percentage of funding for operational WOPs ties a lot of GWOPA's staff' efforts into the implementation of WOPs. This percentage is likely to be higher in future if the EU-WOP programme is extended /expanded by an additional 14 million Euros.

Despite diversifying its funding base, GWOPA is still overly reliant on few large donors. The current financing model of the Alliance is based on a single donor providing Secretariat funding for GWOPA over a given strategy period. Because GWOPA staff salaries are secured via this funding line, this model puts strong pressure on GWOPA to identify and secure a host well before the next strategy period starts. In addition, GWOPA's funded programming is dominated by one large donor, the European Commission, which accounts for 76% or 11 million USD (9 million Euros) of its total programmatic funding. This means that despite achieving some diversification in its donor base through securing other new donors during this reporting period (BMGF, UNICEF Ethiopia, OFID), GWOPA is still highly reliant on few large donors.

3.4b) What is the progress in securing a host country for next strategy period?

GWOPA is in the process of discussing the continuation of core funding with its current host country, Germany. Discussions are underway with the Government of Germany to extend hosting and core funding into the next strategy phase. Whilst these discussions are progressing well, there is potentially a mismatch in the time window between the ability of the German Government to commit future resources based on budget decisions due to be taken in summer 2024 and the GWOPA Secretariat's requirement to confirm core funding by the end of 2023.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This MTR has reviewed the GWOPA strategy 2020-2024 against three questions – (1) to what extent the strategy direction is still on course for achieving objectives (assessing the evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence), (2) whether the strategy is on track for achieving its planned results (assessing the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, prospects to impact and sustainability) and (3) to what extent the implementation of the strategy hinders or facilitates the achievement of objectives (assessing the evaluation criterion of efficiency). The conclusions highlight GWOPA's performance in implementing its strategy against the evaluation objectives of (a) whether the strategy is on track towards planned results, (b), the strategy's performance against the evaluation criteria, (c) adequacy of resources, partnerships and WOP support, (d) external changes and areas for improvement and (e), the effects of Covid-19 and implementation of recommendations to the previous evaluation report.

Overarching conclusion:

Over the first three years of strategy implementation GWOPA has shown strong resilience and progressed well in strengthening the Alliance's foundation to grow and thrive. At the start of the strategy implementation period, GWOPA was in a relatively fragile position: it needed to implement governance reforms in response to an internal crisis, experienced staff vacancies, including a vacancy of its head, needed to improve its funding base and adjust to a new host government. The GWOPA Secretariat coped extremely well with these challenges and also demonstrated resilience to the then following Covid-19 pandemic. The Secretariat duly put its house in order by carrying out necessary Charter revisions and progressing related governance reforms, further developing its WOPs monitoring tools, substantially increasing its funding base and carrying out a wide range of activities across all its work areas, including the organization of two global WOP Congresses. The combination of these achievements has put GWOPA in a strong position to further grow and strive.

Detailed conclusions

1. Concerning 'relevance', the strategy remains highly relevant to external challenges and members' needs; there is now an opportunity for revisions to make it more outward-oriented and more aligned with UN-Habitat. Given the need for governance reforms, the GWOPA 2020-24 strategy has an inward-looking focus as expressed in a supporting outcome in the ToC and results framework of ensuring that 'GWOPA is effectively and efficiently managed and governed'. An analysis of recent trends in WOPs' work areas, international frameworks, and new developments and challenges in the sector, confirms the continued relevance of the GWOPA strategy (evaluation objective d). The strategy clearly acknowledges the most important topics and international frameworks that are relevant to GWOPA. However, while SDG6 is central in GWOPA's ToC, the New Urban Agenda, UNFCCC and the Sendai Framework for DRR are absent from it. Given GWOPA's institutional closeness to UN-Habitat, there is also room for further aligning GWOPA's strategy with its parent agency's Domains of Change. Members' needs are also not systematically assessed and therefore not fully understood. A clearer explanation in GWOPA's ToC on how it contributes to the New Urban Agenda and other international framework would provide a more outward looking focus and enable the formulation of sharper advocacy and stakeholder engagement goals.

2. In terms of 'coherence', GWOPA occupies a clear niche and is valued by its members. The Alliance now needs to reassert its global thought leadership of WOPs as a key tool to contribute to the SDGs and urban transformation. As a solidarity network for peer-to-peer utility capacity building in the water sector, GWOPA occupies a clear niche role in the sector ecosystem. It's anchoring in the UN system via UN-Habitat gives it a comparative advantage which is valued by its members and partners. Over recent years the ecosystem of actors implementing capacity building activities for utilities has become more crowded and there are concerns from members that GWOPA is not sufficiently known by all

relevant actors to maintain its leadership role. Further, GWOPA's lacks a strategic approach to leveraging its partnerships As international efforts to improve the capacity of water supply and sanitation service providers grow, GWOPA needs to make sure that WOPs are known as a valuable instrument for capacity building. An important priority for GWOPA is therefore to maintain and assert further its thought leadership on WOPs. To do so, GWOPA needs to move outside its comfort zone to engage with all relevant stakeholders in the field of utility capacity building.

3. Assessing 'effectiveness', GWOPA has made good progress against its strategy objectives overall, with stronger performance against the strategic outcomes of WOPs being well known and supported and knowledge services compared to the third outcome of strengthening its network. **It also progressed well against the supporting outcome of effective governance.** GWOPA has been active across most of its work areas during the strategy period; an important focus has been on improving its governance and tools to serve the member base and on acquiring and implementing funded programmes. These priorities have come at the expense of a more outward-oriented, strategic engagement around clear advocacy and engagement goals, including on mobilizing resources for WOPs beyond GWOPA-Secretariat managed programmes. In this context, the benefits of being a member of GWOPA may have not been expressed and communicated clearly enough.

4. In terms of 'partnerships and supporting WOPs' GWOPA has strengthened its foundation to further grow, serve and monitor its membership; it now needs to double its efforts to increase its membership base and continue to put governance reforms into practice. Over this strategy period, a key focus for GWOPA has been to get its house in order by clarifying the network's governance and membership via Charter revisions and overhauling and further developing essential tools to serve the network and monitor the global WOPs practice such as the WOPs observatory, the PMP and the CoP. In so doing, GWOPA also responded comprehensively to all recommendations of the previous strategy evaluation (evaluation objective e). As a result, the Alliance is now in a stronger position to support the WOPs practice. However, the Secretariat's efforts have not resulted in the expected membership growth and SC elections have not yet taken place, the process of signing MoUs with platforms is not yet complete and GWOPA does not have a clear approach to setting up and engaging with national platforms, the 'operational arms' of GWOPA. The Secretariat now needs to double its efforts to grow its institutional membership, and revive governance processes and engagement with the platforms.

5. GWOPA's has engaged widely but not always with a sharp enough agenda. The Alliance's communications and advocacy activities demonstrate that GWOPA has co-organized and engaged in a wide range of events, but with a tendency to focus on quantity over quality. This is partially due to the inward-looking character of the current strategy, coupled with a lack of thematic grounding in the wider urban agenda, which led to a focus on the technical side of implementing WOPs at the expense of upstream engagement with the wider enabling environment for WOPs. GWOPA's internal data indicates that the outreach and uptake of its website and knowledge products remain limited.

6. In terms of 'sustainability', GWOPA is missing opportunities to think through and measure how its approach could be replicated and scaled up. Until now, GWOPA does not track how sustainable its approach is and what the prospects are for scaling up WOPs. Operational programmes focus on the implementation of WOPs in specific geographic areas. Going forward, GWOPA should deliberately explore how it can increase leverage via replication and scale-up at national level via different entry points. It should also put efforts into measuring the likely sustainability of WOPs, replication and scale-up.

7. In delivering the strategy ('efficiency'), the GWOPA Secretariat has been able to respond and adapt to changing circumstances, including Covid-19, and progressed on key outcome areas whilst also coping with and addressing internal challenges. GWOPA has proven high levels of resilience in making progress against strategy outcomes despite external challenges i.e. Covid-19, and internal challenges, mostly related to staffing. Related to Covid-19, the Secretariat not only coped but also took pro-active measures to support its network i.e. through a series of related webinars. The Secretariat is seen as very approachable by external stakeholders, which facilitated collaboration, in particular GWOPA's landing in Bonn, where the Secretariat developed positive local connections from the outset. The Secretariat successfully took remedial measures to overcome staff shortages and is of the opinion that any remaining skills gaps can be filled through upskilling staff or via the use of external consultants.

8. In terms of 'impact outlook', GWOPA's RF does not sufficiently unpack the results chain that is within GWOPA's sphere of influence, which makes it hard to understand whether GWOPA is effective. The Alliance's results framework does not capture some important intermediate outcomes related to GWOPA's work, e.g. it does not measure the strength of the network or steps towards the growth of the WOPs practice worldwide. At the same time, there is an undue ambition to capture the impact of GWOPA's work via regular reporting mechanisms in the RF, which could be better served (or needs to be complemented) under its ongoing knowledge work and via funded programmes. The development of the PMP provides an appropriate and important opportunity for GWOPA to improve WOPs results reporting. Going forward, the documentation around the monitoring framework requires further elaboration and initial teething problems need to be addressed.

9. Concerning 'efficiency', there is a risk that GWOPA is consumed by its operational work to be able to duly focus on strategic engagement. GWOPA's successful fundraising has tilted the Secretariat's portfolio towards operational work, representing 61% of the Secretariat's current resources for this strategy period. Whilst the operational work also provides opportunities for strategic engagement, the Secretariat needs to ensure it continues to free resources for normative engagement in order to grow the WOPs practice more strategically, beyond Secretariat-managed programmes.

10. To further increase efficiency gains, GWOPA needs to be better integrated within UN-Habitat. GWOPA is not well known within UN-Habitat and there is no significant active collaboration between GWOPA and UN-Habitat's programmes or field offices despite potential win-wins. Difficulties with executing internal administrative processes have, at times, slowed the Secretariat's effectiveness. To change this situation, there needs to be a constructive dialogue to overcome any bottlenecks and find ways to actively use existing collaboration mechanisms.

11. Related to resourcing, GWOPA has made excellent progress with fundraising but needs to address the risk of losing core funding and strengthen resources for strategic engagement. Over this strategy period, GWOPA has made great strides in boosting its portfolio and has taken steps towards diversifying its donor base. However, because GWOPA's staff salaries and core activities depend on host government funding, and due to the portfolio of funded programmes being dominated by one donor, the Secretariat remains exposed to a risk of losing its funding base. The Secretariat needs to continue efforts to strengthen core and diversify programme funding.

Interaction of mentors with the staff of CWASA and visit to the Sheik Russel Water Treatment Plant to better understand current situation in CWASA (November 2019)

7 LESSONS LEARNED

This section contains the lessons learned as a results of the MTR.

GWOPA has shown resilience over the implementation of the strategy period. The Secretariat coped well with the challenges that presented themselves over the first three strategy years. When the pandemic struck, the network switched to online collaboration in funded programmes and its communications work, including the organization of webinars to support utilities in coping with Covid-19. Despite the vacancy of a head of GWOPA for almost three years and other staff shortages, the Secretariat carried out important governance reforms, substantially increased its portfolio of funded programmes and developed a set of tools to better serve the network. The Secretariat also embraced the office move by forging a set of positive local-global connections in Bonn.

The focus on the network governance and tools has come at the expense of serving the membership and platforms. GWOPA has put a lot of effort into internal processes such as governance reforms and improving its tools such as the PMP, the CoP and the WOPs observatory. To some extent, these necessary efforts may have come at the expense of serving its current and future members. GWOPA finds it hard to raise institutional membership numbers and some existing members claim not to know any more who GWOPA is.

The successful acquisition of funded programmes may have taken away attention from more upstream, strategic work. Based on successful fundraising, GWOPA has embarked on a large operational WOPs programme, the EU-WOP. Getting the programme up and rolling may have taken the Secretariat's attention away from further developing a strategic focus in response to a changing environment. This will require some recalibration as it is important that the Secretariat remains nimble so that it can effectively engage with a busier field of WOPs actors across the globe.

A 5-year rhythm in change of host country and core funding consumes staff energy and resources. It takes time to settle into a new office and build relationships with a new host in addition to also starting a new strategy implementation period. In the current 5-year rhythm of changing host country, GWOPA needs to start the process of finding a new host well before the middle of the implementation period in order to avoid the risk of not retaining its core funding. The related uncertainty is potentially unsettling for staff and takes the attention away from engaging with content.

The administrative processes involved in being part of a UN-organization have, at times, affected the Secretariat's ability to respond to internal changes and slowed basic processes. The Secretariat's ability to implement UN rules related to recruitment and to administrative processes such as processing contracts have at times affected the Secretariat's ability to carry out its work and may have contributed to overstretching. Whilst these rules cannot be changed, there may be more effective ways of engaging with them that the Secretariat and UN-Habitat management could jointly explore.

Khulna Diagnostic Team meetings and group discussions with KWASA staff and project consultants including field visit (December 2019)

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Review and extend the 2020-24 strategy to 2025; reconstruct the ToC to ensure they become more outward looking and closely aligned with the SDG Acceleration agenda, UN-Habitat's Domains of Change, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant international frameworks.

How:

- Reconstruct the ToC to align it with GWOPA's commitments to SDG Acceleration, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant international frameworks and with UN-Habitat's Domains of Change
- Elaborate internal causal pathways in the ToC from activities to outputs, outcomes and impact, taking into account all key activity areas and their potential outcomes
- Revise the results framework to align it with the reconstructed ToC, with a focus on more outcome-focused results which are in its sphere of control and add indicators to measure sustainability, replication and scale up
- Revise strategy work areas based on the reconstructed ToC and revised RF and extend the timeframe to 2025 to align with the UN-Habitat strategy

Who:

- GWOPA Secretariat, with support from UN-Habitat management

Timeframe : within 3 months

Recommendation 2: Build on GWOPA's convening power as a UN-hosted network to extend its international reach and assert its thought leadership on the value of the WOPs practice as an instrument for water and sanitation operator capacity building worldwide.

How:

- Carry out a landscape analysis of utility capacity building initiatives and actors
- Develop advocacy and stakeholder engagement plans
- Use advocacy and stakeholder engagement plans to build on already existing partnerships and forge strategic engagement with other relevant actors
- Continue to engage in ongoing advocacy activities i.e. around the 'enabler dialogue' by exercising a strong leadership role

Who:

- GWOPA Secretariat, SC members, with support from institutional and individual members

Timeframe: within 12 months

Recommendation 3: Redouble efforts in growing and servicing the membership.

How:

- Carry out an assessment / survey of members' needs
- Improve the communication around the benefits of becoming a GWOPA member (e.g. use of GWOPA tools and database, networking opportunities, exposure)
- Identify gaps in institutional membership base and update membership outreach plan
- Actively work with SC members and WOPs platforms to implement the outreach plan (e.g. via an SC working group on the topic)

Who: GWOPA Secretariat, SC and WOPs platforms

Timeframe: within 12 months

Recommendation 4: Raise the knowledge, communication and advocacy profile of GWOPA with a view to increase visibility and support scaling.

How:

- Building on the revised strategic plan (recommendation 1), revise / develop communications and advocacy goals and strategies to increase visibility and support scaling
- On the knowledge services side, develop typology of WOPs, continue efforts to strengthen the evidence base of WOP effectiveness and further tailor WOPs tools
- Elaborate the rationale for and how PMP works as an effective tool for WOPs results reporting and address current teething problems
- Actively monitor the quality and outreach of related events and products

Who: GWOPA Secretariat and Communications Unit at UN-Habitat

Timeframe: within 6 months

Recommendation 5: Operationalize the SDG Acceleration commitment to grow the WOPs practice by 2030

How:

- Develop a strategy for WOP replication and scale-up; this could include
- Developing a strategy for setting up and supporting national WOP's platforms, as part of this, identify conducive national contexts for WOPs platforms
- Collaborating with UN-Habitat regional and field offices to extend GWOPA's local footprint
- Strengthening strategic partnerships to upscale and raise funds for the WOPs practice; potential entry points are German stakeholders, USAID, UNICEF[27], and the International Development Banks
- Engaging with the agenda around professionalizing small water and sanitation operators

Who: GWOPA Secretariat, WOPs platform representatives

Timeframe: within 6 months

Recommendation 6: Leverage the urban agenda to sharpen GWOPA's strategic engagement

How:

- Incorporate sanitation, climate change, resilience, and aspects of the 'enabling environment' to strengthen links to sustainable urban development in ToC and strategy narrative
- Unpack links between WOPs and the wider urban transformation in the strategy narrative
- Further develop ways to link WOPs support to wider urban planning processes in operational programmes

Who: GWOPA Secretariat

Timeframe: within 12 months

Recommendation 7: Where necessary, fill skills gaps in the GWOPA Secretariat in response to strategy needs

How:

- Identify skills' gaps amongst GWOPA Secretariat staff against the revised strategy
- Identify ways of filling these gaps, either through upskilling staff or seeking external resources to fill gaps

27 At the country level, UNICEF needs to match hardware investments from some donors with capacity development efforts and WOPs offer a low-cost and local way of implementing capacity building.

Who: GWOPA Secretariat, with support of UN-Habitat management

Timeframe: within 3 months

Recommendation 8: Reinvigorate the practical governance of GWOPA

How:

- Hold SC elections as planned in 2024
- Re-instate yearly SC meetings, ideally in person; consider introducing intermediary virtual SC meetings
- Finalize MoUs with regional platforms and ensure regular engagement / consistent contact

Who: GWOPA Secretariat and WOP platforms, with the support of UN-Habitat management

Timeframe: within 12 months

Recommendation 9: Strengthen internal ties between GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat

How:

- Strengthen ties with UN-Habitat field offices via UN-Reform process
- Open up country-level dialogues involving UN-Habitat offices around existing WOPs
- Make use of existing collaboration mechanisms within the division and within UN-Habitat more widely e.g. the co-creation of projects during the project design phase or in-house agreements for collaboration on ongoing programmes
- Through constructive dialogue, identify internal efficiency improvements in carrying out administrative processes
- Ensure GWOPA staff have a full understanding of UN-Habitat's core processes

Who: GWOPA Secretariat, Urban Basic Services Branch, Urban Planning, regional and field offices, Human Resources

Timeframe: within 12 months

Recommendation 10: Secure ongoing Secretariat and programme funding

How:

- Continue positive engagement with host government to extend the existing funding agreement
- Continue efforts to diversify programmatic funding with a focus on bringing in resources for normative work related to the revised strategy; as part of this, consider pitching for different elements of support to potential donors
- Consider extending the host period beyond 5 years to provide more stability to the Secretariat

Who: GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat management

Timeframe: within 12 months

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ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS ALLIANCE (GWOPA) STRATEGY, 2020-2024

1. Introduction

These Terms of Reference (TOR) are for the mid-term evaluation of the Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) Strategy 2020[28]-2024. Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) are peer-support exchanges between two or more water operators, carried out on a not-for-profit basis, with the objective of strengthening their capacity, enhancing their performance and enabling them to provide a better service to more people, especially the poor The strategy is implemented through the Contribution Agreement between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and UN-Habitat.

The strategy sets out the vision, mission, strategic objectives, and expected outcomes. It also outlines key organization and governance structures, the funding framework, potential risks and mitigation measures, as well as the monitoring and evaluation framework to follow up on inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes specified in the strategy.

The TOR outline the evaluation background and context, purpose and objectives, scope and focus, evaluation questions, stakeholder involvement, evaluation approach and methodology, accountability and responsibilities, qualifications of the consultant to conduct the evaluation, provisional time schedule, as well as expected deliverables and resources.

2. Background and Context

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

Pursuant to its various mandates, UN-Habitat works on two levels to achieve its goals, effectiveness, and impact. At the operational level, it undertakes technical cooperation projects. At the normative level, it seeks to influence governments and non-governmental actors in formulating, adopting, implementing, and enforcing policies, norms, and standards conducive to sustainable human settlements and sustainable urbanization. Its work is guided by successive strategic plans and work programmes.

The current UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 provides four Domains of Change (subprograms) as summarized below:

i. Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across urban-rural continuum;

ii. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;

iii. Strengthening climate action and improved urban environment; and

iv. Effective urban crisis prevention and response

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) is an initiative of UN-Habitat and contributes to the agency's work principally through domain of Change One. In 2006, the Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, requested UN-Habitat to lead the development, and host the secretariat of the Global Water Operators Partnerships' Alliance. The SG's decision was a

28 The five-year Strategy was launched in 2019, however as the Hosting Agreement with BMZ only took effect in 2020, the GWOPA International Steering Committee approved in 2021 a change to the strategy duration until 2024, to correspond with the timeframe of the current BMZ Contribution Agreement for the hosting of the GWOPA Secretariat in Bonn.

follow-up to the drafting of the Hashimoto Action Plan by the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB). The main UNSGAB's Hashimoto Action Plan I objective was to strengthen local water services through Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) while ensuring that WOPs are recognized as an important means of achieving internationally agreed targets on water and sanitation. This objective was adopted by UN-Habitat as its own and the agency agreed to build the Global WOPs Alliance. GWOPA itself is a network of partners committed to helping water operators help one another to improve their collective capacity to provide access to water and sanitation services for all.

The first GWOPA Strategy, for the 2013-2017 period, framed GWOPA work during the period of hosting in the City of Barcelona. The mid-term and final evaluations of the 2013-2017 informed the development of 2020-2024 strategy and confirmed that WOPs are effective and GWOPA is instrumental in pushing their agenda and provided lessons for the development of the current strategy.

The GWOPA 2020-2024 Strategy was developed with inputs from GWOPA network organizations and lessons learned from its previous strategy evaluation. It is aligned with the new UN-Habitat strategic plan 2020-2023 which was being drafted at the same time. It situates WOPs as a mechanism for localizing the SDGs and positions UN-Habitat's GWOPA Secretariat as the global convener, catalyzer, advocate, and knowledge broker for WOPs within its growing global alliance.

Its Vision is that service providers, connected in a solidarity-based network, are sharing and helping one another improve services for all, to achieve local and global objectives. Its mission is to work as an effective global alliance to inspire, mobilize support for, catalyze, guide, monitor, and enable Water Operators' Partnerships that improve lives.

2.1 Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

The overall goal of the GWOPA programme is to promote and support effective WOPs to strengthen water and sanitation utilities. GWOPA's strategy has two strategic objectives: 1) that WOPs are scaled up and 2) that WOPs are contributing to water and sanitation service providers' improved capacity and performance, and local realization of the SDGs, to the benefit of all, particularly the poor.

The Strategy has the following four specified Outcomes:

v. WOPs are well known, supported, adopted, and adequately funded

vi. WOP actors make use of the knowledge products and services produced or co-produced by GWOPA

vii. GWOPA is a strong and fruitful water solidarity network.

viii. GWOPA is efficiently and effectively managed and governed

The achievement of the two strategic objectives and four outcomes are measured and monitored by indicators of achievement provided in the Results framework of the Strategy starting on page 51.

2.2 Organization and Governance

UN-Habitat founded the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) in 2009 and established a global governance structure to guide its operations - being an alliance of water operators, UN Agencies, water associations, development partners, labour and civil society bodies, International Financial Institutions and the private sector.

The GWOPA Secretariat coordinates the work of the Alliance and develops and implements the work of the strategy. The Secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany where it is hosted by the Government of Germany within the UN Bonn Campus. The Secretariat is anchored with the Urban Basic Services Section (UBSS) of UN-Habitat, the largest section of the Urban Practices Branch under the Global Solutions Division.

GWOPA's Governance structure and management are defined by the GWOPA Charter, first established at its first Steering Committee in 2009 to set the regulatory framework for GWOPA governance and operations. From 2020-2021, with an eye to fine-tuning for effectiveness while retaining its foundational principles, the Charter underwent a Governance review resulting in a new draft Charter which will be presented for adoption at the next GWOPA General Assembly in May 2023.

Currently, the International Steering Committee provides strategic direction to the Alliance and its Secretariat and approves the annual work plans presented by the Secretariat at the Steering Committee's annual meetings. The Steering Committee membership is drawn from Alliance constituencies within GWOPA's broader Alliance Membership. Elections for the Steering Committee, the GWOPA chair, and GWOPA task forces and committees occur during GWOPA's General Assemblies.

2.3 Alignment of the Strategy with the SDGs and New Urban Agenda

The water and sanitation utilities have a critical role in achieving many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local level. In small towns and big cities, water and sanitation operators provide services that are fundamental to inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities (SDG11). The strategy contributes to SDG 6 of **Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**. Other SDGs are interrelated as water and sanitation services relate to poverty, food production and security, health, gender equality, energy and economic growth, etc. The SDG 6 targets 6.1-6.4, 6.a and 6.b are those of most direct relevance to water and wastewater operators.

The New Urban Agenda calls "to equip public water and sanitation utilities with the capacity to implement sustainable water management systems" (paragraph 120) and recognizes the need for sustainable and inclusive water and sanitation services in its vision of cities and communities where "no one is left behind." The NUA also emphasizes peer-to-peer capacity development and partnerships.

2.4 Funding and Budget

The GWOPA 2020-2024 Strategy is core funded by the Federal Government of Germany and is augmented by project funding from the Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC), the European Union, the Governments of Germany (BMZ), the Netherlands (DGIS, via IHE-Delft), Spain (AECID), and UNICEF.

The Government of Germany (BMZ, together with the Federal Foreign Office, FFO) took over hosting from the previous host country, Spain, at the conclusion of a competitive bidding process to host the Secretariat for the 2020-2024 Strategy Implementation period. The BMZ agreement provides GWOPA with a total funding of 5.75 million Euros for a five year period. 1.15 M Euros are provided annually. The funding is for GWOPA staff and project office operations; Global WOPs congress; GWOPA specific programatic activities and common services. The agreement with FFO covers most office expenses and the cost of installation in Germany. Prior to and since acquiring the German core support, the Secretariat has mobilized significant additional project funds from a diversity of sources to allow an intensified strategy implementation.

2.5 The WOPs portfolio

GWOPA maintains a global WOP database which documents over 430 WOPs that have taken place within the WOP movement, managed or funded by a range of partner institutions. Currently, GWOPA is managing the largest global WOPs programme to date, the EU WOP Programme, implemented with funding from the European Union in support of 22 WOPs and involving over 50 partnres. GWOPA works in collaboration with all WOP programmes and platforms globally, including major initiatives such as the WaterWorX funded by the Government of the Netherlands, and the German Utility Platform supported by a German consortium, as well as regional programs, such as in Latin American and the Caribbean and Asia, supported by their respective regional development banks.

2.6 Previous Evaluations of the Strategy and GWOPA

GWOPA was evaluated twice with reference to its 2013-2017 strategy; first, a Mid-Term Review in 2016, followed by a final GWOPA 2013-2017 Evaluation in 2018. Overall, the evaluation found that GWOPA has succeeded in developing a normative framework that enables water and sanitation operators to improve service delivery with relatively limited funding and by applying a bottom-up process. And that given the ever-increasing demand for water and sanitation services in most urban centres in low and middle income countries, combined with the need for rehabilitation and expansion of the existing systems, there was a need for substantial capital investment. The evaluation gave 11 recommendations of this evaluation should assess the status of implementation of those recommendations.

In addition, in 2021, two reviews: The Early ROM Review of the GWOPA-managed by EU WOP programme assessed the first year of implementation in the 4-year long WOP project. Also a GIZ-commissioned meta-review of WOP projects and results involved an element on GWOPA operations (report pending completion).

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The Mid-term evaluation is mandated by the Contribution Agreement with the Government of Germany and the UN-Habitat Programme Management and Evaluation Policy.

The evaluation is intended to: (i) provide evidence on whether the project is on track towards achieving the strategies outcomes and objectives; (ii) enhance learning, and identify constraints and challenges, which may need corrective measures and improvement. The findings, lessons learned and recommendations from this evaluation will inform implementation for the remaining period of the GWOPA strategy.

Specific objectives of the evaluation are:

a) Assess if the implementation of the strategy is on track of achieving of its planned results at the output and outcome levels;

b) Assess the performance in terms of the relevance of results, efficiency, effectiveness, impact outlook as well as sustainability of the approach.

c) Assess the adequacy of resources, partnerships, and WOPs supported by GWOPA and how these arrangements have benefited the water operators and contributed to development results such as increased access to water supply and sanitation;

d) Assess what has changed, areas needing improvement, and elements needing reinforcement in the second half of the strategy implementation; and bring forward challenges and opportunities for GWOPA.

e) Assess the effects of COVID-19 on various activities of GWOPA and also assess the implementation status of the recommendations given in the evaluation report of the GWOPA strategy 2013-2017.

f) Identify lessons and provide recommendations to improve performance of the strategy for the remaining period of the strategy.

The key audiences for this evaluation are the Government of Germany, other GWOPA donors, UN-Habitat Management, the GWOPA Secretariat, the GWOPA General Assembly and International Steering Committee and GWOPA Alliance Implementing partners.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will focus on the first 2.5 years of the GWOPA 2020-2024 Strategy implementation period. It will cover both the strategy and the operational level with a view to drawing lessons to inform further implementation. In terms of strategy, the evaluation will review the coherence and clarity of the strategic framework and its usefulness in guiding GWOPA efforts as well as allocation and implementation decisions. At operational level, modalities and implementation performance of partners will be assessed, results analyzed and documented.

5. Evaluation Questions and Criteria

The overall evaluation questions to be answered by this evaluation will be structured under the basic five evaluation criteria as follows:

Relevance

1. How relevant is the Strategy in light of the prevailing global urban water and sanitation challenges and related international frameworks for addressing them, including the Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, and Our Common Agenda, among others?

2. How could its relevance be improved?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent are the objectives and outcomes of the Strategy are being achieved?

2. How effectively is GWOPA delivering on the strategy priorities and contributing to promoting the implementation of, and better coordination between, WOPs?

3. this for assessing impact. Effectiveness is on what is planned. Has the implementation of the Strategy prioritized gender-sensitive and human rights approaches as well as considered climate and youth which are cross-cutting issues of UN-Habitat?

4. How do expected and planned results compare against results delivered?

5. How could its effectiveness be increased?

Efficiency

1. Was the formulation of the strategy based on a sound understanding of the alliance needs and priorities, were risks identified, assessed and strategies for monitoring and reporting developed?

2. Were resources mobilized and services designed to effectively respond to the objectives and priorities of the strategy?

3. Have the management and governance arrangements delivered as expected?

4. To what extent have delays and other changes during implementation affected cost-effectiveness?

Impact Outlook

1. To what extent has the GWOPA strategy attained development results for improved water supply and sanitation in the short, medium and long-term of the targeted beneficiaries and GWOPA partners?

Sustainability of Approach

1. To what extent has/will the GWOPA strategy through implementation of activities engaged the participation of beneficiaries in design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting?

2. To what extent has/will the GWOPA strategic approach be replicated or scaled up at national or local levels?

3. To what extent has/will the GWOPA strategic approach and implementation of activities foster new innovative partnerships?

Coherence

1. Is the strategy coherent and implemented in synergy with other programmes of similar objectives?

It is acknowledged that causal links at the Strategy's impact level may be difficult to establish. The evaluation should take these factors into account but should nevertheless document outcomes/ effects and the wider impact of the Strategy.

6. Stakeholders' Involvement

As the evaluation will be forward-looking and feed into the formulation of the new strategy, stakeholder involvement is an essential part of the evaluation. However, the involvement will not compromise the independence of the evaluation. This evaluation will be expected to be participatory, involving internal and external key stakeholders. This includes but is not limited to GWOPA Secretariat and UN-Habitat key sections and relevant partners, members of GWOPA Knowledge centers, the Government of Germany and other development partners, and beneficiaries of GWOPA activities.

7. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in four consecutive phases: an inception phase; a data collection phase including field visits; a data analysis and drafting phase; and evaluation findings presentation and dissemination phase.

A variety of methods will be applied:

- Desk review of relevant strategy documents, including but not limited to the GWOPA Strategies, annual reports, and evaluations.
- Interviews with various stakeholders, including relevant UN-Habitat staff, GWOPA Steering Committee Members, GWOPA Members, donors, and other relevant key UN-Habitat partners;
- Surveys to beneficiaries;
- Group meetings for consultations and validation of findings;
- Analysis and synthesis of information should be presented logically to give an overall assessment of progress and impacts in the implementation of the GWOPA Strategy 2020-2024.

8. Accountability and Responsibilities

The independent Evaluation Unit of UN-Habitat will supervise and manage the evaluation process, including planning, providing technical support, follow-up, and dissemination of evaluation products. The GWOPA Secretariat, supported by the Urban Basic Services Section (UBSS), the Urban Practices branch, and Global Division will provide the information and documentation required and coordinate with the relevant evaluation stakeholders.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established to oversee the evaluation process. Members of the ERG are proposed to include representatives from the Office of the Executive Director (OED), Programme Division, Management, and Operations Division, UBSB, GWOPA Secretariat, and GWOPA Steering Committee, and the donor, the Government of Germany. The Reference Group will be responsible for reviewing and endorsing TOR and the main evaluation deliverables, including the inception report, drafts, and final evaluation report with the intent of ensuring quality, credibility, and utility of the evaluation.

The evaluation consultant will be responsible for conducting the evaluation based on these TOR and applying UNEG norms and Standards. He/she will prepare main evaluation deliverables (inception report, draft reports and final evaluation report).

Other key stakeholders may be consulted at strategic points in time of the evaluation either through mail correspondence or through participation in meeting(s).

9. Qualifications of the Evaluation Consultant

The evaluation will be conducted by one independent external evaluation consultant and build on prior evaluations of GWOPA and its work. The consultant must have proven and extensive experience in evaluating policy and strategies at international level. S/he should have proven capacity and strong methodological and analytical skills and solid knowledge of water and sanitation, partnerships, and global networks.

In addition, the consultant should have:

a) Extensive evaluation experience with the ability to present credible findings derived from evidence and put conclusions and recommendations supported by findings.

b) Specific knowledge and understanding of UN-Habitat and its mandate.

c) 10-15 years of programme management experience in results-based management working with development project/ programmes.

d) Advanced academic degree in political sciences, social economy, governance, planning, similar relevant fields.

e) Experience in water and sanitation in developing countries is desirable.

f) Fluent in English.

10. Provisional Time Schedule

The evaluation will be conducted during the period of Oct 2022 to Jan 2023. The table below indicates timelines and expected deliverables for the evaluation process.

Item	Description	Timeframe
1	Recruitment of the evaluation consultant	Sep- Oct 2022
2	Inception phase, including formal document review, development of inception report	Oct-Nov 2022
3	Data collection phase: Collection of data through interviews, projects analysis, surveys, etc.	Nov-Dec 2022
4	Report writing, review and submission	Dec- Jan 2023

11. Key Deliverables

The three primary deliverables for this mid-term evaluation are:

i. ***Inception Report*** with evaluation work plan. Once approved, it will become the key management document for the evaluation, guiding the evaluation delivery in accordance with UN-Habitat's expectations.

ii. ***Draft Mid-term Evaluation Report***. The consultant will prepare an evaluation report draft to be reviewed and endorsed by the Evaluation Unit, and the Evaluation Reference Group. The draft should follow UN-Habitat's standard format for evaluation reports (to be provided).

iii. ***Final Mid-term Evaluation Report*** should not exceed 40 pages (excluding Executive Summary and appendices). In general, the report should be technically easy to comprehend for non-specialists, containing detailed lessons learned and recommendations.

12. Resources and Payment

The consultant fees and DSA will be paid on UN terms and conditions for consultants, considering experience and qualifications. The consultant will be paid professional fee; and DSA will be only paid when working outside his/her duty station. Travel costs of the consultant (airplane ticket economy class) will be covered by UN-Habitat.

EPICS EU-WOP Eastern Uganda visted Welsh Water, UK.
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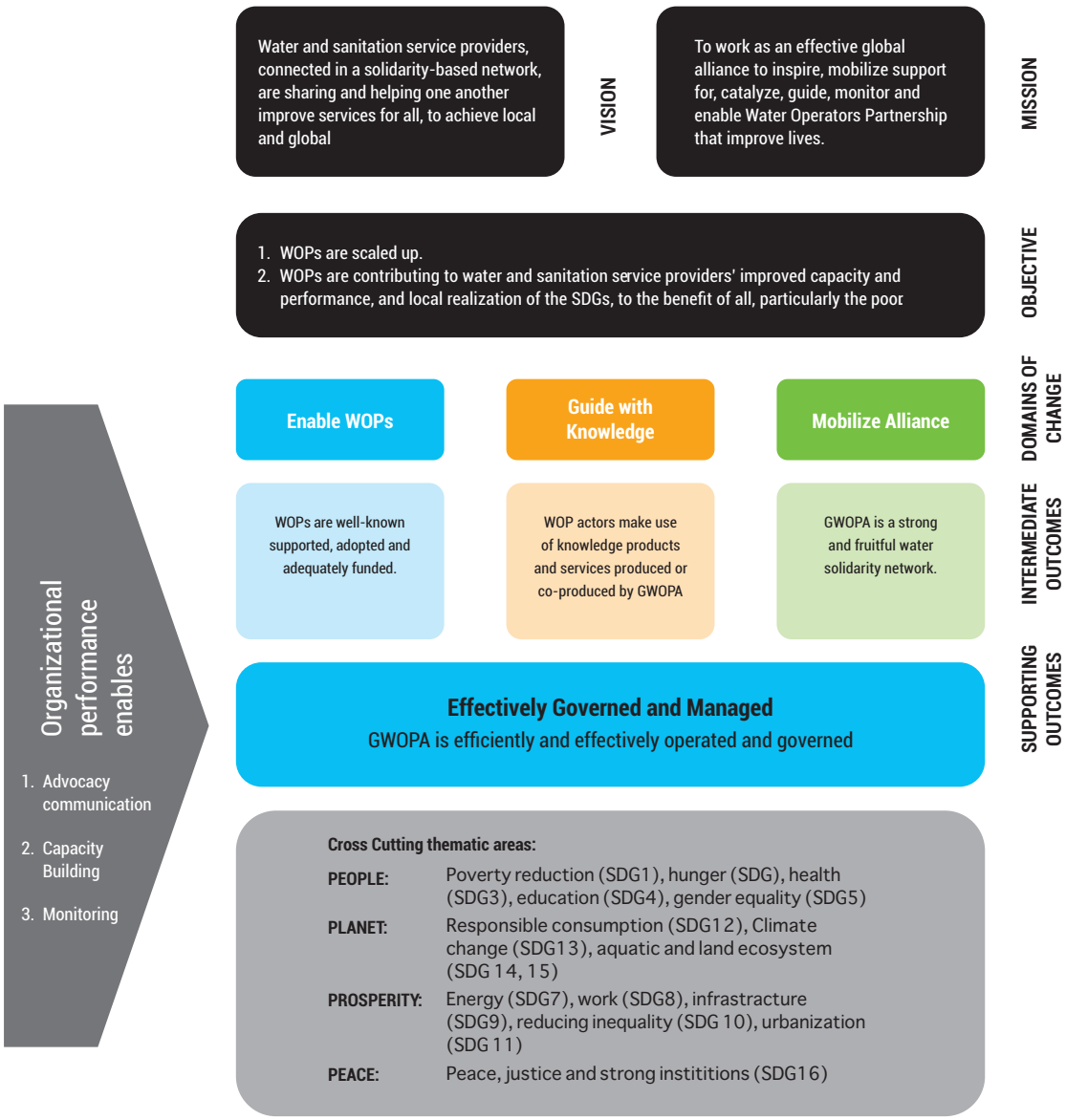
ANNEX 2: GWOPA THEORY OF CHANGE AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Figure 4: GWOPA Theory of Change



Project Title: *GWOPA'S STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION 2020-2024*			**Project Team members: JULIE PERKINS, ANNE BOUSQUET, MARIA PASCUAL, SAMIA BEN TEKAYA, ROSEMARY KIRAGU**					
Project Duration: 5 YEARS			**Project Manager:** **JULIE PERKINS**		**Collaborating Branches/Regions: UBSB/GLOBAL**			
Project Budget: 7M (tbc)								
Result Statements	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Baseline (2018)**	**Targets (including time frame)**	**Data Sources to verify Indicators**	**Data Collection Methods** (on indicators)	**Assumptions**	**Frequency of data collection**	**Responsibility**
Project Objective	To increase the quantity and quality of Water Operators' Partnerships being carried out worldwide in support of the SDGs. To Improve Water and sanitation service providers' capacity and performance and realize the SDG 6 targets at local level.							
Expected Accomplishment 1 **WOPs are scaled up**	No. of new Water Operators' Partnerships initiated per year	20	26	WOP monitoring reports and/or evaluations, data facilitated by WOP platforms and programs, information gathered through PMP tool, annual survey, added into GWOPA's online WOP profiles database	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits, generating WOPs profiles entered in database	Members and partners report to GWOPA, data and accurate information is accessible to Secretariat	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat

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Project Budget: 7M (tbc)								
Result Statements	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Baseline (2018)**	**Targets (including time frame)**	**Data Sources to verify Indicators**	**Data Collection Methods (on indicators)**	**Assumptions**	**Frequency of data collection**	**Responsibility**
Expected Accomplishment 2 **WOPs are contributing to water and sanitation service providers' improved capacity and performance, and local realization of the SDGs, to the benefit of all, particularly the poor.**	No. of mentee utility staff having improved their capacity through a WOP per year	800	1,040	WOP monitoring reports and/or evaluations, data facilitated by WOP platforms and programs, information gathered through our Results PMR tool, annual survey	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits, generating WOPs profiles entered in database	Members and partners report to GWOPA, data and accurate information is accessible to Secretariat/ They know how to report on this and GWOPA makes available adequate reporting tools	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	No. of WOP mentee utilities attributing their operational performance improvement to a WOP, per year	10	13	WOP monitoring reports and/or evaluations, data facilitated by WOP platforms and programs, information gathered through our Results PMR tool, annual survey	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits	Members and partners report to GWOPA, data and accurate information is accessible to Secretariat/ They know how to report on this and GWOPA makes available adequate reporting tools	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Percentage of active WOPs generating results that measurably contribute to SDG targets, per year	NA (not measured before)	50	WOP monitoring reports and/or evaluations, data facilitated by WOP platforms and programs, information gathered through our Results PMR tool, biennial surveys	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits. A survey will be led at mid-term and final evaluation (every 2.5 years) on a basis of a representative sample of WOPs and results will be extrapolated	Members and partners report to GWOPA, data and accurate information is accessible to Secretariat/ They know how to report on SDGs	Every 2.5 years	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Number of people, disaggregated by gender and age where possible, benefitting from water and sanitation service improvements generated through WOPs, per year.	5,000,000	3,900,000	WOP monitoring reports and/or evaluations, data facilitated by WOP platforms and programs, information gathered through our Results PMR tool, annual survey	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits. A survey will be led at mid-term and final evaluation (every 2.5 years) on a basis of a representative sample of WOPs and results will be extrapolated	Utilities have access to this information and make it available to GWOPA. That all utility end users have benefited by WOP improvements, unless specified otherwise.	Every 2.5 years	GWOPA's Secretariat

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Project Budget: 7M (tbc)								
Result Statements	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Baseline (2018)**	**Targets (including time frame)**	**Data Sources to verify Indicators**	**Data Collection Methods** (on indicators)	**Assumptions**	**Frequency of data collection**	**Responsibility**
SUB EA 1. **WOPs are well-known, supported, adopted and adequately funded**	Reach of GWOPA (co-)organized events dedicated to lobby, advocacy and resource mobilization per year	458	460 people per year	GWOPA records and list of attendees to sessions	GWOPA's forms and mission reports	Staff and partners fill out the form and do their mission reports	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	No. of GWOPA (co-) authored advocacy documents used for the promotion of WOPs per year	1	3	GWOPA's publications and articles authored and co-authored delivered	GWOPA online resources library, listing reported annually in GWOPA's monitoring report to Steering Committee	Promotion material is well designed and relevant for relevant targets	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	No. of actors initiating work towards promoting, supporting or advocating for WOPs per year	NA (not measured before)	5	GWOPA's records and communications material such as Newsletter and online pieces of News	GWOPA's website News section, Newsletter, Annual Report	Communication material is well designed, website is attractive and well-thought, updated etc	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	No of new international, national or local frameworks, policies, laws, or mechanisms that supports WOPs-type work (non-for-profit peer partnerships for capacity development in the water sector) per year	NA (not measured before)	1	The papers, articles and reports and GWOPA's annual reports informing about their use	GWOPA's website News section, Newsletters, Annual Reports	Partners make this accurate information available to GWOPA	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Total new funds dedicated to the WOPs practice per year in USD	To be calculated	To be estimated	Source organization reports, published calls for proposals, surveys, WOP online database (Global WOPs Observatory)	GWOPA's annual data collection campaign, WOP database inputs, development of WOP case-studies through desk work and field visits, inputs collected from partners and members for Newsletter and News publication	Members and partners report to GWOPA, data and accurate information is accessible to Secretariat	Every two years	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Reach of the Global WOPs Congress (by type of audience) per Congress	390	400	GWOPA records on participants that subscribed and participated	Registration forms	Registration forms are adequately filled out. The Congresses happen on required frequency with enough funding	When Congress is happening *every 2 years supposedly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Web and social network engagement per year	Web statistics for 2018) see *	+ 10 % pear year	Statistics on web and social media likes, follow, etc.	Annual monitoring of web statistics	Secretariat has adequate staffing to manage web and social media contents and moderate online groups and communities	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat

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Project Duration: 5 YEARS Project Budget: 7M (tbc)			Project Manager: JULIE PERKINS		Collaborating Branches/Regions: UBSB/GLOBAL			
Result Statements	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Baseline (2018)**	**Targets (including time frame)**	**Data Sources to verify Indicators**	**Data Collection Methods (on indicators)**	**Assumptions**	**Frequency of data collection**	**Responsibility**
SUB EA 2 **WOP actors make use of the knowledge products and services produced or co-produced by GWOPA.**	Reach of knowledge products per year	8137 views	+ 5% per year	Web statistics and GWOPA's records on distributed knowledge products	Annual monitoring of web statistics and GWOPA's records	The number of products disseminated is a proxy for the reach	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Reach of knowledge services per year	63 people	+ 5% per year	Web and social networks statistics, survey	Annual monitoring of web statistics, survey dissemination and collection	Survey is reliable, well designed and gets a sufficient number of responses	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Degree of satisfaction with knowledge products (average per year)	N/A (not been measured yet)	Higher than 3 out of 5	Survey responses from survey targeting KP users who are download from resource library	Survey automatically sent to users through online library	People respond to survey and in a relevant manner	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Degree of satisfaction with knowledge services (average per year)	N/A (not been measured yet)	Higher than 3 out of 5	Questionnaire given to all participants after any training or webinar Survey once a year through the poll function on Workplace to ask users	Dissemination of survey and questionnaire	People respond to survey and in a relevant manner	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
SUB EA 3 **GWOPA is a strong and fruitful water solidarity network.**	No of GWOPA institutional members	N/A (no formal membership process so far)	1st year: 100 +10% per following year	Membership forms signed	Dissemination of membership forms and archiving of signed ones with updated listing	Organizations already engaged with GWOPA confirm their commitment trough membership and new organizations are attracted	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	No of active GWOPA partners	To be checked	+3 per year	MoUs signed and list of co-organized events; active partners are those ones with whom GWOPA co-organize events and those who have signed an MoU during the reporting period	Consultation of GWOPA list of events and list of MoUs	Partners actually sign MoUs and GWOPA actually co-organizes events with partners	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat

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Project Duration: 5 YEARS			**Project Manager:** **JULIE PERKINS**		**Collaborating Branches/Regions: UBSB/GLOBAL**			
Project Budget: 7M (tbc)								
Result Statements	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Baseline (2018)**	**Targets (including time frame)**	**Data Sources to verify Indicators**	**Data Collection Methods** **(on indicators)**	**Assumptions**	**Frequency of data collection**	**Responsibility**
SUB EA 4 **GWOPA is efficiently and effectively operated and governed**	Funds managed by GWOPA per year	To be checked	+20% after 5 years	UMOJA budget	Compilation of information from Contribution Agreements and UMOJA information	Information is available from UMOJA; CAs with donors are signed	Once, at the end of the Strategy implementation	GWOPA's Secretariat
	% of workplan achieved	75%	80%	GWOPA's annual workplan	Consultation of GWOPA's annual workplan produced yearly for steering committee	Funds and enabling context allowing the Secretariat to implement its workplan	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat
	Degree of satisfaction with the GWOPA governance structure and functioning for the effective stewardship of the Alliance	N/A (never measured before)	Higher than 3 (on a scale of 0 to 5)	Questionnaire	Circulation of questionnaire during steering committee meeting	New governance framework is developed and adapted upon need expressed by all stakeholders	yearly	GWOPA's Secretariat

← *** Baseline of web statistics for KPI Web and social network engagement per year**	← **** Target of web statistics for KPI Web and social network engagement per year**
← Total Hits: 74,151	← + 10 %/year
← FB Likes: 1042	
← FB Followers: 1055	
← Twitter Followers: 1024	
← LinkedIn Follower:1366	
Newsletter Subscription: 2675	
Number of users of Workplace: 35 (initiated only in 2019)	
← No of users of PMP: 0 (will be operational in 2020)	

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION MATRIX

	MTR question	*Areas of assessment*	*DAC*	*Documentation*	*KIIs & FGD*	*Workshops*	*Data analysis methods*
1	**To what extent is the strategy direction on course for achieving its objectives?**						
1.1	How relevant is the strategy in light of new external global water and sanitation challenges and internal needs?	a) To what extent have global urban water and sanitation challenges changed over the last 2.5 years and is there a need for updating the strategy direction? b) Do international frameworks provide new foci for GWOPA's strategy direction i.e. the UN-Habitat work programme, UN Reform, COP 27? c) Do alliance members' needs and priorities point to areas of strategy adjustment? d) To what extent does the strategy respond to previous evaluation recommendations?	**Relevance**: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to partner/ institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change **Coherence**: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.	Sector literature on global urban water and sanitation challenges International frameworks i.e. Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, Our Common Agenda, UN Reform, COP 27 Alliance member survey results WOP Congress report GWOP evaluation report	KIIs with GWOPA Secretariat, SC members UN-Habitat BMZ, GIZ WOP platform representatives	ToC workshop	Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop
1.2	To what extent is the Strategy implemented in synergy with other programmes of similar objectives?	a) What is the added value of GWOPA compared to other initiatives with similar objectives? b) What steps does the strategy spell out and does the Alliance implement to achieve synergy with similar initiatives i.e. German stakeholders?		Documentation on similar initiatives GWOPA strategy, ToC and results framework	KIIs with GWOPA Secretariat Representatives of similar initiatives	ToC workshop	Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop

	MTR question	Areas of assessment	DAC	Documentation	KIIs & FGD	Workshops	Data analysis methods
2	**Is the strategy on track for achieving planned results?**						
2.1	To what extent are the objectives and outcomes of the strategy being achieved?	a) To what extent is there evidence of progress against the three core programme outcomes and UN-Habitat's cross-cutting priorities since the start of the strategy implementation? b) How strong is the internal logic and causal chain of evidence between achieving outputs, outcomes and objectives i.e. improved water supply and sanitation service levels? c) To what extent is GWOPA contributing to the implementation and improved coordination of WOPs through and beyond funded programmes? d) Are there any other positive or negative repercussions not captured by the strategy results framework?	**Effectiveness**: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups **Impact**: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	GWOPA annual reports including raw data against results framework WOP data base Any service level data available from GWOPA or WOPs Strategy Theory of Change	KIIs with GWOPA Secretariat staff and consultants Members SC UN-Habitat	ToC workshop	Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop
2.2	How likely is the GWOPA approach to maintained and developed in future?	a) To what extent is there evidence that previous mentees continue to perform well and progress to become mentors themselves? b) To what extent is there evidence that WOPs been replicated or scaled up at national and local levels?	**Sustainability**: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.	WOP data base, other raw data held by GWOPA	KIIs with Regional and national platform representatives Members GWOPA Secretariat		Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop

	MTR question	Areas of assessment	DAC	Documentation	KIIs & FGD	Workshops	Data analysis methods
3	**To what extent does strategy delivery facilitate or hinder achievement of objectives?**						
3.1	Is the strategy being implemented as planned and what factors affect delivery?	a) How is the strategy implementation progressing? b) What aspects of strategy implementation work well and which do not according to staff, members and partners, and why? c) Which contextual and internal factors affected implementation most and how was strategy implementation adapted in response? d) How consistently was the strategy implemented across multiple WOPs / platforms? e) To what extent is there evidence that the strategy implemented gender-sensitive and human rights approaches, and that it considered climate and youth?	**Efficiency**: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	Documentation related to funded programmes Documentation related to core functions	KIIs with GWOPA Secretariat UN-Habitat SC-members Other members Partners		Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop
3.2	To what extent does the internal monitoring and risk management enable setting, tracking and adjusting the achievement of strategy objectives?	a) How well were strategy output and outcome indicators defined and contributions tracked towards achieving objectives? b) To what extent are cross-cutting priorities (gender, human rights, climate and youth) monitored? c) To what extent were risks identified, tracked and mitigated?	**Efficiency**: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	GWOPA results framework and ToC GWOPA strategy Annual reports	KIIs with GWOPA MEL lead GWOPA secretariat staff and consultants UN-Habitat		Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop

	MTR question	*Areas of assessment*	*DAC*	*Documentation*	*KIIs & FGD*	*Workshops*	*Data analysis methods*
3.3	To what extent are management and governance arrangements enabling strategy implementation?	a) How effective is the working relationship between UN-Habitat, SC and GWOPA secretariat? How are challenges addressed? b) What is the progress in implementing governance recommendations and what opportunities and challenges do updates to the Charter offer for WOP platforms and members? c) To what extent does GWOPA use the institutional anchoring in UN-Habitat to achieve its objectives?	**Efficiency**: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	Results framework data UN-Habitat work programme GWOPA strategy	KIIs with SC chair and members, Assembly chair UN-Habitat staff WOP platform representatives Members FGD with GWOPA Secretariat staff		Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop
3.4	How is GWOPA progressing in mobilising resources for its strategy implementation?	a) What is GWOPA's progress in achieving funding targets, diversification of activities and of its donor base? b) What is the progress in securing host country for next strategy period?	**Efficiency**: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	Annual reports Other data on funding	KIIs with GWOPA Decretariat Partners including BMZ, GIZ		Qualitative data analysis and synthesis across all sources Sense-making workshop

ANNEX 4: 2013-17 EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

The table was prepared by the GWOPA Secretariat upon a request as part of the MTR.

2013-17 Evaluation recommendation	Action taken
1. UN-Habitat management confirms its continued commitment to GWOPA and support for elaboration of a strategic framework for GWOPA as outlined below to be concluded by end of 2018.	Taken. (expressed through letter and to the ISC at the next meeting in Nairobi). A participatory elaboration of a new strategy was undertaken and completed in early 2019.
2. An ISC meeting is called to take stock of the current situation and advise on the way forward.	An ISC meeting held in Nairobi in 2018 which brought the ISC together with the UN Habitat management
3. Clarification with the Government of Spain on prospects for future support to GWOPA.	This was immediately pursued and although signs were positive, just prior to ISC meeting in Madrid in 2019, the Government of Spain's decision to not continue support was confirmed.
4. Consideration of options for a hosting and funding agreement and subsequent call as decided once outlines of the Strategy and Charter are in place.	The new strategy was used to support a new call for proposals for host countries.
5. Calls for support to regional platforms including a potential platform for Arab countries.	(The meaning of this recommendation is unclear) Continued collaboration with regional platforms and Arab platform pursued beginning in 2021
6. A new Charter is drafted with involvement of UN-Habitat management, the GWOPA Steering Committee, and GWOPA Secretariat. The new Charter should delineate mandates, roles and responsibilities clearly for all parties involved, including regional and national platforms.	Charter drafted, approved by SC, awaits approval by Assembly
7. The GWOPA Strategy for 2018-2022 should be drafted in consultation with Alliance members and partners. The Strategy should emphasise increased cooperation with regional and national WOP platforms and interface with other UN's interventions in the water and sanitation sector. It should also include a monitoring framework that adequately documents socio-economic and physical results. The strategy should be consistent with SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.	Strategy prepared in consultation with Alliance partners (surveys and consultations) and with the support of an ISC task force.
8. Negotiation with donors who have indicated support for WOPs should be conducted to define potential level of engagement for GWOPA in consultations with donors that have strong focus on water and sanitation, e.g. the governments of Japan, Germany and Switzerland.	Negotiations took place with the Government of Germany; the German bid outlines collaboration areas and annual reports indicate collaboration activities underway.
9. A GWOPA Congress and Assembly should be convened when outlines of the GWOPA Strategy 2018-2022 have been reasonably consolidated and prospects for donor support are better clarified.	The 4th Congress was held off until a new (funded) hosting arrangement with Congress coverage was in place. The first happened online (due to Covid) in 2021.
10. An Exit Strategy should be prepared in the event host funding for the Secretariat is not forthcoming.	Not applicable
11. Following the outcome of consultations in 2018 on GWOPA's future a review of its prospects should be conducted. The GWOPA Charter and the 2018-2022 Strategy should subsequently be finalised based on inputs from delegates at the GWOPA Assembly and Congress	The General Assembly, where the final Charter is to be adopted, has been repeatedly postponed for strategic reasons, most recently in order to first strengthen membership following the new requirements/ categories. It is currently planned to take place at the World Urban Forum in Cairo in 2024.

ANNEX 5: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Name	Position	Organisation
Maria Martinez	Consultant	GWOPA secretariat
Anne Bousquet	Staff	GWOPA secretariat
Ashmeet Kharbanda	International UN Volunteer	GWOPA secretariat
Emrah Engindeniz	Programme management officer	GWOPA secretariat
Asa Jonsson	Head	GWOPA secretariat
Annabelle Houdret	Coordinator	Bonn Water Network
Theresa Huebscher	Adviser, sector programme for water policy	GIZ
Linda Engel	Project Manager	Engagement Global
Anne Le Strat	Consultant	GWOPA secretariat
Maria Koenig	Advisor	GIZ
Friederike Barthe-Carpentier	Advisor	GIZ
Anke Verhej	Programme Coordinator, WaterWorX	VEI
Siemen Veenstra	Knowledge Coordinator, WaterWorX	VEI
Maria Pasqual	former staff member	GWOPA secretariat
Theresa Huebscher	Advisor, sector programme for water policy	GIZ
Klaas Schwartz	BEWOP Coordinator	IHE Delft
Julie Marechal Perkins	Staff	GWOPA secretariat
Maria Martinez Munez	Consultant	GWOPA secretariat
Giuliana Ferrero	Consultant	GWOPA secretariat
Lavuun Verstraete	WASH Chief	UNICEF Ethiopia
Basazin Mindra	Urban Water Specialist	UNICEF Ethiopia
Stefan Wagner	Head, Department of International Affairs	City of Bonn
Susanne Nolden	Department of International Affairs	City of Bonn
Claudia Wendland	Head, Department of International Cooperation	Hamburg Wasser
Arto Suominen	External Consultant	Helsinki Region Environmental Services
Andre Dzikus	Chief, Urban Basic Services Section	UN-Habitat
Rike Sohn	Senior Policy Advisor Water Policy	BMZ
David Boys	Deputy General Secretary	Public Services International
Hanna Mencke	Advisor	GIZ Zambia
Ignatius Jean	Executive Director	CAWASA
Milo Fiasconaro	Director	Aqua Publica Europea
Arnaud de Vanssay	Team Leader, Water	DG INTPA, European Commission
Mai Flor	Executive Director	Waterlinks
Faustina Boachie	Low Income Customer Support Department	Ghana Water
Sam Drabble	Head of Evaluation, Research and Learning	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
Rosemary Campbell	Head of Water	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
Shipra Narang Suri	Chief, Urban Practices Branch	UN-Habitat

ANNEX 6: WASH SECTOR UTILITY CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES IN ETHIOPIA

The table below is based on an informal record of ongoing sector utility capacity building initiatives in Ethiopia and the information below is therefore indicative only and should not be cited.

Donor	Partner	Programme	Outcome	No of utilities	Type of cap building
MFA NL	VEI	WaterWorX	Improved capacity of Urban Water Utilities through WOPs	5 utilities	WOP
Government of Denmark	Danish water utilities	Water Strategic Sector Cooperation Ethiopia	Improved capacity of urban water utilities through partnership approach	2 utilities (Hawassa, Dire Dawa)	WOP
EU	Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority & VEI	EU-WOP	Improved capacity and performance of urban utility through WOP	1 utility (Bahir Dar)	WOP
FCDO	NIRAS	Strengthening Climate Resilience Systems and Capacity for Better WASH Service delivery in rural areas	Support to spare parts and maintenance for multi-village schemes	Not clear	Other capacity building
FCDO	UNICEF with IRC+VEI and NWSC+2ML	Strengthening Climate Resilience Systems and Capacity for Better WASH Service delivery in rural areas	Improved service delivery of town water utilities	18 water utilities across 7 regions	WOP
BMZ-KfW	UNICEF with NWSC+2ML	Utility System strengthening for refugee host systems	n.d.	1 utility (Itang, Gambella)	Not clear
BMZ-KfW	UNICEF-Sachsen Wasser	Utility shadowing for refugee host systems	n.d.	2 utilities (Somali Region	WOP
BMZ-KfW	UNICEF-Ethiopian Water Technology Institute	Targeted Technical support of rural utilities	n.d.	3 utilities	Other capacity building
BMZ-KfW/ KOICA	UNICEF-UN-Habitat; NWSC, Ambo, Wolayta-Soddo	GWOPA WOP	Improved capacity and performance of urban utilities through WOP	3 utilities (Bidre, Bule, Doyo Gena)	WOP
BMGF	UNICEF	Improving country enabling environments for inclusive sanitation services	Develop appropriate capacity and tools at city and country levels for CWIS	4 towns in 4 regions	Other capacity building
n.d.	WaterAid	Continuation of utility strengthening programme	n.d.	20 utilities	Not clear

Outcome area	KPI	Yearly target	2019	2020	2021	2022	Ambition	Validity	measurability	Accuracy	Data source / reliability
WOPs are scaled up	No. of new Water Operators' Partnerships initiated per year	26	29	10	8	39	low compared to aim of fostering WOPs across the world	a valid measure for understanding WOP practice	easy to measure	highly dependent on external parties comprehensively reporting to GWOPA	WOPs data portal
WOPs contribute to SDG 6	No. of mentee utility staff having improved their capacity through a WOP per year	1040	3597	3280	2480	198	Difficult to set ambition because outside of GWOPA's direct control	valid step towards SDG6	Based on self-assessment of utility staff engaged in a WOP	Based on self-assessment of utility staff engaged in a WOP	WOPs data portal
	No. of WOP mentee utilities attributing their operational performance improvement to a WOP, per year	14	24	34	67	77	Difficult to set ambition because outside of GWOPA's direct control	valid step towards SDG6	Unclear whether self-assessment or based on operational data	Unclear whether self-assessment or based on operational data	WOPs data portal
	Percentage of active WOPs with planned results that contribute to SDG targets, per year	50%	27%	66%	100%	53%	The ambition could be higher	valid step towards SDG6			WOPs data portal
	Number of people benefitting from water and sanitation service improvements generated through WOPs, per year	3.9 million	16.3	12.3	9.3	7.8	outside of GWOPA direct control	relevant at impact level	not easily measurable on yearly basis	based on current data sources likely to be inaccurate	WOPs data portal
WOPs are well-known, supported, adopted and adequately funded	Reach of GWOPA (co-organised) events dedicated to lobby, advocacy and resource mobilization per year	460 people / year		2477	3687	444	If considering online events, ambition low	In its current formulation, too general to enable targeted outreach	based on no of participants of GWOPA (co-) organised events	based on no of participants of GWOPA (co-) organised events	internal GWOPA data
	No of GWOPA (co-)authored advocacy documents used for the promotion of WOPs per year	3	2	5	4	3	ok at output level, but quality important	relevant at output level	based on GWOPA produced outputs	likely to be accurate	internal GWOPA data
	No of new international national, or local frameworks, policies, laws or mechanisms that support WOPs-type work per year	1	3	1	2	1	outside of GWOPA direct control	relevant at outcome level	Cannot be attributed to GWOPA		internal GWOPA data

Outcome area	KPI	Yearly target	2019	2020	2021	2022	Ambition	Validity	measurability	Accuracy	Data source / reliability
	Total new funds dedicated to the WOPs practice per year in USD	10 million	14	0	4.1	tbd	only partially under GWOPA control	relevant to WOP practice		dependent on external parties reporting, not well defined	source not clear
	Reach of Global WOP Congress	400	n/a	3223	N/A	TBC	Based on past record	relevant to WOP practice	Easy to measure	likely to be accurate	Internal GWOPA data
WOP actors make use of the knowledge products and services	Web and social network engagement per year (74,151 at baseline)	addi-tional 10%	11% up	40% down	74% up	56% down	baseline was 74,000	refer to reach but not a good indicator of meaningful engagement.	Measurement changed over time, first website, then also newsletter and workplace and social media	2020 decrease due to server down for 3 months	Internal GWOPA data
	Reach of knowl-edge products per year (8,137 views at baseline)	addi-tional 5%	29% down	n/a	2.8% up	tbc	Ambition to be in line with WOPs practice growth	relevant to knowl-edge services	Some tools are now made available on CoP		Internal GWOPA data
	Reach of knowl-edge services per year (63 at baseline)	addi-tional 5%	154% up	695% up	175% up	tbc	Ambition low compared to GWOPA mandate				Internal GWOPA data
	Degree of satisfac-tion with knowl-edge products	above 3 of 5	3.5	4.5	n/a						Internal GWOPA data
	Degree of satisfac-tion with knowl-edge services	above 3 of 5	4.5	4.5	4.4						Internal GWOPA data
GWOPA is a strong and fruitful solidarity network	No of GWOPA institutional members	100, then 10%	n/a	n/a	5	45	need to review ambition				Internal GWOPA data
	No of active GWOPA partners	add 3 per year	57	6	29	tbd	unclear what the right level of ambition is	Unclear what value the indicator adds			Internal GWOPA data
GWOPA is efficiently and effectively managed and governed	Funds managed by GWOPA per year	add 20% after 5 years	1.038	6.25	6.18	tbd	ambition to be reviwed in light of strategy revision	potentially valid target			Internal GWOPA data
	% of workplan achieved	80%	75%	77%	80%	tbd		does not reflect any outputs very well	not well defined		Internal GWOPA data
	Degree of satisfaction with the GWOPA gov-ernance structure and functioning for the effective stewardship of the alliance	above 3 of 5	n/a	n/a	N/A	tbc		the governance structure is unlikely to be revised	unclear who will assess and based on which criteria		Internal GWOPA data

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