



Call for Expression of Interest for mentor public water and sanitation utilities for Ukrainian mentee utilities.

Date of issue: 14 August 2024

Deadline for submission: 15 September 2024

Implementing Agency	UN-Habitat / Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA)
Project	Strengthening the capacity of 3 mentee operators in Ukraine through Water Operators Partnerships (Zaporizhzhia City Municipal Water Utility, Utility Company «Oblvodokanal» of Zaporizhzhia Regional Council and Municipal Kryvbassvodoknal, Kriv Rih)
Modality of project implementation	Remote and on-site in Ukraine
Contract type	Agreement of Cooperation with UN-Habitat
Budget	USD 215,000
Duration	16 months
Starting date	September 2024
Ending date	January 2026

NB: candidates can only submit one proposal for a partnership with only one of the three Ukrainian mentee utilities.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the agency for human settlements mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. Together with governments, the agency is responsible for promoting and consolidating collaboration with all partners, including local authorities and private and non-governmental organizations, in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, with its Secretariat, is led by UN-Habitat and hosted in Bonn, Germany. It leads the global movement for Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs). These peer-support partnerships between water and sanitation service providers work by harnessing the skills, knowledge, and goodwill within a solid utility to build the capacity and improve the performance of another utility that needs assistance or guidance.

GWOPA ensures that WOPs are well-known, supported, adopted, and adequately funded and that WOP actors benefit from GWOPA knowledge products and services. Its global membership

comprises local public water and sanitation service providers from all continents. More information on the initiative can be found at: <https://gwopa.org/>

BACKGROUND OF THE WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS PROJECTS IN UKRAINE

UN-Habitat in Ukraine

UN-Habitat has started supporting recovery efforts in Ukraine after the full-scale invasion of February 2022, upon request of its Executive Board in March 2022 and the Government of Ukraine in July 2022. Since then, UN-Habitat has supported national and subnational governments in their recovery efforts, linking short-term reconstruction needs to longer-term resilience solutions. At the national level, UN-Habitat supports the government of Ukraine in developing national policies and instruments, including digital instruments, that guide regional and local governments' recovery. The programme also strives to increase Ukrainian urban planning and design capacities through support from academia, think tanks, and practitioners. At the local level, UN-Habitat supports the recovery planning efforts of local governments through its Urban Lab, which was established in Kyiv. The development of digital solutions supports recovery planning efforts at all levels through the UN Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC Hamburg), a partnership between UN-Habitat, the Hafen City University of Hamburg and the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT). UN-Habitat is scaling up its presence in Ukraine, increasing the capacities of its office in Kyiv and building partnerships with local and international actors engaged in urban recovery efforts.

The WOP projects: Mobilizing peer support for Ukrainian operators

Access to sustainable water and sanitation services is a growing problem in rapidly de-urbanizing countries, and armed conflicts aggravate the situation in contexts where utilities are already lagging. Most of the responsibility for providing access to water supply relies on operators. However, this is often not backed up by the capacity of financial and human resources to reach unserved people.

The primary purpose of this project is to address the current lack of progress on improving sustainable access to water supply and sanitation in three Ukrainian settlements, the City of Kriv Rih (Krivbassvodokanal - Municipal Water Utility), and the region and City of Zaporizhzhia (Zaporizhzhia City Municipal Water Utility, Regional Zaporizhzhia Water Utility), using the WOPs approach, in the context of the war the country is going through. The project also aims to build capacity to replicate this approach in other service areas nationally and regionally through a partnership with UNICEF Ukraine Country Office (UCO). Please find the utilities profiles in Annex 1.

Ukraine's water and sanitation systems are incredibly fragile, bringing significant risks of sudden deterioration and interruptions, considering compounding pre-existing vulnerabilities and deteriorating water and sanitation infrastructure. Children and communities depend on drinking water supply through relatively degraded infrastructure - approximately 40 per cent of Ukraine's existing water supply networks are assessed as critical. Similarly, almost 35 per cent of the water treatment facilities need rehabilitation or further upgrade due to decades of wear and tear and a fragmented mode of operation. Water security is further threatened due to climate-related risks, including droughts and floods - climate change is making natural catastrophes in Ukraine more likely and more severe by increasing temperature, altering rainfall patterns, extending

heat waves, and reducing water availability, with significant impacts on the agricultural and human health sectors, particularly for children.

Since the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, the Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) sector has experienced significant damage and losses and has struggled to provide essential services in challenging circumstances. The estimated aggregate physical damage for the WSS sector is US\$2.2 billion. Most damage has been observed in more extensive physical infrastructure like wastewater treatment plants, water supply and wastewater collection networks, and drinking water treatment plants and facilities. Losses have been estimated at approximately US\$7.5 billion. More than 40 per cent of the total losses are from the lost revenues of WSS services provision. There are additional costs for WSS service provision due to increased energy costs, and the remaining economic losses are associated with increased fuel consumption, increased prices of materials and equipment, lack of required repairs, tariff deficits, water losses, increased costs for chemical reagents, and required demolition and debris management. Restoring water, sanitation, solid waste management, and energy services is critical to starting resilient, inclusive reconstruction during the early recovery. Reduced access to safe, clean water and WASH services is also expected to delay the achievement of universal access to WSS by 2030.

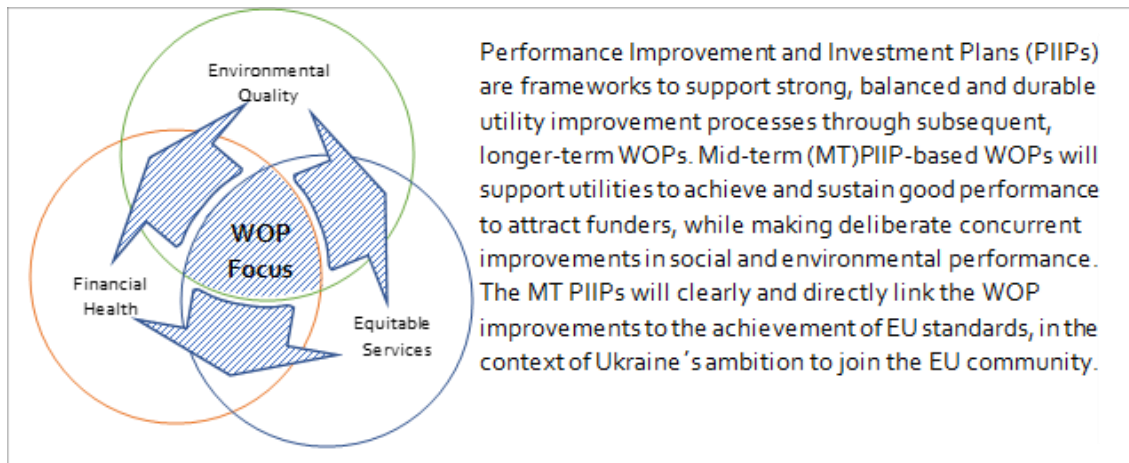
The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, GWOPA, proposes to support the capacity development of these three operators by applying the Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) approach: a mentor (champion utility) helps a mentee to build its capacity to be better equipped and skilled to provide sustainable services. "Not-for-profit, peer-to-peer capacity building arrangements". The WOPs model for capacity building has a track record of success and effectiveness, and the practice is growing.

Several support services are necessary to increase the quality of WOPs and their efficiency: UN-Habitat assists the WOP teams in setting up a solid and healthy basis for the partnerships, to structure them adequately from the beginning, through training and other types of guidance and tested methodology on partnering processes.

The WOP Approach

During the 16-month partnerships between the 3 pairs of utilities, "mentor" operators will support "mentees" with capacity development and change implementation in high-priority areas, ranging from improving billing and collection to energy efficiency¹, assembled in Short Term Action Plans (STAPs). The STAPs will include a small investment component, such as a pilot project, to ignite long-term changes towards sustainability.

Towards the end of the STAP implementation, the WOP partners will be supported to conduct a more thorough joint analysis of the causes and potential solutions to their performance shortcomings and to develop Medium Term Performance Improvement and Investment Plans (MT-PIIPs) which would lay out a suite of longer-term improvement steps, combined with an investment component, to be implemented during a subsequent phase of improvement (lasting five years).



All interventions will benefit from GWOPA's leading role and extensive experience in coordinating WOPs worldwide, its vast network of operators and development partners in regions around the world, as well as a near decade of learnings from its global comparative research on WOPs and the resulting set of best practice guidance materials.

Throughout the process, the WOPs partners will be supported by GWOPA, which coordinates the **partnering processes** on WOPs approaches and best WOPs practices and will be introduced to the PIIP Planning process, with relevant **technical training** on themes requiring deeper learning.

GWOPA and UNICEF Ukraine Country Office will organize a launching workshop, where mentors and mentees will be introduced to the WOP approach and will be trained on WOP tools (diagnosis, development of Short-Term Action Plan (STAPS), monitoring tool, reporting, and development of PIIPs).

Key staff from participating operators will also share their learning and showcase their experience through a dedicated online **Community of Practice (CoP)** focusing on various relevant technical issues and partnering issues. The mentees will also be able to establish bridges and foster cross-fertilisation with other WOPs practitioners in Ukraine and even with WOP practitioners from different regions.

GWOPA will also avail its WOP Partnership Management Platform (PMP) for each WOP project. Co-implementing partners will be trained in the tool and responsible for entering the required data, allowing GWOPA to monitor progress.

GWOPA will help amplify the benefits by documenting and widely showcasing the project lessons and results. GWOPA will organise a closing workshop, aiming at drawing the lessons learned both for the mentors and mentees (outcomes, objectives, etc...) and the UNICEF UCO team, including recommendations on how to improve the practice and to replicate and upscale the WOP mechanism at country level.

Through GWOPA's main communications channels, including its Global WOPs Observatory, and with the bi-annual Global WOPs Congress in 2025, these GWOPA - UNICEF projects enhance their visibility internationally and gain momentum for replication.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Project title	Strengthening the capacity of three Ukrainian water services providers through Water Operator's Partnerships
Logical framework	
Impact	To improve long-term access to drinking water supply and sanitation for residents in three Ukrainian settlements by strengthening the capacity of resident water and sanitation service providers
Objective	Strengthening the capacity of three Ukrainian water and sanitation service providers through Water Operators' Partnerships
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improved managerial, operational, commercial and financial performance of three mentee water utilities: Zaporizhzhia City Municipal Water Utility, Regional Zaporizhzhia Water Utility, and Krivbassvodokanal (Kriv Rih Municipal Water Utility) in Ukraine 2) Mentees have clear road maps on short-term and medium-term objectives for performance improvements and investments/PIIPs 3) Mentees have exposure to good operators and WOP practices beyond their projects through learning exchanges 4) Improved capacity on the WOP approach and methodologies by mentor and mentee utilities and critical partners, including UNICEF Ukraine Country Office
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partners develop and implement one-year short-term action plans (STAPS) 2. Partners develop Performance Improvement and Investment Plans (PIIPs), which include clear road maps to bring the mentees up to European standards - 3 PIIPs delivered 3. WOP partners adopt and use a robust mechanism to plan, monitor and report WOP results – use of PMP 4. Online dedicated group populated for Ukrainian WOP practitioners created in GWOPA's Community of Practice 5. WOP project lessons documented to inform potential project replication
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WOP projects are prepared, and agreements are finalised 2. Participation and contribution to kick-off workshop, including attendance to training on WOP approach and methodology, training on monitoring tool (PMP) 3. Diagnosis visit on-site and development of Short-Term Action Plans following GWOPA methodology 4. Creation of profiles and data populated in the PMP and regularly updated 5. Good practice exposure visit from mentee to mentor's

	<p>premises</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Capacity Building activities are implemented by mentors under GWOPA guidance and coordination, according to the STAPS, through all kinds of modalities, including classroom training, online training, technical demonstrations, on-the-job training and job shadowing – 3 to 4 missions on-site in Ukraine are expected. 7. Contribution to the dedicated Ukrainian WOPs’ Community of Practice 8. Participation and contribution to the closing workshop held to discuss project outcomes and recommendations for next steps 9. Contribution to communications material on project updates to be disseminated by GWOPA through established communications channels 10. Data contribution to WOP project case studies
Geographic scope	Zaporizhzhia City Municipal Water Utility, Regional Zaporizhzhia Water Utility, and Krivbassvodokanal (Kriv Rih Municipal Water Utility) in Ukraine
Timeline	16 months
Project budget	USD 215,000 per WOP

Responsibilities, Activities and Expected Outcomes/Outputs

The project will be implemented closely with the UNICEF Ukraine country office and UN-Habitat GWOPA. GWOPA will provide the methodological approach and collaborate with UNICEF Ukraine to organize a kick-off workshop involving all key partners, including training and providing written supporting materials. GWOPA and UNICEF Ukraine will also convene the final seminar. The workshops will convene all the involved partners of the three WOPs simultaneously.

Activity 1: Development of Short-Term Action Plans (STAPs)

The mentor will help the mentee to lead an assessment of each unit or department of the operator. The assessment process should be participatory during the diagnosis visit on-site in Ukraine, with the involvement of staff from all levels, including the mentee utilities. To do so, the mentor will send a team of experts for enough days at the mentee’s premises.

Output 1: The assessment process is done during the diagnosis visit and selecting working areas for the short-term action plans.

Deliverable 1: The diagnosis report for each mentee will include a description of the mission, with the mission programme and the selection of the working areas considered priorities.

Output 2: Short-term Action Plans (STAPs) designed based on the selected working areas. The action plans should include a SWOT analysis of each working area selected and a short-term capacity-building program through WOP. The STAPs should present the actions/measures

proposed with corresponding measurable objectives and indicators and costs involved (low-cost, fundable by the mentee itself or included in donors' investment plan) if necessary. GWOPA will provide a template for each working area action plan.

Deliverable 2: Short-term Action Plans for each mentee, including a detailed timeline and description of all capacity development activities proposed.

Activity 2: Implementation and monitoring of the short-term action plans

The mentor will implement the short-term plans through on-the-job and classroom training, field visits, benchmarking visits and distance follow-up on progress (list of modalities non-exhaustive). The training part of the plan can take place either at the mentee's premises or at the mentor's premises. The mentee will take the necessary actions or measures recommended in the plans developed with the mentor. The mentor will submit a report for each activity/mission/training.

The WOP project should be monitored in GWOPA's Partnership Management Platform (PMP). Training on the PMP will be provided by GWOPA to all partners, and continued assistance with data entry, review, and reporting will be available from GWOPA upon request. The mentor will create user profiles of identified focal points for monitoring respective working areas, including any role given to the mentee in progress monitoring.

Outputs 3: Reports on all missions/activities. These reports should be submitted, reviewed and pre-approved by GWOPA before submission to the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office. It includes the exposure visit to the mentor's facilities. The last mission should evaluate the results and lessons learnt, and the mission will coincide with the final end-of-project workshop to be convened by GWOPA and UNICEF Ukraine Country Office.

Output 4: WOP overview and planning & monitoring modules entered in the PMP, incl. a short note on focal points for monitoring respective working areas.

Output 5: Entry and regular updates (minimum every two months) on project implementation data in the PMP, in line with project milestones in the STAP approved by UNICEF Ukraine Country Office and GWOPA.

Output 6: Participation by mentor and mentee in GWOPA's Global WOPs Community (Community of Practice) in project groups to be moderated by GWOPA. ToRs will be provided. GWOPA will create online groups within its online Community of Practice.

Output 7: Final narrative report on each WOP, including learning notes and case studies on project lessons learnt. GWOPA will provide templates.

Output 8: By the end of the project, the mentor will develop a Medium-Term Performance Improvement and Investment Plan (MT-PIIP) for the mentee. The PIIP should include a selection of mid-term working areas and the corresponding capacity-building action plan, with an estimation of the costs involved. GWOPA will provide the outline for the PIIP.

Responsibilities:

The mentor will identify, nominate, and make available experts/staff members with adequate knowledge and experience in the working areas identified as priority needs by the mentee. The mentor will appoint a focal point for the WOP coordination and communications with UNICEF

UCO and GWOPA. This should be done at the very beginning of the project, and the contacts should be sent to GWOPA.

The mentor should make sure that:

- the mentee nominates a team of resource persons who will coordinate any action related to the WOP projects and will be responsible for communications with the mentor, UNICEF UCO and GWOPA. This should be done at the very beginning of the project, and the contacts should be sent to GWOPA.
- The mentee facilitates the mentor's expert team's visit by providing adequate means as required.
- The mentees' staff is informed about the project promptly.
- all actions are approached and implemented in a participatory manner, from the planning phase to the implementation phase.

For the visits made by the mentor to the mentee, UN-Habitat and UNICEF UCO should be informed in advance of each visit, including the duration, dates of travel, the names and positions of staff travelling and the program of the visit. After each visit, the mentor should send a mission report to GWOPA, which will be shared with UNICEF UCO for review.

The mentor will be responsible for any necessary security measures for field visits of its expert staff members in Ukraine, with the option to contract with private security companies for a total budget of USD45,000 provided through the Agreement of Cooperation with UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat will not be liable for any claims or issues arising from partner work or travel to Ukraine.

BUDGET

Item	Cost USD Per WOP	Description
Direct WOP costs	120,000	Estimated cost for each WOP over 16 months, depending on the number of visits (at least 3 to 4), no of people travelling, location of mentors, etc.: includes air tickets in economy class and other modes of travel, accommodation and food for staff travelling, insurance, visas, venue rental, local transportation etc. NB: mentors sign the GWOPA code of conduct and operate on a not-for-profit basis Complete list of eligible costs in Annex 3
Small grants for procurement of equipment, software or other	50,000	Mentors are responsible for procurement following UN Habitat procurement rules and regulations, including delivery on-site to the mentees.
Security costs	45,000	Based on 3 missions per WOP, security is provided by private providers under the responsibility of the mentor.
Total	215,000	

Eligibility of Partners

- Only public water and sanitation utilities from all regions are eligible.
- Public water and sanitation utilities can apply individually or in collaboration with:
 - a) One or more other public water and sanitation utilities from all regions.
 - b) One or more not-for-profit relevant organizations from all regions.
 - c) In both cases, the application should be submitted by the Lead mentor utility partner with which the Agreement of Cooperation will be signed.
- Most personnel involved in the project must be staff members of the applicant utility. However, the applicant organization may contract consultants, especially Ukrainian nationals, for specific tasks upon justification.
- Candidates must comply with the [GWOPA Code-of-Conduct and Guiding Principles](#), particularly the not-for-profit principle, ensuring the involvement of the Lead partner on a non-commercial basis.
- Candidates must have a proven track record of involvement in similar cooperation projects with peers for capacity building (WOP-type projects).
- Candidates must have a proven track record of good performance according to international norms and standards of the water and sanitation sector.
- Candidates must have in-depth knowledge and practice of EU water and sanitation sector norms and standards, especially the EU directives for drinking water and sanitation services.
- Previous experience in collaboration with Ukrainian utilities is an added advantage.

Selection Criteria

- Eligibility of status.
- Relevance of associated partners, if proposed.
- Availability for a minimum of field travel in Ukraine.
- Experience in similar peer-to-peer collaboration.
- Previous experience in collaboration with Ukrainian partners.
- In-depth knowledge and practice of EU water and sanitation sector norms and standards.
- Proven track record of good performance.
- Alignment of motivation with GWOPA Charter, including a not-for-profit, solidarity-based partnership spirit.
- Relevance of proposed approach and activities.
- Counterpart contribution (Cash or In-Kind Contribution)

Eligible Costs

- Staff time of Mentors and Additional Partners with non-profit/public status¹
- Supplies, commodities, materials
- Equipment (such as small hardware/software that is required for WOP activities)
- Contractual Services (outsourced services ²including audits, translation, etc.)
- Travel (international and local transportation under economy class, accommodation, food/per-diems during WOP activities).

¹ Only overhead costs directly attributable to staff costs (e.g. office-related operating expenses of mentee organization attributable to the staff participating in the WOP) are eligible for grant funding as part of staff time. Staff time must reflect standard staff compensation rates. Justification of staff time compensation may be requested.

² Most WOP activities are expected to be carried out by peers on a not-for-profit basis. Only where peer support on a not-for-profit basis is unavailable or for discrete, one-off activities may outsourced services be procured commercially. Entities contracted to provide for-profit services are not considered WOP partners.

- Transfers to Additional Partner(s) ³
- Logistics (site visits, workshop space, translation, travel insurance, etc.)

Application process

Note: Organizations may only submit one proposal for a partnership with one of the three Ukrainian mentee utilities.

Candidates must provide:

- Indicate the Ukrainian mentee utility they wish to collaborate.
- Proof of not-for-profit status and those of their partners, if any.
- Signed GWOPA Code of Conduct (Annex 2);
- Documentation showing their ability to perform the requested tasks, including a track record of good performance, previous peer-to-peer collaboration, experience with EU water and sanitation sector norms and standards, and previous collaboration experience with Ukrainian utilities as a strong advantage.
- A short narrative explaining their motivation.
- Approach for the project with a description of the activities intended, including modalities of capacity building envisaged and tentative timeline of activities proposed. Candidates must confirm their ability to travel to Ukraine, at least to attend the launching and closing workshops and lead the first diagnosis mission. All field visits are subject to evaluation of the security in Ukraine.
- A provisional budget in USD using the template in Annex 3.

Selection process

- Applications are open until 15 September 2024.
- Only complete applications received by the deadline will be considered.
- UN-Habitat reserves the right to request additional documentation and information after submission.
- A selection committee composed of UN-Habitat and UNICEF Ukraine Country Office will review the applications and select the candidates based on the above selection criteria.
- The candidates will be notified by email of the selection process result no later than 25 September 2024.

Submission Requirements and Guidelines

Expressions of Interest must be emailed to unhabitat.ubss.eoi@un.org with the reference “UKRAINE WOPs EOI” in the subject of your email, with a copy to anne.bousquet@un.org

Failure to indicate the reference may result in your proposal not being considered.

Contact Information

Should you require further clarification on the call, please contact Anne Bousquet, Programme Management Officer, Urban Basic Services Section, UN-Habitat, anne.bousquet@un.org

^{3 2} Only non-profit or public entities participating as Additional Partners are eligible for transfers from the mentees. Transfers are distinct from any outsourcing of services provided on a commercial basis. The same expenditure eligibility rules apply to budgets of transfers to Additional Partners. The Mentee will apply its vetted financial mechanism to provide such grants.

Other

Please note that this EOI notice does not constitute a solicitation. UN-Habitat reserves the right to change or cancel this requirement at any time in the Expressions of Interest/or solicitation process.

Submitting a reply to an EOI does not guarantee that a Cooperation Partner will be considered for receipt of the solicitation when issued and only Cooperation Partners who are deemed qualified by UN-Habitat upon completion of evaluation of submission will receive the final solicitation document.

Links

Annex 1. Ukrainian mentee utility profiles

Annex 2. [Gwopa code of conduct](#) (to be signed and submitted with the application)

Annex 3. Budget template