

1. About GWEN

The Global Water Education Network is an initiative that responds to the call for increased support to Capacity Development efforts which results from both the Global Acceleration Framework agenda to achieve SDG6 and to the outcome of the UN 2023 Water Conference, specifically calling for a Water Education network in support of developing capacities of institutions especially for the Global South.

UNESCO and the Alliance of IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, Cap-Net, and the Stockholm International Water Institute jointly decided to respond to this challenge by becoming the founding partners of the “Global Water Education Network” (GWEN) and driving its further development.

GWEN was submitted in February 2023 as a voluntary commitment to the Water Action Agenda and supported the discussions during the UN 2023 Water Conference, which took place on March 22-24th, 2023.

Vision

On a global scale, water education and capacity development are regarded and supported as a key element for sustainable development in general and for water resources management in particular. The international community invests in the skills and capacities of current and future professionals and diverse stakeholders to manage water resources and water-related infrastructure to transversally contribute to sustainable development and climate change adaptation.

Aim

The GWEN initiative is designed with the main purpose of **better connecting existing networks** and initiatives around water education and capacity development, and to provide actions that are rooted in local contexts and addressing local problems.

The main goal of GWEN is to develop and deliver on a common global agenda to accelerate capacity development for the water sector in low- and middle-income countries.

GWEN's objectives

GWEN is designed as a **coordination mechanism** consisting of the founding partners operating in collaboration with **existing** networks and **member** institutions.

Main objectives of GWEN as a coordination mechanism are to:

1. **Deliver capacity development services in support of national governments and other key water institutions** to identify and address education and capacity gaps through demand driven activities.
2. **Develop co-curated capacity development products, services, and instruments** to allow GWEN members to jointly deliver state of the art capacity development services.
3. **Provide a centralised knowledge brokering platform** to contribute to **global discussions on water learning**, improve sharing of lessons learned, trends and insights related to capacity development and water education.

Guiding principles

GWEN's guiding principles follow decades of experience and research on water knowledge and capacity development, including outcomes from the 6th International Symposium on Knowledge and Capacity for the Water Sector, held at IHE Delft and the resulting 2020 Delft Agenda, and the expertise of IHE Delft, Cap-Net, SIWI and UNESCO in developing and implementing capacity development programmes.

Capacity for achieving the SDGs and beyond is a form of preparedness to address future challenges in a complex, changing, and uncertain world. This requires not just **additional capacities, but also about having the right know-how to deliver the right responses.**

Following this learning path, GWEN's guiding principles are:

- Capacity development as a long-term and systemic process, requiring local ownership to be sustainable.
- Deliver high quality capacity development for institutions and individuals.
- Deliver capacity development that is inclusive and integrates gender considerations.

The following topic areas of water capacity development will be covered by GWEN:

- Water governance, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), and transboundary aspects in a context of climate change.
- Emphasis on the integration of technological and social aspects.
- Water education for the future: interdisciplinary teaching and research in universities, support water youth groups, and water education in schools.

2. Governance model

GWEN will not be a new institution but a collaborative network of partners, members, and donors.

A light coordinating and administrative secretariat facilitates project management and financial transactions. The secretariat will be hosted at IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education, one of the Alliance-founding partners, formed by IHE-Delft, Cap-Net, and SIWI, who will have specific roles as part of the secretariat.

All other partners will be part of and contribute to GWEN's specific activities.

The governance model makes a distinction between the following categories of actors:

- **UNESCO and the Alliance founding partners** will host the Secretariat, maintain vision, and mission and commit to the Founding Charter, and spearhead global resource mobilisation.
- **Executive board**, consisting of UNESCO, founding partners, members selected at the members meetings, partners, and clients including main funding partners. Advises on network delivery projects/goals on the ground, membership process, and guiding criteria of admission. The executive board will operate lean and non-bureaucratic, with defined ToR's revised as per growth model of GWEN.

- **Members:** who co-fund and/or are active in water education and capacity development at local, regional, and international levels.
- **Clients/recipients:** utilities, national governments, private sector, relevant cross-sectoral organisations. RBO's, NGO's, lake, groundwater, and source to sea institutions. Local, regional water education and capacity development institutions. Communities and citizen science groups.

GWEN Secretariat

GWEN will be coordinated and managed by the four founding members. The secretariat will be hosted at IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education.

This founding partners will ensure the strategic direction and overall management of the network, fostering collaboration among members and providing governance and oversight. The secretariat will ensure a well-managed and effective platform for all members. The coordination processes will include:

- **Strategic Leadership:** The founding members will drive the long-term vision, goals, and priorities of the network, capturing inputs from all GWEN membership and the global water community.
- **Operational Management:** Day-to-day operations, including administration, communication, activity planning, resource allocation, and membership engagement, and management of the GWEN's website and knowledge platform.
- **Partnership Building:** The secretariat will actively seek partnerships with international organizations, funders, and education leaders to expand the network's reach and impact.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The secretariat will assess the network's progress and effectiveness, ensuring that members' needs are met and that the network continues to deliver value.

3. GWEN membership

GWEN's Members role and characteristic

The underpinning ethos of the GWEN members is reciprocity, to share experiences, knowledge and learn, improve skills, and avoid duplication of activities to respond to global water education and capacity development challenges facing countries.

GWEN membership entails the pooling of specific resources, expertise, and skills by the members to achieve the common goal of GWEN, as well as goals specific to the individual partners.

Membership and admission will be based on accepting and subscribing to the vision, aim, and commitment towards cooperation and guiding principles of GWEN.

Members of GWEN will be selected based on a set of criteria which includes inter-alia:

- Experience and roll-out of water education and capacity development services.
- Accredited and high-quality products (MSc, diplomas, formal and non-formal education and informal learning).
- Proven capacity to deliver products/services at different levels.
- Registered organization with track record to enhance reputation and prestige.

- Range of provider to match demand from funding partners promoting local resource mobilisation and leverage support.

GWEN members and partners collaborate and respond to the continued call to build the capacity of institutions and people, especially to support developing countries.

GWEN's Benefits

By joining the Global Water Education Network, members:

- **Become part of an established thriving community working on water education for sustainable development:** capacity developers, water professionals, policymakers, and practitioners, that collaborate on innovative solutions to water challenges and foster cooperation and knowledge exchange.
- **Have the opportunity to scale up capacity development efforts:** successful capacity development initiatives within the network are scaled up and institutions and individuals across the globe have improved knowledge, skills, and expertise in water-related topics, allowing them to make informed decisions and drive positive change.
- **Contribute to fostering dialogue and collaboration** among engaged network members and partners who actively participate in capacity development activities, share knowledge, and a supportive learning environment.
- **Be able to expand research and innovation networks** in the field of capacity development and water management through partnerships and collaborative projects.

Member Commitments

GWEN members agree to actively contribute to the success of the global network mission. By joining, members agree to:

- **Actively engage in network activities:** Participate in regular meetings, forums, and working groups to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and collaborate with fellow members.
- **Support capacity development:** Contribute to capacity development efforts by offering mentorship, facilitating training sessions, or assisting with the development of new learning materials.
- **Promote network resources and activities:** Help raise awareness about the network's offerings by sharing resources, events, and opportunities with your own professional and organizational networks.
- **Contribute to the knowledge base:** Share expertise by submitting relevant learning contents, research, case studies, and best practices to the network's resource library to enrich the collective knowledge available to members.

- **Uphold ethical and professional standards:** Ensure conduct within the network which is aligned with core values of transparency, inclusivity, and mutual respect, fostering an environment of trust and collaboration.
- **Commit to continuous learning:** Actively seek out opportunities to enhance your own skills and knowledge through the network's programs, maintaining a commitment to professional growth and development.

Members meetings

Online members meeting will be held on an annual basis. Every 5 years, at the occasion of the IHE's International Symposium on Knowledge and Capacity for the Water Sector, in Delft, The Netherlands, the members meeting will have a hybrid format, combining face to face and online sessions.

The upcoming [IHE Symposium takes place on July 2-4, 2025](#).