

THE BALI COALITION TO STRENGTHEN TRAINING IN THE WATER SECTOR

Training in the water sector is
a profitable and sustainable investment!

Coalition secretariat:



Coalition partners:



For the 10th World Water Forum, organized from May 18 to 25, 2024 in Bali (INDONESIA), we, representatives of public and private operators of municipal water and sanitation services, local authorities, governments, international organizations, international financial institutions, basin organizations, civil society and the private sector, bring our support for the Bali Coalition to strengthen training in the water sector.

As part of the process of the World Water Forums and the process initiated by the United Nations Water Conferences (past edition of March 2023, announced editions of 2026 & 2028), the objective of the Coalition is to promote training as an essential tool to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular access to drinking water and sanitation.

It is aligned with the United Nations analysis, that has identified “capacity development” among the accelerators necessary for the implementation of SDG 6.

STRENGTHENING SKILLS IN WATER AND SANITATION PROFESSIONS IS ESSENTIAL EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD!

The supply of water for the population, health, hygiene, domestic uses and agricultural production has always been a major issue for humanity. However, throughout the world, the situation is known and alarming:

- ♦ **2.2 billion** people around the world do not have access to safely managed drinking water services,
- ♦ **3.5 billion** people worldwide do not have access to safely managed sanitation services.

Today, more than ever, improving drinking water and sanitation services is one of the major priorities for development, health and the fight against poverty.

To achieve the SDGs for drinking water and sanitation, new infrastructures must be created and the quality of services improved to meet the needs of users. These objectives involve more efficient operation and maintenance, renewal of structures, as well as better governance of services and strengthening of skills and human resources.

The need for skills is further apparent considering that the investments that are made each year in the water sector often do not completely achieve their objectives due to design flaws and also multiple inadequacies in their management and operation. Many infrastructures are deteriorating too quickly, representing a significant waste of investment.

Actions are still too focused on the creation of equipment and infrastructure, without sufficient concern for their subsequent economic management, operation and maintenance, and local water resource availability and management.

However, professional training, initial and continuing, is an essential tool for improving the management of water resources and strengthening the efficiency of water and sanitation services.

Professional skills and abilities at the levels of managers, technicians and workers are still insufficiently developed. It is therefore essential to strengthen the means of institutional, economic and technical training for water professionals, in order to enable a more efficient organization of collective water uses and services.

A large number of employees are needed in municipal water and sanitation services to provide access to water and sanitation, with skilled professionals, technicians, engineers and administrators performing water treatment, distribution, sewage management, maintenance, monitoring, and administrative functions. Local governments, water utilities, and relevant authorities have the responsibility to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the local context and infrastructure to determine the adequate staffing and resources for effective water and sanitation service delivery.

The hierarchical distribution of these personnel varies according to the locations studied. Workers are the most numerous, but the percentages of managers and technicians tend to increase with increasing national level of development. More particularly, the lack of technicians is often significant. In addition, workers and forepersons are often insufficiently trained.

Furthermore, labor costs tend to be a significant portion of the overall expenses in providing water and sanitation services. In order to optimize this important item of expenditure, it is essential to strengthen the skills through the initial and continuing training of these professionals.

Based on this analysis, the partners of this Coalition are committed to promote and implement the following recommended actions:

1

TO STRENGTHEN SKILLS AND DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN THE WATER SECTOR

- ◇ Strengthen awareness of the importance of professional training in development strategies and programs.
- ◇ Integrate professional training into investments.
- ◇ Encourage the dissemination of good practices and innovative and appropriate solutions in the field of professional training.
- ◇ Support the creation of new training capacities around the world and strengthen existing systems.
- ◇ Develop common training tools and improve teaching practices.
- ◇ Develop platforms of skills and resource people in the areas of drinking water and sanitation.

2

TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

- ◇ Finance training as part of investments as a percentage of new or rehabilitation works by mobilizing all stakeholders, including donors.
- ◇ Create “dedicated funds” at the national level for the development of professional training, funded by taxes or contributions proportional to the payroll of companies or a percentage of the selling price of water.
- ◇ Provide for employee training in the budgets of water companies (public or private) at a minimum of 1% of the payroll.
- ◇ Public Development Aid, bi- or multilateral, and programs devoted to water by international cooperation organizations, must integrate these principles, as well as experimentation, evaluation and the exchange of know-how in vocational training.
- ◇ Vocational training is a productive investment and must be considered as such in development projects.

3

TO INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING INTO HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- ◇ Consider training as an essential component of Human Resources Management.
- ◇ Synergize the development of skills with career progression.
- ◇ Systematically develop Multi-annual Training Master Plans at national level and within water companies.
- ◇ Training Organizations are essential players in supporting Human Resources Directors in the implementation of this strategy. There is great interest in collaborations between training organizations and water companies as an effective means of disseminating experiences acquired in the field and transferring practical knowledge.
- ◇ Have quantitative and qualitative studies and databases of employees and skills building needs around the world.
- ◇ Have quantitative and qualitative studies and databases of jobs, employees and skills development needs around the world, as well as indicators of the benefits and impact of the vocational training provided, in order to demonstrate its effectiveness.

TO USE SPECIALIZED TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS, EQUIPPED WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

- ◇ Establish the terms of reference for training with requirements for quality, professionalism and measurable efficiency.
- ◇ Define performance indicators to assess the impact of the training provided and the real return on investment.
- ◇ Engage in a true training engineering approach.

TO IMPROVE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE SECTOR, GENDER BALANCE AND YOUTH REPRESENTATION

- ◇ Incorporate water and sanitation in educational programs, create scholarships to reduce financial barriers and encourage girls and young women to engage in school and university careers in which they remain under-represented.
- ◇ Develop internship and apprenticeship to provide practical hands-on experience and skills in addition to theoretical knowledge.
- ◇ Run awareness campaigns to highlight the meaning and significance of water and sanitation professions, emphasizing the positive impact on public health, the environment, and community well-being.
- ◇ Ensure competitive entry-level salaries and benefits as well as equal hiring and pay practices to attract and retain skilled women and young professionals.
- ◇ Increase youth participation in the decision-making processes of water management organizations as well as the representation of women in leadership position.

Vocational training is a profession in its own right.

Strengthening skills in water and sanitation professions is more than ever an essential priority, if we do not want water, a scarce resource, to become one of the limiting factors in the sustainable development of many countries of the world.

Faced with climate change, the delay is becoming worrying. Unprecedented mobilization is essential for humanity to win the battle for water and prepare for the future.

WE MUST SUPPORT PROJECTS TO STRENGTHEN SKILLS IN WATER PROFESSIONS AROUND THE WORLD!