

	Theme 3. Fresh water availability and access
PR 3.1	Green drinking water utilities¹
Organised by	Marco Schouten, Vitens Evides International, the Netherlands
Partners	World Resources Institute, USA IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands SAWACO, Ho Chi Min, Vietnam Harar Water Utility, Ethiopia Evides Waterbedrijf, Rotterdam, the Netherlands Asian Development Bank
Chair	Gerhard Mulder, IUCN, the Netherlands
Rapporteur	Anne Barendregt, Vitens Evides International, the Netherlands
Presenters	Annette Ottolini, CEO Evides Waterbedrijf Rik Dierx, Vitens Evides International/SAWACO CEO Harar Water Supply and Daniel Truneh, Vitens Evides International Maxime Eiselin, IUCN NL Vijay Padmanabhan, Technical Advisor for Urban and Water, Asian Development Bank

Green drinking water utilities

By 2030, the world is projected to spend an estimated \$10 trillion on repairing and expanding water infrastructure alone. As water demand surges, dams and treatment plants age, and more extreme floods and droughts threaten our water security and drive up water management costs, there is tremendous need for cost-effective, sustainable approaches to secure ample and clean water.



The World Resources Institute (WRI), Vitens Evides International (VEI) and IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL) seek to catalyse global movement through the Green Utility Network to enhance water security, strengthen climate resilience, and bolster economic development for 100 million people through a € 1 billion investment in green-grey water infrastructure to transform how utilities invest in water management.

The Green Utility Network brings together commitments, resources, and knowledge to implement and scale-up green-green water infrastructure globally.

The 'Practice Session' on Green Utilities, ably facilitated by Gerhard Mulder (IUCN NL), was attended by 25 participants. The session centred around presentations of past (multi-purpose raw water storage reservoirs in the Biesbosch) and prospective 'green-grey' investments examples. The presented cases illustrate the role that water utilities can play in society to lower their climate footprint and make drinking water systems climate resilient and adaptive to climate change.

A panel composed of Annette Ottolini (CEO Evides waterbedrijf), Kadi Warner (Regional Senior Expert at the World Resources Institute), HE Kebede Gerba Gemossa (State Minister¹, Ethiopia), Vijay Padmanabhan (Technical Advisor for Urban and Water at ADB), reflected on the opportunities of green utilities and their roles and contribution for scaling up.

Vietnam

On the one hand, the analogy between Rotterdam and Ho Chi Min City underlines the need and potential to scale-up green-grey investment. Vietnam's participation in the International Delta Coalition (launched during AF2016), for example, could provide the political foundation for the replication of the Biesbosch (water buffering, pre-treatment, nature conservation) storage reservoirs. More information is needed to determine if the green-grey investment option will generate the desired return on investment for the local water utility

¹ Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

(SAWACO). The key challenge lies in: a) the need to establish the environmental costs and return on investment in a pre-feasibility stage, and b) -thus- the extent in which International Financing Institutions (IFIs) are willing to provide grant funding for these assessments.

Ethiopia

While SAWACO and the People's Committee of Ho Chi Min City have yet to be convinced, the enthusiasm and interest of the State Minister to pursue green investment in the Harar region highlights the importance of national government, local government/utility and wider stakeholder buy-in.

Ghana

The presented Atewa case highlights the value of monetizing ecosystem services in shifting mind-sets of local stakeholders, downstream beneficiaries (Ghana Water Company) and decision-makers away from (grey) investment costs -alone- to green-grey investments with environmental (forest ecosystem) and economic (tourism potential, savings on water treatment) returns. With 'willingness to pay' surveys pointing to a potential revenue of USD 3.3 million per annum (15% more than the current bill) through a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) scheme, a sustainable financing and repayment scenario could result in much more than a pipe dream.

The presentations, questions and answers and panel discussion underlined the importance of:

- National government *ownership* and support to regional (catchment-based) Multi Stakeholder Processes. From a needs and financing perspective.
- Regional stakeholder *leadership* in day-to-day collaboration and gathering of environmental (water quantity/quality, ecology) and economic (treatment costs, current tariffs, demand projections, willingness to pay) data to establish a business case for green-grey investment.
- Grant financing by IFIs to finance the required pre-feasibility studies for climate *adaptation* measures.
- Environmental legislation to stimulate and/or incentivize investment in energy efficiency improvement measures (climate *mitigation*) by water utilities.

This session presented and promoted an approach to transform water utilities into 'green utilities' through a partnership of water utilities, governments, donors and investors and other stakeholders. The Green Utility Network aims to promote this approach in transforming utilities and scaling up green-grey infrastructure investment.

For more information on the Green Utility Network, and the various examples, see www.greenutilitynetwork.org