



THE RABAT DECLARATION

TRAINING IN THE WATER SECTOR
IS A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT!

On 7 and 8 December 2009, the Bureau of the International Network of Water Training Centres (INWTC) met in Rabat, Morocco, and adopted the following declaration:

One thing is clear:

it is indispensable to build capacities in the water supply and sanitation sectors throughout the world!

Supplying water for people, health, hygiene, domestic uses and agricultural production has always been a major issue for mankind. Current conditions around the world are alarming:

- 1.3 billion human beings do not have access to clean water,
- 2.6 billion human beings do not have basic sanitation.

Today more than ever, improving water supply and sanitation services is a major priority for development, health and fight against poverty.

To achieve the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals, we need to create new infrastructures and improve the quality of services to better meet the users' needs. This involves improving the way their infrastructures are operated, maintained and replaced, and will require better governance of services, reinforced capacities and human resources.

Even though investments are still insufficient, significant funds are spent in the water sector each year. These investments do not always fully achieve their targets, and this is sometimes the result of design faults in infrastructures, but more often due to multiple deficiencies in the way they are managed and run. Many infrastructures become run down too quickly and funds are frequently squandered.

Actions are still too focused on simply building new equipment, without sufficient concern for how it is to be eco-



nomically managed, operated and maintained in the future, or appropriate consideration of the "Overall Water Cycle".

An observation:

initial and continued vocational training is a vital tool for boosting the efficiency of water and sanitation services

Capabilities and vocational skills are still insufficiently developed, both at managerial level, and among technicians and workers. It is therefore vital to build the institutional, economic and technical training means for those who work in water, resulting in more efficient organization of water uses and services.

This involves a large number of employees, and the needs are significant.

For example, an urban water supply service reaching 1 million inhabitants requires an estimated 500 to 700 staff members.

The hierarchical division of employees depends on the geographical zone studied. Workers are the largest group, but the percentage of managers and technicians tends to rise in line with a country's level of development (see table below).

Workforce expenditure can represent up to a third of the total cost of the water supply service. The key to optimizing this considerable item of expenditure is to build capacities through basic and continuing vocational training.



	Managers	Technicians & Supervisors	Manual workers
Developing countries	1 - 5%	10 - 15%	80 - 89%
Developed countries	5 - 15%	25 - 30%	55 - 70%



Recommendations:

In the light of this, the INWTC recommends the following:

➔ Capacity building and development of vocational training in the water sector:

- Reinforce awareness of the importance of vocational water training in development strategies and programmes.
- Integrate vocational training into investments.
- Encourage the widespread use of good practices and innovative, appropriate solutions in vocational training.
- Support the creation of new water training centres throughout the world and strengthen existing ones.
- Devise common training tools and improve educational practices.

- Develop skills and increase the number of resource persons in the fields of water supply and sanitation.

➔ Backing vocational training with sustainable financial mechanisms:

- Fund training by making investments in relation with new or rehabilitated works.
- Create "Earmarked Funds" at national level for developing vocational training; this could be funded by taxes, by contributions proportional to companies' total wage bill, or by a percentage of the water sale price.
- Include staff training in water companies' budgeting (public and private) at a minimum of 1% of the total wage bill.

Official Development Aid, both bilateral and multilateral, and international cooperation organizations' water-based programmes, should integrate these principles, and should also test, assess and exchange know-how relating to vocational training.

Vocational training is a productive investment and should be considered as such within development projects.

➔ Incorporating vocational training into human resource development strategies:

- Consider training as an essential component of Human Resource Management.
- Develop skills in line with career progression.
- Systematically draw up long-term Training Plans both nationally and within water companies.

Training bodies are vital partners for Human Resource Managers in implementing this strategy. For this reason, it is important to instigate collaborations between training centres and water companies to spread and share experiences on the field and transfer practical knowledge.

➔ Making use of specialized bodies with the appropriate capacities and educational tools:

- Define terms of reference for training, with quantifiable requirements on quality, professionalism and efficiency.
- Define performance indicators that make it possible to assess the impact of training and the actual return on investment.
- Adopt a genuine training development approach.

Vocational training is a profession in its own right.

If we do not want water, a rare resource, to become a limiting factor for sustainable development in numerous countries around the world, capacity building in water and sanitation is more crucial than ever.

Worrying delays have taken hold, and unprecedented mobilization is essential if humanity is to win the water battle and prepare for the future.

We need to support capacity-building projects in the water sector throughout the world!



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