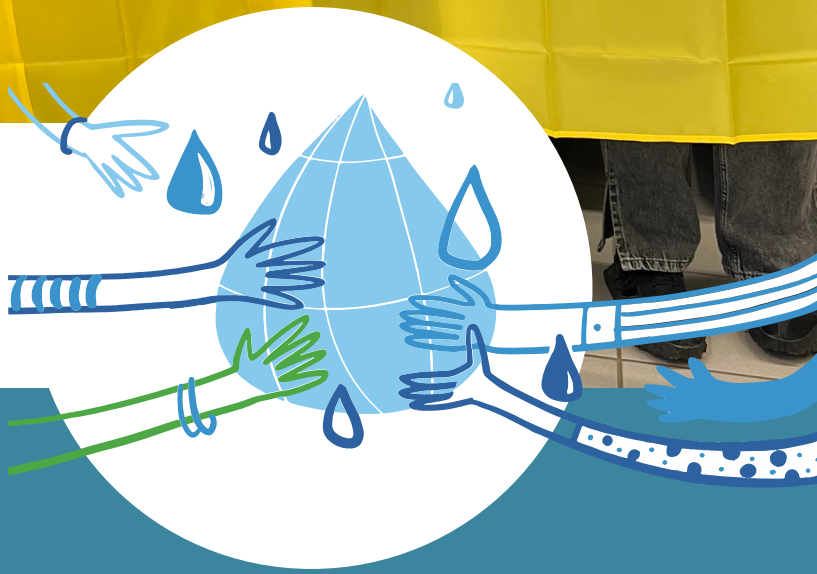
Utility Platform

For strengthening partnerships of municipal utilities worldwide



Outcome Report 6 – Water Operator Partnership

Ukrainian Water Operators Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal and German Water Operator Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOWV)

IMPRINT

Published by:
Utility Platform for Strengthening Partnerships of Municipal Utilities Worldwide

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

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Design:
DIAMOND media GmbH, Neunkirchen-Seelscheid

Image on front cover:
Technical exchange in the drinking water laboratory of OOWV in Rastede-Nethen | 03/2024 | Photo: OOWV

On behalf of
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Referat G43 Länder und Kommunen

Published: June 2024 in Berlin

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The Utility Platform is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ). The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Engagement Global/ the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) have been implementing it since July 2019. The pilot project is being developed and implemented together with the German Association of Local Public Utilities (VKU) and German Water Partnership (GWP).

Implemented by giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

and ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen

with its SERVICE AGENCY COMMUNITIES IN ONE WORLD

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

In cooperation with German Water Partnership

VKU VERBAND KOMMUNALER UNTERNEHMEN e.V.

About "Utility Platform for Strengthening Partnerships of Municipal Utilities Worldwide"

Context
In many German partner countries, municipal utilities providing public goods and services such as water and waste disposal are in poor economic shape. As a result, their service provision is only unreliable or does not reach the entire population. Due to the war, utilities in Ukraine are finding it particularly difficult to maintain operations, restore destroyed technology and bring new plants up to European Union standards. In the face of climate change, growing cities and digitalisation, utility companies in Germany and its partner countries are facing similar challenges in order to continue providing their services.

Objective
Municipal utilities in cooperating countries have better access to up-to-date, tried-and-tested knowledge and the technical and institutional expertise of German municipal utilities.

Approach
The Utility Platform promotes and supports 28 partnerships between German municipal utilities and operators in Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Jordan, Moldova, Ukraine and Albania in the water and waste sector. The platform promotes close exchange on corporate management and on operating and maintaining plants. Technical advice, mutual visits, job shadowing, virtual meetings and the procurement of technology, particularly for Ukraine, form the core of the cooperation between the companies.

The project has also established a logistics hub that dispatches donations and procurements from German utility companies to their Ukrainian counterparts. Appeals for donations by the Association of Local Utilities (VKU) make it possible to deliver needed technical equipment to Ukraine. In addition to the donations, the logistics partner Go Local also transports the goods that are procured for Ukrainian utilities as part of the 16 solidarity operator partnerships.

About the author: Dr Katharina Welle

Dr Katharina Welle is an evaluation specialist with expertise in water, sanitation and hygiene and public health in international development. She is based in Brighton, in the UK, where she works as an independent consultant carrying out evaluations, providing organisational support on theory of change, performance monitoring and learning in the WASH sector and beyond.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS

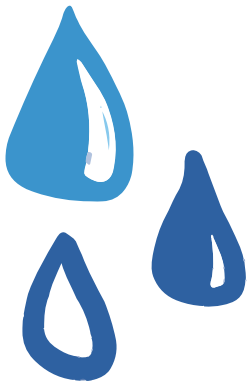
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GWOPA	Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance
IFAT	International Trade Fair for Water, Sewage, Waste and Raw Materials Management
OOWV	Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
WOP	Water Operator Partnership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The partnership between Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOWV) and the Ukrainian operators Miskvodokanal in Sumy and Chernihivvodokanal in Chernihiv started in mid-2022 as a temporary (six-month) solidarity exercise providing emergency supplies to repair war-related damages. Since then, the partnership has been extended until June 2024 to carry out a second emergency supply round. Thematic exchanges have also started between the partners.

WOP Outcomes (Chapter 3)

The WOP resulted in capacity outcomes at individual and operational level. The table below provides a visual summary of the key outcomes achieved throughout the WOP for each of the work packages (WP). Details on the achieved capacity outcomes can be found in Chapter 3 “Progress towards results by work area”.



Organisational level		Capacity outcome	Work Package 1: Sumy Emergency Support	Work Package 2: Chernihiv Emergency Support	Work Package 3: Technical advice
INDIVIDUAL		Enhanced knowledge and skills	See p. 17		See p. 20
		Increased motivation			See p. 20
		Applied new knowledge and skills	See p. 17		
OPERATIONAL		Improved data and information	See p. 17		
		Better systems			
		Improved organisational structure			
		Better equipment/ infrastructure	See p. 17	See p. 18	
		Improved management practices			
		Improved working routines			
STRATEGIC		Improved vision, mission, strategy			
		Additional resources			
		Improved external relations			
		More supportive organisational culture			
		Better leadership			
OTHER		Any other Outcomes			

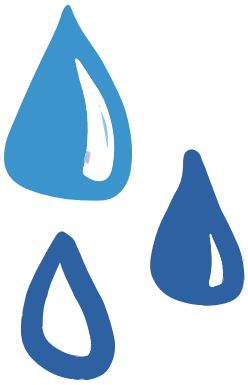
Table 1: Summary of capacity outcomes related to the WOP

Key Outcomes Achieved

- **Improved data and information (WP 1):** The pipe inspection camera enables the staff to generate additional imaging data. By linking up images with the Geographic Information System (GIS) of the enterprises network, the operator can carry out repairs more effectively - without needing to unnecessarily dig up pipes in the network.
- **Better equipment/infrastructure (WP 2):** As a result of the first round of emergency supply, Chernihivvodokanal has been able to repair the war-related damages to its pumping station and is once again able to supply the local population with drinking water. Once the sewer cleaning vehicle ordered during the supply round for 2023/4 is in use, it is expected that the operator will be able to clear blockages in the sewage network and clean its sewage network to enable repairs and inspections.
- **Enhanced knowledge and skills (WP 3):** Technical exchanges and field visits have provided Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal staff with new insights about the options available for modernising their infrastructure and the new processes and working routines the modernisations will lead to. Based on the technical advice from OOWV, the two operators plan to review their construction concepts. Having solid plans in place that conform with EU regulations is expected to make it easier for the two operators to attract the necessary investment for their infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

Partnership strength (Chapter 4)

The partnership has grown, grounded in strong personal ties between the main interlocutors of each partner coordinating emergency supplies. The partners feel that there are strong levels of trust between them, that roles and responsibilities are clear and that there is good representation from all parties at thematic exchanges. Meetings progress smoothly and all parties are eager to continue the collaboration. A source of frustration has been slow progress in procurement, an issue that is outside the direct control of the WOP participants. As collaboration progresses from supply-related to more in-depth technical exchanges, more staff members are brought into the exchanges, and the partnership is developing further.



1. INTRODUCTION

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has set up the 'Utility Platform for strengthening partnerships of municipal utilities worldwide', as a pilot project running from 2019 until 2024. Another project phase will be starting in July 2024, running until June 2027. The initiative supports partnerships between municipal utilities in Germany and its partner countries to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda. The partnerships of the pilot project follow principles of peer-support with the aim to build capacity on a not-for-profit basis to enable better service delivery. These principles were derived from the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA), which was founded in 2009.

The Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOWV)-Chernihiv-Sumy Water Operator Partnership (WOP) represents two of nine international WOPs, three solid waste operator partnerships and 16 solidarity partnerships with Ukraine supported under the current pilot project. This report summarises the evolution and strength of the partnership and the outputs and any capacity outcomes that the WOP has achieved so far for thematic areas of collaboration.

The following approach was used to identify and document WOP outputs and outcomes and to assess the strength of the partnership. First, WOP operational plans were reviewed and adapted to reflect expected results via an excel-based results reporting format for each thematic work area. Then, project outputs and capacity outcomes were assessed via document and expenditure review, exchanges with the WOP coordinator and a semi-structured interview with a WOP participant from Sumy.

To assess capacity outcomes, an adapted version of the 'Performance and Change Model' by Burke and Litwin (1992) was used. In this report, Capacity Outcome Categories are unpacked into individual, operational and strategic capacity outcomes:

Organisational level		Capacity outcome	Description
INDIVIDUAL		**Enhanced knowledge and skills**	Availability of human resources and the extent to which they have the required skills and knowledge to accomplish the work they have been assigned to.
		**Increased motivation**	Proactive tendencies to move towards goals, take needed action and persist until satisfaction is attained.
		**Applied new knowledge and skills**	Active use of the newly acquired knowledge and skills in daily practices.
OPERATIONAL		**Improved data and information**	Updated information on the conditions of any part of the water utility system, be it related to physical infrastructure (e. g. pipes), management processes, (e. g. customer database) or otherwise.
		**Better systems**	Standardised policies, procedures, management and operational information systems and mechanisms that facilitate work.
		**Improved organisational structure**	Arrangement of functions and people into specific areas and levels of responsibility, decision making authority, communication and relationships to assure effective implementation of the organisation's mission and strategy.
		**Better equipment/ infrastructure**	Tools and equipment necessary for utility operations and basic infrastructure for the business processes (e. g. water production and distribution).
		**Improved management practices**	Practices that managers use to mobilise the human and material resources at their disposal and advance the strategy, including managerial behaviour, work etiquette, professionalism, planning, communication and control.
		**Improved working routines**	The way the tasks are executed daily in consolidated routines.
STRATEGIC		**Improved vision, mission, strategy**	The vision outlines the company's goal for the future and the values that define it. A mission states how the company will achieve its vision. Strategies are the ways in which the mission and vision will be reached.
		**Additional resources**	Additional (financial) resources via new acquisition or operational costs savings.
		**Improved external relations**	Improved communications with external stakeholders and customers. This includes stakeholder relations that the operator has forged and how such networks support the achievement of its strategy.
		**More supportive organisational culture**	Collection of rules, values and principles that are enduring and guide organisational behaviour.
		**Better leadership**	Managerial staff providing overall organisational direction and serving as behavioural role models for all employees.
OTHER		**Any other Outcomes**	

Table 2: Description of capacity outcomes

The **partnership's strength** was assessed based on the 'Partnership Health Check' tool categories developed by Prescott and Stibbe (2017) via an interview with one person from OOWV and one from Sumy. To validate the findings, the report was shared for feedback with all three WOP partners.

2. THE WATER OPERATOR PARTNERSHIP (WOP)

This section presents the WOP partners OOWV, Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal and tells the history of the partnership.

2.1 WOP Partners

The WOP is coordinated by OOWV, the German partner in this partnership. The international partners are the two Ukrainian communal enterprises Chernihivvodokanal and Miskvodokanal responsible for water supply and sewage services of the city administrations Chernihiv and Sumy.

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The **German partner OOWV** is a public enterprise in the northwestern part of Germany, providing drinking water services to 1 million inhabitants across nearly 8,000 km2. It also provides wastewater services to many of the communes it supplies with drinking water. The municipal company operates 15 water works, 14,600 km of water pipes, 44 sewage treatment plants and a sewer network of 4,800 km.

The **international partner Miskvodokanal** is a Ukrainian communal enterprise providing drinking and wastewater services to 267,000 inhabitants and the local industry in the city of **Sumy** in Eastern Ukraine. The length of Miskvodokanal's water supply network is 533 km and of its sewer networks 331 km.

The **international partner Chernihivvodokanal** is another Ukrainian communal enterprise. It provides drinking water and wastewater service to approximately 300,000 people in and around Chernihiv via a water supply network of 560 km and a sewer network of 346 km.

The resource envelope for the WOP amounts to 1 million Euros over the course of two years. The resources are equally distributed for activities with both Ukrainian partners.

2.2 Timeline of the partnership

The immediate aim of the solidarity operator partnership, which started in mid-2022, is to provide support to the Ukrainian enterprises to enable them to re-establish water supply and sewage services to their populations. For Chernihivvodokanal this includes equipment to repair the destroyed pumping station. For Miskvodokanal the support aims to equip the partner with the means to understand and repair the damage caused to its wastewater system by the war. In January 2023, the partnership was extended until June 2024 and expanded to include initial thematic peer-to-peer exchanges in addition to emergency aid. Table 1 below outlines the key activities over the past 1.5 years.

Colleagues from Miskvodokanal received the first transport of urgently needed materials | 2023

Photo: Miskvodokanal

Timeline	Key events / developments
June 2022	**Matchmaking at IFAT.** At the international trade fair for water and wastewater management (IFAT) in Munich, GIZ matches two Ukrainian water operators with OOWV with the intention to enter into a solidarity operator partnership. Originally, the partnership is envisaged for a period of six months with the aim to supply materials up to a volume of 100,000 Euros for each Ukrainian operator.
July – October 2022	**Emergency supply items are identified and ordered.** Several remote meetings take place between OOWV and the Ukrainian operators to understand their needs. The experts jointly identify the emergency supplies to support the operators (materials to repair the pumping station in Chernihiv and water testing equipment and a visual inspection vehicle for Miskvodokanal to identify the damage caused to the wastewater canals) and the equipment is ordered by OOWV.
November 2022	**A first visit to Germany.** In November, two representatives from both, Miskvodokanal and Chernihiv, visit the facilities at OOWV. In addition to the initial supply of materials, potential topics for thematic exchanges are identified.
January 2023	**The partnership is extended until June 2024.** The total funding is increased to 1 million Euros. A second round of emergency supplies is initiated. OOWV present the state of the partnership at a 'Youtility' lunch to other WOPs of the Utility Platform.
February 2023	**Chernihivvodokanal visits the 'Rebuild Ukraine' Congress in Warsaw.** The visit provides an opportunity for the operator to present its rehabilitation plans and to meet potential suppliers.
May 2023	D**elivery of first round of emergency supplies.** The procured emergency equipment is delivered to both operators.
May / June 2023	**Ukrainian partners travel to Germany for networking and training courses.** Staff members of Chernihiv and Miskvodokanal participate in a training on the 'basics of wastewater management for non-water managers' and a staff member from Miskvodokanal also participates in a laboratory course, both organised for all Ukrainian partners as part of the wider Utility Platform pilot project by the German operator Stadtentwässerung Dresden.
November 2023	**A first round of in-person technical exchanges take place.** A further visit from both partners to OOWV is facilitated. The intention is to discuss first images of the damage to pipes with Miskvodokanal and technical plans to rehabilitate and modernise the sewage treatment plant in Sumy and water works in Chernihiv. In addition, the partners visited the 'German-Ukrainian Municipal Partnerships Conference 2023' in Leipzig as well as the 'Rebuild Ukraine 2.0' Congress in Warsaw. To broaden the view on water production and wastewater treatment, they visited Polish water operators outside the city of Warsaw in Kobyłka and Otwock.

Table 3: Timeline of WOP activities

3. PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS BY WORK AREA

This section documents the results achieved for partners between July 2022 and November 2023. The results are organised into three work packages: (i) emergency supply for Sumy, (ii) emergency supply for Chernihiv and (iii) technical advice on water and sewage plant rehabilitation plans. The documentation here is complemented by an excel-based results matrix, which has been developed as part of the assignment.

3.1 Work Package 1: Emergency supply Sumy

Implementation of activities

Challenge: Sumy was one of the first locations hit by the war in early 2022. During Russian attacks, parts of Sumy's sewage network were damaged and destroyed, hampering the operator's ability to service the local population. Due to the evacuation of parts of the population, Miskvodokanal's sales of services decreased by 35%. During a siege, the operator also ran into logistical difficulties of supplying the population with drinking water supply and wastewater treatment. When the partnership was formed, Miskvodokanal did not have the necessary equipment to understand the extent and nature of the damage to its sewer infrastructure.

Goal: The aim of the emergency supply to Sumy is to enable Miskvodokanal to identify and repair the damage caused to its sewer network.

Progress to date: There are two rounds of emergency supply for Sumy, one in 2022/23 and one in 2023/24. The total value of procurements for both rounds amounted to approx. 400,000 Euros. In the first round, the partners identified a pipe inspection camera and laboratory equipment to enable the operator to properly investigate the damage caused to its sewer network. All the equipment has been procured and delivered to Sumy. As the enterprise was able to obtain a second inspection vehicle from other sources, the GIZ-supplied camera is now allocated to inspecting damage to its drinking water pipes. OOWV provided online training to Miskvodokanal staff members on how to take images. Miskvodokanal staff members have taken a first set of images, and a joint analysis has been carried out during the operator's visit to OOWV in November 2023. In the second round of supplies Miskvodokanal identified several further needs. The plan was to supply vehicles for damage processing in the drinking water and wastewater sector. Due to the difficult procurement situation, OOWV is coordinating alternatives with its partner in Sumy.

Donated goods from OOWV: the first transport of urgently needed materials to Sumy and Chernihiv has begun | 06/2023

Photo: OOWV

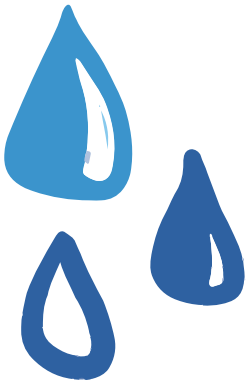
Outcomes achieved

Individual level

- **Enhanced knowledge and skills:** Through online training and technical exchanges, staff members have gained new skills in image interpretation, especially in analysing images to identify specific locations of its network needing repair.
- **Applied new knowledge and skills:** The operator can carry out repairs more effectively - without needing to unnecessarily dig up pipes in the network.

Operational level

- **Improved data and information:** The camera enables the staff to generate additional imaging data. By linking up images with the Geographic Information System (GIS) of the enterprises network, the operator can carry out repairs more effectively - without needing to unnecessarily dig up pipes in the network.
- **Better equipment/infrastructure:** The pipe inspection camera has been dedicated to inspecting damage to water supply pipes. The laboratory equipment is used for phosphor and nitrogen analysis, which the enterprise is unable to procure during the war, and which the enterprise considers as important in preparation for upgrading its effluent standards in line with European Union regulations.



3.2 Work Package 2: Emergency supply Chernihiv

Implementation of activities

Challenge: Chernihiv suffered major infrastructure damage right at the start of the war. Damages to the water and wastewater infrastructure include parts of the water and sewer network, wells, water tanks, and equipment and electricity supplies at pumping stations and the company's technical vehicles. Three of the five drinking water pumping stations were damaged or destroyed, amongst them pumping station No. 5, which supplies people in the surrounding areas of the city.

Goal: The emergency supply to Chernihiv aims to enable the utility to repair the war damage to Chernihiv's drinking water pumping station No. 5 and to enable basic sewer cleaning. The expectation is that, based on the emergency repairs, the community of Chernihiv and internally displaced persons will be reconnected to water and wastewater services. The funds provided by GIZ complement other emergency support, e.g. from Save the Children International, which enabled the operator to repair one of its artesian wells (well No. 3).

Progress to date: There are two rounds of emergency supply for Chernihiv, one in 2022/23 and one in 2023/24. Procurements across both rounds totalled around 400,000 Euros. The first round comprised three pumps, pipes and parts for switchboxes to repair the war-damaged pumping station No. 5. All equipment for 2022/23 was successfully delivered in May 2023 except for some small electronic components. The water pumping station No. 5 is now working and supplies the population since October 2023. For 2023/24, experts jointly selected sewer cleaning equipment in the form of a suction vehicle to enable the utility to carry out basic sewer cleaning. The vehicle has been ordered by OOWV and was delivered to Chernihiv in May 2024.

Peers jointly selected and procured a suction vehicle to enable Chernihivvodokanal to carry out basic sewer cleaning | 2024

Photo: Miskvodokanal

Outcomes achieved

Operational level

- **Better equipment/infrastructure:** As a result of the first round of emergency supply, Chernihivvodokanal has been able to repair the war-related damages to its pumping station and is once again able to supply the local population with drinking water. Once the sewer cleaning vehicle ordered during the supply round for 2023/4 is in use, it is expected that the operator will be able to clear blockages in the sewage network and clean its sewage network to enable repairs and inspections.

3.3 Work Package 3: Technical advice on water and sewage plant rehabilitation plans

The thematic exchanges with Chernihivvodokanal and Miskvodokanal revolve around the restoration and modernisation related to key water and sewage infrastructure.

Implementation of activities

Challenge: Both Ukrainian communal enterprises have drawn up first concepts to rebuild and modernise their water and sewage infrastructure after the war and would like them scrutinised by their German counterpart OOWV. In Sumy, the existing wastewater treatment plant has a high energy

consumption due to the existing pumping equipment, a lack of full automation of technological processes and no sludge management. Hence, the operator will not be able to comply with sanitary regulations of the European Union (EU) in the upcoming years. In Chernihiv, reconstruction plans will serve to replace and modernise war-damaged infrastructure (drinking water pumping station No. 2 and sewage treatment plant).

Goal: The aim is to provide technical advice on the operators´ concepts, including feedback by OOWV experts on any necessary adjustments needed to conform with EU rules and regulations.

Progress so far: WOP partners decided that OOWV advice will focus on the wastewater treatment plant in Sumy and the water pumping station in Chernihiv. However, both partners will attend all meetings together to learn from the discussions. Partners have shared their concepts with OOWV and OOWV technical staff shared their experiences and provided feedback during a visit of Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal staff to Oldenburg in November 2023. During the visit, OOWV experts explained that sludge management provides an opportunity for lowering the energy consumption of the wastewater treatment plant. In addition, the upcoming EU rules and regulations for wastewater treatment plants were presented and discussed. Chernihiv presented the current progress in reconstructing of water pumping station No 2. The OOWV experts shared their experience by explaining the processes of two water works at OOWV which are currently being rebuild. These discussions were complemented by a field visit to the new water works in Marienhafe, currently under construction. The plan is to set up monthly technical exchanges going forward during which OOWV will continue to technically accompany the reconstruction processes in Chernihiv and Sumy.

Partners from OOWV and Ukraine examine images from a camera inspection of a sewage pipe together with experts from OOWV and Ukraine | 11/2023

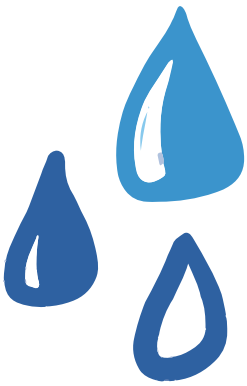
Photo: OOWV

Outcomes achieved

Individual level

- **Enhanced knowledge and skills:** Technical exchanges and field visits have provided Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal staff with new insights about the options available for modernising their infrastructure and the new processes and working routines the modernisations will lead to. Based on the technical advice from OOWV, the two operators plan to review their construction concepts. Having solid plans in place that conform with EU regulations is expected to make it easier for the two operators to attract the necessary investment for their infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

- **Increased motivation:** For both operators, the technical interactions have also acted as a strong motivator for staff involved in the exchange visits and online discussions.



4. PARTNERSHIP STRENGTH AND LESSONS LEARNED

This section documents the WOP participants' perceptions on the evolution and of the overall partnership strength based on an assessment of partnership categories based on an interview with the coordinator and one of the WOP participants, Miskvodokanal. This means that the information in this section speaks particularly for the relationship between OOWV and Sumy, although most of the thematic exchanges involve both partners simultaneously and are therefore expected to reflect the experience of all partner organisations.

Partnership design

Overall, this WOP has developed into a strong partnership since the start of interactions in mid-2022. The WOP started off as a solidarity procurement exercise rather than setting joint thematic goals and working towards them. Several trips and regular (bi-weekly) online exchanges enabled partners to set up a personal connection, which has created a solid basis for collaboration. The generosity of OOWV, which went out of its way to support its Ukrainian partners during the war, e. g. via donations of unused electrical equipment, has further contributed to creating strong ties. As collaboration moves further into the direction of technical exchanges, the partnership has grown further and widened to include a wider set of staff amongst all partners.

Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities between partners are clear. On the Ukrainian side, the director and chief engineer are usually present, and all parties are interested and motivated.

Meeting processes and representation

The communication between partners is clear, transparent and well organised. OOWV usually sends the meeting agenda ahead of time, which enables the Ukrainian partners to organise themselves ahead of time. Language difficulties are overcome with the support of an interpreter.
In terms of the representation of partners at meetings, the start of technical exchanges has seen more and more technical colleagues getting involved. Partners find that the level of participation is good from all sides.

Work processes

In terms of work processes, a source of frustration has been the slow progress and temporary setbacks with procurement. As OOWV is a public enterprise, they are not as flexible and fast as private organisations in the procurement process. As the WOP moves towards technical exchanges, it is expected that this issue will become less relevant.

Trust and transparency

There are strong levels of trust amongst partners facilitated by the personal ties developed over the past 1.5 years. WOP participants have discovered each other's culture, cuisine and taken an interest in each other's personal lives.

At the moment, WOP partners are exploring widening out the partnership to the Ukrainian partners' German twin cities and water and sewerage providers of Aachen (twinned with Chernihiv) and Celle (twinned with Sumy). A first exchange visit has taken place to Aachen and contacts are currently being established with Celle.

Resources

In terms of resourcing, the partners understand that there are some financial resources to support the coordination of the partnership on the side of OOWV and that Ukrainian partners benefit in terms of the technical insights and emergency supplies.

Group photo of the delegation during the tour of the waterworks in Marienhafe | 11/2023

Photo: OOWV

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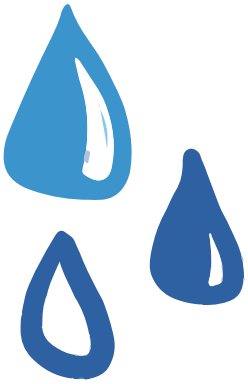
OOWV (2023c): Solidarity Partnership between Water Operators in Sumy – Chernihiv – OOWV. Presentation at Utility Lunch 19.01.23

OOWV (2023d): Inventarliste Stand July 2023

Interviews

Staff members from OOWV
Staff members from Miskvodokanal in Sumy
Staff members from Chernihivvodokanal



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Thank you to all employees from Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband, Miskvodokanal and Chernihivvodokanal who contributed to this publication via interviews, photos, editing, etc.!

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