

## Note to unions about EU financial support for public-public partnerships in water and sanitation

The European Commission is providing €40 million for non-profit partnerships to support water services in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This money has been made available as a result of intense pressure from NGOs and PSI/EPUSU over the past years, to encourage support for water services in developing countries on the basis of solidarity, not profit.

### 1. What it is about

What are water partnerships?

Established public water operators provide training and other support for public water operators in developing countries. They help countries develop better water systems, without private companies taking a profit and distorting the priorities of the service.

Why is the EU giving money for water partnerships?

Because of a successful campaign by unions and NGOs to support public water services, not privatisations. Also, because the previous €500 million of EU money over the previous six years did not provide the necessary results – in part because few public utilities were involved.

Why should trade unions get involved?

Water partnerships strengthen public water services, avoid privatisation and create secure jobs with proper training. See below for more details.

What can unions do?

Contact public sector water employers to encourage them to become partners. Contact other unions in Europe or ACP countries – discuss what is needed, and discuss which operators might form a partnership. See below for more details.

### 2. Issues that projects can cover

What are the projects for?

The objective of the projects is to 'develop capacity in the water & sanitation sector [in ACP countries], leading to better water and sanitation governance and management, and to the sustainable development and maintenance of infrastructure'. Every project has to deliver a 'concrete operational result', and this has to be of lasting benefit so that it can be " .... maintained as a permanent asset to the beneficiary partner(s) even after the end of the project implementation."

What does capacity-building mean?

It means strengthening the competence of staff and of the organisation, so that there are lasting improvements. Training is a central part of almost every capacity-building programme. Projects also have to include a 'communication and visibility plan', which is very important to ensure that everyone – politicians, managers, workers, and public – understand the changes and their importance.

What can the projects focus on? Can they address labour relations or public participation?

Yes. The guidance note gives a number of examples of 'themes', which include:

- Labour management tools
- Improving efficiency in management practices
- Building a participatory process to allow consensual institution-building within local politics
- Awareness-raising and institutional support such as the reinforcement of the municipalities' management and control capabilities, in-house organisational restructuring or the development of transparency and accountability practices through the involvement of local civil society organisations.
- Good governance and integrated water resource management (IWRM)

Can projects deal with investment issues?

Yes. Other examples given by the guidance note include:

- Accessing investment finance
- Methodologies for expanding access to the poor

Can projects deal with technical issues?

Yes. The guidance note mentions:

- System maintenance and improvement (including leakage reduction)
- Water quality testing
- Water resources protection and pollution prevention including preliminary studies to assess the state of water resources & necessity and scale of infrastructure developments

### 3. How trade unions can be involved

Can trade unions be involved as partners in these projects?

Yes, and this is encouraged by the EC. The guidance says that it "encourages partnership projects that actively involve non-state actors, including trade union organisations and civil society". The main partners must be public authorities or water utilities, but trade unions and civil society organisations can be included in proposals as 'supporting partners'.

What is the role of supporting partners like trade unions?

Supporting partners "can assist in activities such as awareness raising and in the institution-building process." This can include a significant role in developing new ways of working with the public, for example, or better employment and training practices.

Can trade unions initiate partnerships?

Yes. Unions can play an especially important role from the start, by making contacts. African or Caribbean or Pacific trade unions who want to get their water utility supported by a public sector company, for example, can contact unions in Europe for help in finding a supportive public water operator. European or ACP country unions who want to encourage a progressive water operator to help build capacity, can contact unions in Africa to make them aware they are available.

Do trade unions get paid for their involvement in projects?

No. But travel and accommodation expenses of supporting partners, such as unions, will be paid. And if the project runs training courses which use trade unionists as lecturers, for example, they should be paid like other lecturers.

So unions can help create partnerships, become supporting partners, and help develop proposals?

Yes. **PSI will provide advice and support for unions who want to initiate partnerships and help develop proposals.**

## How will PSI help?

- PSI can help affiliated unions in all stages.
- We can help you identify suitable employers – in the EU, and in Africa/Caribbean/Pacific.
- We can help you develop ideas for partnerships – help you work out what are the problems, work out how training and re-organisation could help
- We can help you find a partner – by connecting trade unionists in Africa and Europe
- We can help you find other ‘supporting partners’, like NGOs
- We can help with writing the ‘concept notes’ for the proposals

## 4. Who can be partners

Who can submit applications?

The applicants have to be public authorities – such as municipalities or communes – or water utilities (or other water organisations, such as an association of water operators). These can be either from an EU or from an African, Caribbean or Pacific country. These applicants will receive the grant and provide the training and capacity-building – and they can bring in other ‘implementing partners’, such as training bodies, which also have to be public authorities or water utilities (or other water organisations)

What organisations can be supported through these partnerships?

The organisation benefitting from a project must be from an ACP country, and must also be a public authority or water utility or other water organisation. A project can include more than one beneficiary organisation – for example 2 or 3 water utilities in one country, or a group of local authorities or utilities in a number of countries.

Have public sector water operators done this before?

Yes. There are many cases where European and other public water operators have helped their counterparts in developing countries. You can read more about them in a PSIRU report here <http://www.psiru.org/reports/2009-03-W-PUPS.doc>

Can private companies use this funding for commercial projects?

No. The guidance says very clearly that “actions which are profit-making” are ineligible.

## 5. Project size

How long can projects last?

Projects must be between 2 years and 5 years

How much money can each project have?

Grants can be for a minimum of €250,000 and a maximum of €1 million.

Does the EC grant cover the full cost of a project?

No. The EC grant will only cover 75% of the cost of a project –25% of the costs must be financed another way. But if a water operator or municipality pays the salaries of staff who are seconded to work on a project, that will count towards the 25%.

How does the application have to be submitted?

There is a 2-stage process. 4-page concept notes have to be submitted to the EC by 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The EC will select some of these and invite them to submit full bids, in January 2011. The full bids have to be submitted by March 2011. Then the EC makes a final selection in May 2011, and contracts will be signed in August 2011. There is no advantage in applying early: no concept notes will be examined until after 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

**ACP countries where no eligibility restrictions concerning  
applicants, partners or locations of the proposed public-public partnership project(s)**

Angola	Ghana	Rwanda
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada	Samoa
Bahamas	Guinea-Bissau	Sao Tome & Principe
Barbados	Guyana	Senegal
Belize	Haiti	Seychelles
Benin	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Botswana	Kiribati	Solomon Islands
Burkina Faso	Ivory Coast	Somalia
Burundi	Jamaica	St. Kitts-Nevis
Cameroon	Lesotho	St. Lucia
Cape Verde	Liberia	St. Vincent & Grenadines
Central African Republic	Malawi	Suriname
Chad	Mali	Swaziland
Comoros	Marshall Islands	Tanzania
Congo - Brazzaville	Mauritania	Timor-Leste
Cook Islands	Mauritius	Togo
Democratic Republic of Congo	Micronesia, Fed. States	Tonga
Djibouti	Mozambique	Trinidad & Tobago
Dominica	Namibia	Tuvalu
Dominican Republic	Nauru	Uganda
Eritrea	Nigeria	Vanuatu
Ethiopia	Niue	Zambia
Gabon	Palau	
Gambia	Papua New Guinea	