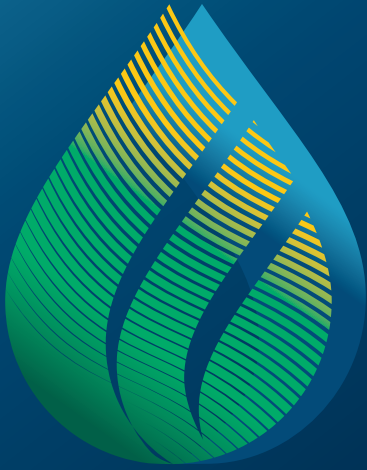




World Health  
Organization



# RegNet

WHO International Network  
of Drinking-water and  
Sanitation Regulators

# Protecting and promoting public health through effective regulation of drinking-water and sanitation services

Regulation is a powerful tool that can be used to improve the safety of drinking-water and sanitation services. The absence of regulation may compromise accountability, leading to increased risks to public health. Such risks may go undetected until outbreaks of diseases related to water and sanitation occur.

A transition to professionally managed and regulated services is central to achieving and sustaining Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) targets on universal access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation. There is growing recognition of the catalytic role that effective regulation can play in improving the provision, sustainability and safety of water and sanitation services.

## World Health Organization (WHO) International Network of Drinking-water and Sanitation Regulators (RegNet)

As a global network of drinking water and sanitation regulators, RegNet members include officials from national and subnational regulatory institutions in Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South Asia and the Western Pacific. Regional regulators' associations are also represented in RegNet, including the *Asociación de Entes Reguladores de Agua Potable y Saneamiento de las Américas* (ADERASA) in Latin America; the European Network of Drinking-Water Regulators (ENDWARE); and the East and Southern Africa Water and Sanitation (ESAWAS) Regulators Association. Coordinated by WHO headquarters, RegNet leverages the capacities of the WHO regional and country offices.



## Mission

The mission of RegNet is to protect the public's health by strengthening the capacities of regulators around the world to support the delivery of safe, well-managed services.

## Network objectives

RegNet is a global forum for sharing and promoting good practices, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange and facilitating capacity development. The strategic objectives for the period 2023–2030 are to:



Support the establishment and application of risk-based regulatory frameworks for drinking-water and sanitation services, and to protect the public's health



Strengthen capacities for implementing good practices and evidence-based responses to emerging regulatory challenges



Promote oversight/regulation of sanitation, particularly non-sewered services



Promote oversight/regulation of small water supplies, including in rural areas

More broadly, RegNet seeks to catalyse the progressive implementation of the human rights to water and sanitation, and achievement of SDG 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.







## Becoming a member of RegNet

RegNet membership is open to professionals who are responsible for ensuring the safety of drinking-water production and/or sanitation service provision and quality through setting or enforcing appropriate standards and regulations; and/or independent surveillance at national and subnational levels.



Interested parties can contact WHO to request membership, who will confirm their roles and request. WHO may also target potential members for identification to ensure a diverse and engaged network<sup>1</sup>.

Individuals interested in joining RegNet are invited to:

-  review the RegNet webpage;
-  review the terms of reference;
-  fill in the expression of interest form, if they meet the criteria set out in the terms of reference; and
-  contact [regnet@who.int](mailto:regnet@who.int) with the completed form, or for more information.

## What it means to be a member

Regulators play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and quality of water and sanitation services and, ultimately, protecting the health of the public. Membership to RegNet offers various opportunities including:

-  **access to global expertise:** RegNet members gain access to a vast pool of knowledge and experience from other regulators around the world, and can share advice and good practice to address common and emerging challenges;
-  **capacity development:** through WHO's global network of scientific and technical experts, RegNet members gain technical advice and support on specific regulatory issues, including managing specific contaminants; and
-  **advocacy and influence:** being part of RegNet means members can join a powerful collective voice advocating for robust water and sanitation standards worldwide, influence international policies and contribute to the development of regulations that prioritize public health.

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<sup>1</sup> Download the RegNet terms of reference.

## How RegNet works with partners in the field of regulation

Through RegNet, WHO also works with various partners in addition to regional regulators' associations to accelerate learning and sharing of experience and catalyse improvements in regulation, including:

- the **International Water Association's** International Water Regulators' Forum which brings together economic, environmental and quality-of-service regulators;
- LIS-Water**, which works to strengthen public polices, the regulation and management of water and sanitation services;
- Sanitation and Water for All**, which convenes multi-stakeholder platforms – including a utilities and regulators constituency – to raise political will, ensure good governance and optimize financing in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector;
- the **United Nations Children's Fund** and the **IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute**, who are working to strengthen governance and accountability in the water and sanitation sector; and
- financing institutions, including the **African Development Bank; Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank** and the **World Bank**, which support policy and institutional reform in countries, including in economic regulation.

With RegNet's focus on the public health aspects of water and sanitation regulation, collaboration and engagement with these partners aims to foster complementary efforts in other areas of regulation.

## Resources and tools



**Help shape global norms on water and sanitation:** as one of the primary target audiences for much of WHO's norms on the safety of drinking water and sanitation, RegNet members also serve as a key resource for providing end-user feedback in the norms development process.



**Contribute to the global monitoring agenda:** members provide strategic input on the use of regulatory data in the global monitoring of water and sanitation services under the 2030 Agenda.



# Frequently asked questions

## *Is RegNet only for regulators?*

Individuals or organizations may perform aspects of regulation or oversight of services even if regulator is not in the job title or if the regulatory function is not fully independent. This is particularly common for sanitation, where regulatory mandates and accountability mechanisms are under development in many countries. Any individuals with oversight, standards setting, surveillance or enforcement functions for water supply and sanitation service provision are welcome to apply for RegNet membership.

## *How often does RegNet meet?*

The network meets face-to-face at least once a year and holds additional online meetings and webinars when necessary.

## *What is expected of members?*

Members are expected to contribute to RegNet's strategic planning; participate regularly in meetings: share knowledge or peer advice on regulatory matters under discussion; provide feedback on technical matters under consultation; and advocate for the network. Further, members are encouraged to raise specific regulatory concerns/requests for advice and support, share their experiences on different issues and share their questions.

## *Who attends RegNet meetings?*

Meetings are exclusively for RegNet members and convening WHO staff. This "safe space" enables members to candidly discuss regulatory concerns and obtain practicable advice. WHO also convenes an advisory group of external partners and a subset of RegNet members to ensure meeting topics are coordinated with topics in other regulatory initiatives.





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For more information:



[regnet@who.int](mailto:regnet@who.int)



[www.who.int/groups/international-network-of-drinking-water-and-sanitation-regulators](http://www.who.int/groups/international-network-of-drinking-water-and-sanitation-regulators)

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