



## WATER & SANITATION: CORNERSTONE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Towards Sustainable Development  
Goal 6 in 2030

# VEI STRATEGY 2030





## WATER AND SANITATION A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Water is life — and key to achieving many Sustainable Development Goals. **SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation**, enables progress across the board: it drives economic growth (**SDG 1**), prevents diseases (**SDG 3**), keeps children in school (**SDG 4**), empowers women and girls (**SDG 5**), and protects our planet from climate impact (**SDG 13**).

By ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all, we unlock opportunities and progress for everyone.

VEI STRATEGY 2030



## INTRODUCTION

# WATER & SANITATION: CORNERSTONE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Access to water and sanitation is fundamental to public health, education, gender equality, and economic development. It means fewer cases of diarrhea and cholera, more children attending school, and less time spent fetching water. Water systems drive urban economies. In short: water and sanitation services are essential for building healthy, prosperous, and stable societies.

Yet today, millions of people around the world still live without safe drinking water or decent sanitation. Social and economic developments are hampered by water challenges. Population growth, urbanization, and climate change will intensify these challenges, while hundreds of billions of USD are needed to achieve universal access to water & sanitation services.



### WATER OPERATOR PARTNERSHIPS

Water & sanitation utilities are key, now and in the future, to addressing the global water and sanitation crisis efficiently and sustainably.

Therefore, VEI develops Water Operator Partnerships – WOPs – with public utilities. WOPs are long-term, not-for-profit and peer-to-peer partnerships to build capacity and mobilize investments in the global water & sanitation sector to serve more people and provide better services, including vulnerable communities. Since 2005, VEI works with more than 50 public water utilities worldwide.





## VEI STRATEGY 2030



### THE IMPACT OF THE WOPs: TRIANGLE OF SUCCESS

To achieve sustainable impact through WOPs, three key stakeholders are involved, in a balanced interplay:

1. Water utilities in the Netherlands provide advanced knowledge, experience and know-how for capacity building, as well as financial backing of VEI to leverage funding from financiers to build stronger WOPs.
2. WOP partners – public utilities in the countries where projects are implemented – play a central role in shaping and leading WOP activities. Their leadership is essential to define priorities and drive the performance improvements needed to strengthen service delivery.
3. Financiers are important to both cofinance the WOPs, and make available investment funding for infrastructural projects. VEI engages with financiers as strategic partners, fostering co-financed joint initiatives. This integrated approach strengthens WASH infrastructure sustainability and overall service delivery.





## VEI STRATEGY 2030

# WATER OPERATOR PARTNERSHIP WOPs IN A CHALLENGING CONTEXT

### EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

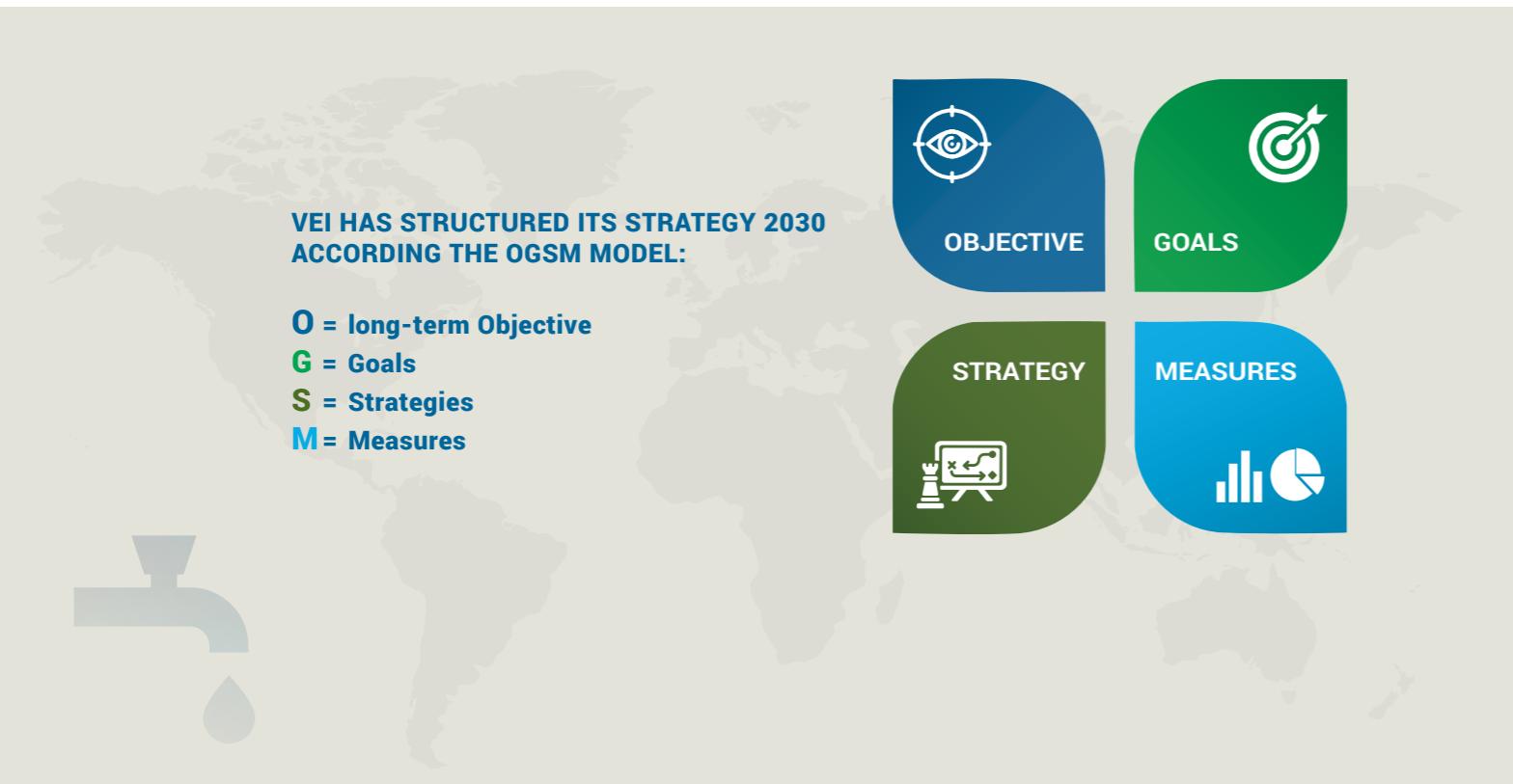
Water utilities around the world are facing growing challenges related to water resource availability and demographic change, combined with the influx of new urban dwellers (geopolitical and social unrest), natural disasters and economic decline (inflation). At the same time, the mandate of many water utilities is expanding to include sanitation (such as faecal sludge management), growing service areas (including rural areas) and the protection of water resources.

As a result, urban water services are under increasing pressure, while utilities remain cash-strapped due to a significant financing gap. This gap deepens despite significant efforts from governments and financiers, and is amplified by budget cuts of bilateral and multilateral donors, and increasing operational costs, e.g. for energy.

### INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The importance of public utilities, and the contribution of WOPs in particular, is increasingly recognized. WOPs are viewed positively for their strong ownership, flexibility and adaptability. VEI contributes actively to WOP development and is regarded as a neutral partner with an extensive network, a large pool of experts, a trusted administration and a solid reputation. Despite the growing support for the WOP-model, challenges exist: the need to intensify relationships with Dutch water utilities to continue mobilizing knowledge and capacity, to diversify the funding base for WOPs, reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint; and ensuring lasting impact by embedding knowledge and capacity within partner utilities.





## OUR OBJECTIVE AND GOALS EXPLAINED

### OBJECTIVE AND GOALS OF STRATEGY 2030

VEI has structured its Strategy 2030 according the OGSM model, as shown on the left.

#### ■ OBJECTIVE

VEI's long-term Objective is to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, in 2030 and beyond, by creating universal access to safe and sustainable water & sanitation services.

#### ■ GOALS

This objective is structured along two main Goals.

1. At least 11.5 million people with access to (improved) climate resilient water and sanitation services before the end of 2030.
2. (Financially) sustainable water supply & sanitation utilities with improved work processes.





## OUR STRATEGIES AND MEASURES EXPLAINED

### STRATEGIES & MEASURES

1. Mobilize funding to create access to water & sanitation (direct SDG), investments for WOP partner utilities (indirect SDG) and for WOP capacity building programs.

*WOPs need resources to create impact: resources for capacity building activities, as well as investments to build infrastructures for access to water & sanitation.*

■ **MEASURE:** establish a Business Development Committee that connects the objectives of donors with the WOP, through an integrated offering for Water, Sanitation, Climate adaptation and Crisis resilience.

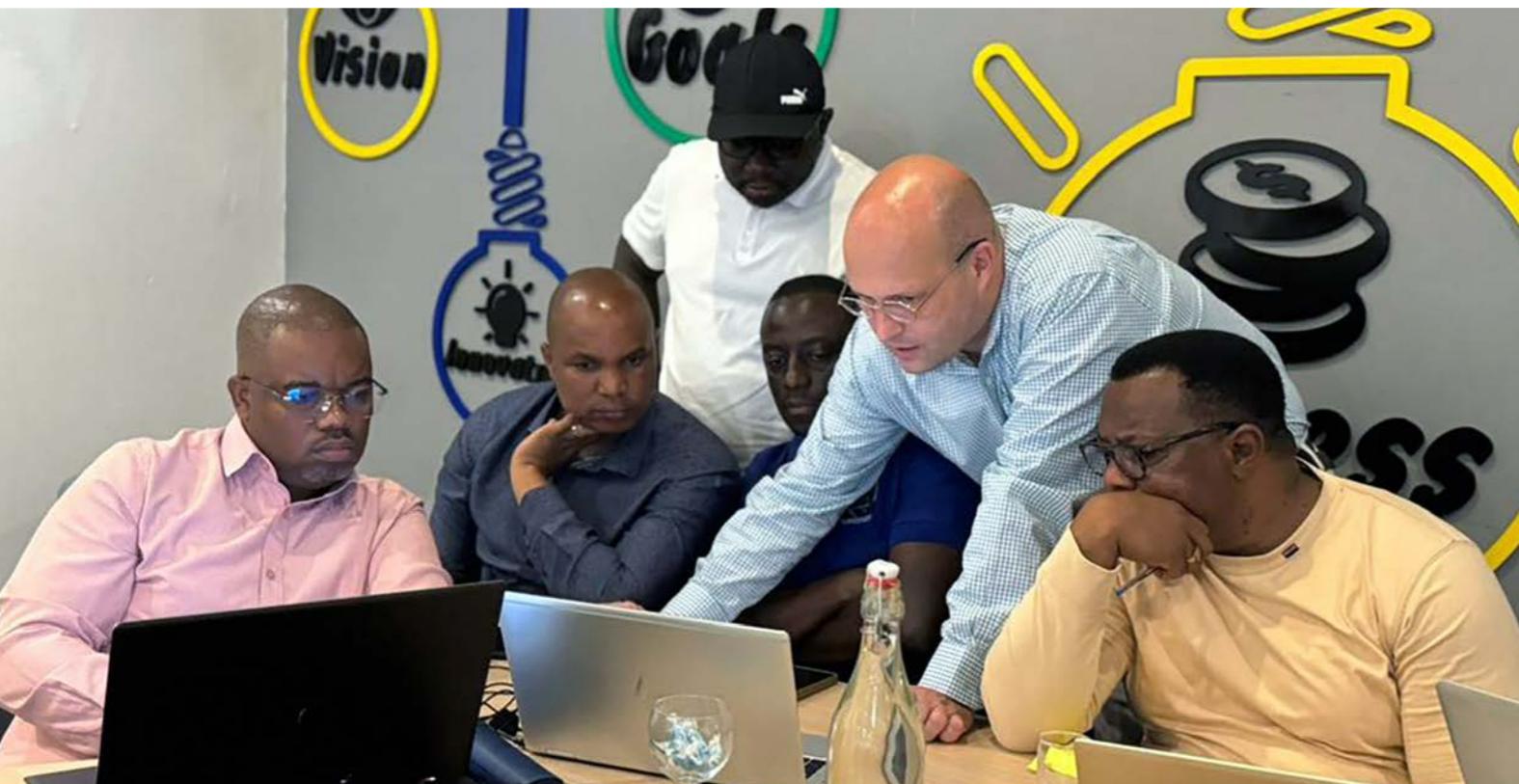
2. Improve the Peer-to-Peer model and mobilize (Dutch) expertise for WOP partner utilities to create capacity for improved sustainable water & sanitation services.

*WOPs are centered around peer-to-peer collaboration to exchange knowledge and know-how. This peer-to-peer model can be further optimized through, for example, improved preparation of experts and standardized approaches.*

■ **MEASURE:** intensified collaboration with Dutch water utilities to increase the pool of experts and improve the impact of their work supported by implementable approaches and readily available knowledge.



## OUR STRATEGIES AND MEASURES EXPLAINED



### 3. Promote the WOP model – evidence based – to financiers and relevant stakeholders

*To develop new WOPs with impact it is necessary that the added value of the WOP-approach is known. Evidence-based cases are the basis for building additional support. These need to be disseminated to Dutch water utilities, our WOP partners and the larger international water community, including financiers.*

■ **MEASURE:** VEI will research the impacts of WOPs, fine-tune its monitoring and intensify dissemination of best practices.

### 4. Develop knowledge to create (climate and crisis) resilient water resources, organizations and systems for water & sanitation (operational excellence)

*Operational excellence means ensuring that all WOPs and projects continue to deliver knowledge that is relevant, needed, and demanded by WOP partners. This means aligning project inputs (knowledge and financial resources) with the most pressing global challenges, including the impacts of climate change and other crises.*

■ **MEASURE:** we strengthen mechanisms for continuous monitoring and learning, secure partnerships for knowledge development and continuously improve monitoring; ensuring that project outcomes remain impactful and up to date.





## OUR STRATEGIES AND MEASURES EXPLAINED

### 5. Further develop VEI into a responsible and productive organization

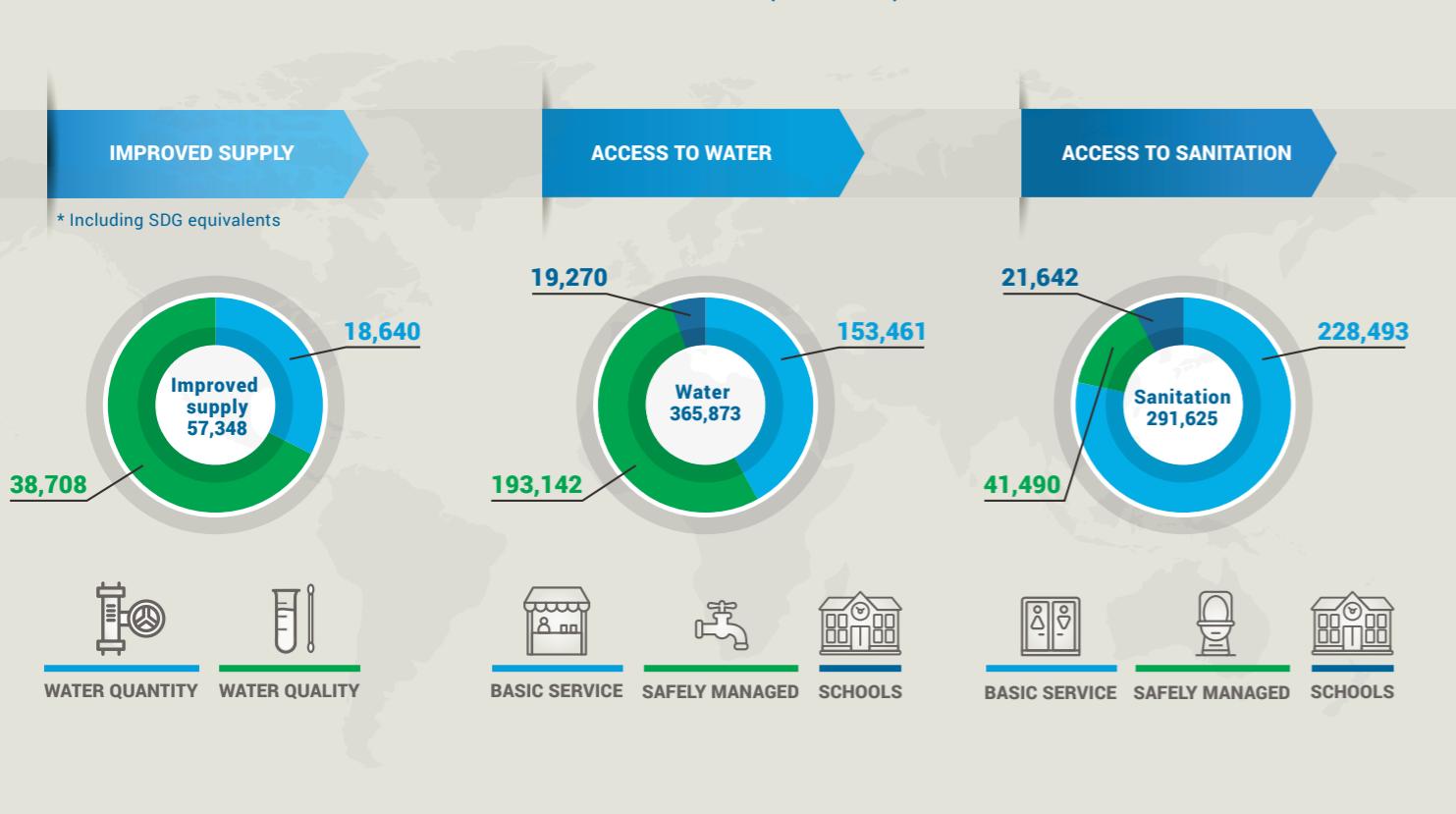
*An adaptive, efficient and inclusive organisation is crucial to deliver impact. This is supported by state-of-the art administrative systems, a fit for purpose organization and motivated staff.*

■ **MEASURE:** VEI will continue to work on improving its efficiency through controlled overhead costs and smart ICT-solutions, aiming at carbon-neutral operations. We remain a trusted partner for financiers based on accountable systems. Health and safety continues to be a priority, with up-to-date insurances, training and crisis management. The implementation of shared values and a new office will enable an attractive work environment.



## DASHBOARD STRATEGY 2030

## #PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY AND GAINED FIRST TIME ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION (714,846)

MONITORING THE STRATEGY  
IMPLEMENTATION & PROGRESS

To keep track of the implementation and progress of Strategy 2030 two main indicators are monitored.

## INDICATOR 1

At least 11.5 million people with access to (improved) climate resilient water and sanitation services before the end of 2030.

People with (improved) access to water & sanitation are divided in two categories, SDG direct and SDG indirect.

SDG-direct covers the realization of SDGs through VEI-financed and executed projects. This includes:

1. Improved supply (water quality and water availability): measured in SDG 'equivalents'.
2. Improved access to Water & Sanitation, including schools, subdivided in the level of services (Basic access or Safely Managed access).

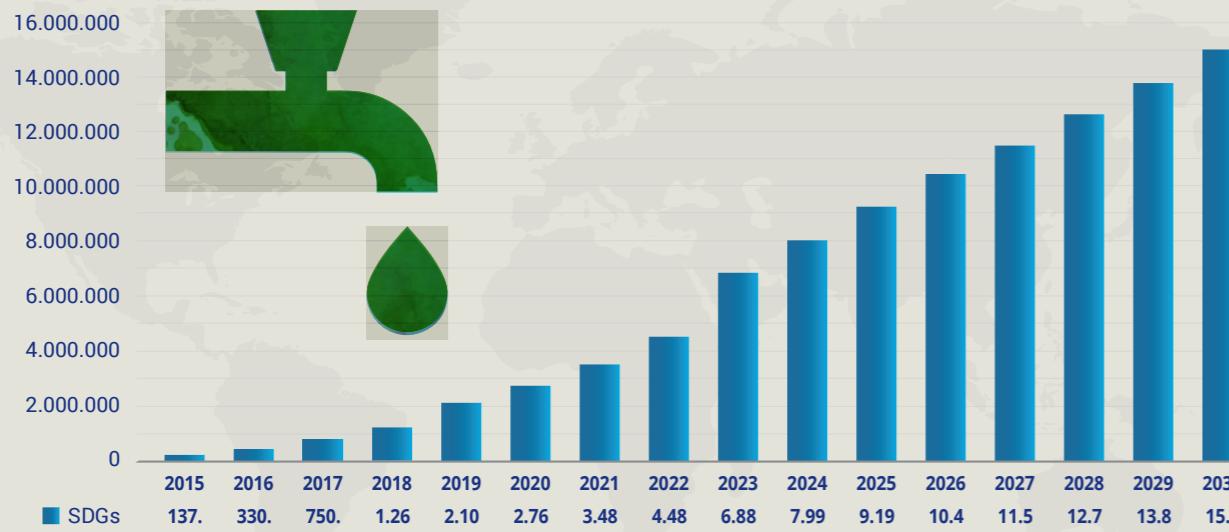
SDG-indirect covers the number of people with (improved) access to water & sanitation, financed by third parties, enabled by VEI projects or interventions.

< The picture on the left page shows how the SDG results are visualized (example 2024).



## DASHBOARD STRATEGY 2030

The annual SDG achievements translate to the below accumulated graph showing the actual SDG results up to 2025 and a forecast towards 2030.



### INDICATOR 2

#### Sustainable water supply & sanitation utilities with improved work processes.

WOP interventions focus on improved maturity of working processes in water utilities, with scores from 1 (basic) to 5 (world class). The main working processes are Water production, Waste water, Water distribution, Commercial management, Wastewater, People & Organization, Enabling environment, Finance, ICT and investments.

The improvement of maturity levels can be achieved through capacity building/training and (operational) investments.



## VEI STRATEGY 2030

### OUR COMMITMENT TOWARDS 2030 AND BEYOND

By connecting water, sanitation, climate adaptation and crises resilience of urban water systems, VEI is committed to working side by side with public utilities – in WOPs – to achieve universal access to water & sanitation and contribute to a prosperous future for all.



## SHARED VALUES

VEI has identified 4 shared values that guide the organization during the implementation of Strategy 2030:

1. **Adaptive by nature:** we all think about our relevance tomorrow, every day.
2. **Drive for impact:** everything we do, contributes to improved Water & Sanitation services, to make visible impact.
3. **Trust & safety:** we trust in each others' capabilities and intentions to design & implement the agreed road towards our goals, with space for making mistakes.
4. **Collaboration:** we acknowledge that we need each other, challenges are dealt with together.





VEI  
Reactorweg 47  
3542 AD Utrecht, The Netherlands  
[www.vei.nl](http://www.vei.nl)

