# Introduction to NoWNET

**The Northern Water Network (NoWNET)** is a dynamic multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to addressing complex global water challenges. Established in 2004 following discussions at the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan (2003), NoWNET was initiated by the World Water Council (WWC), the Global Water Partnership (GWP), and the Forum's Steering Committee, with the Japan Water Forum (JWF) serving as its secretariat.

NoWNET brings together government agencies, the private sector, academia, NGOs, and civil society from Finland, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, as well as key international organizations. It functions as a network of country-level water partnerships in industrialized countries, aimed at sharing knowledge, linking stakeholders, raising awareness, and strengthening collaboration.

Recognizing that water challenges are too complex for any single sector or country to address alone, NoWNET serves as a collaborative hub to mobilize technical expertise, financial resources, and partnerships at local, regional, and global levels. It also works closely with international organizations with aligned objectives to enhance global water cooperation.

## Core Objectives and Functions

NoWNET's mission is anchored in strengthening collaboration and advancing integrated water management through the following objectives:

- **Fostering Collaboration**: Promoting partnerships among diverse stakeholders to address complex and emerging water challenges.
- **Resource Mobilization**: Leveraging financial, human, and knowledge resources across member countries to strengthen water security and resilience.
- **Knowledge Exchange**: Sharing best practices, lessons learned, and operational strategies through international conferences and network meetings.
- **Supporting the Global South**: Advancing water-related initiatives in developing countries and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Strengthening Country-Level Partnerships**: Encouraging the creation and expansion of national water partnerships in industrialized countries to address

domestic challenges while serving as “windows” to the international water community.

- **Facilitating North–South Linkages**: Promoting exchange of experiences and good practices between industrialized and developing countries, including through bilateral and multilateral collaboration.
- **Elevating Water in Global Agendas**: Bringing water issues in industrialized countries to global platforms such as World Water Forums and other international events, ensuring engagement with policymakers and decision-makers.

## Roles and Operational Approach

To achieve these objectives, NoWNET undertakes the following key functions:

- Promoting knowledge sharing and good water management practices among members and partners
- Supporting the formation and strengthening of country-level water partnerships and facilitating their interlinkages
- Expanding networks beyond existing members to include new stakeholders and non-partners
- Coordinating and collaborating on North–South partnerships, including bilateral cooperation between country-level water partnerships
- Organizing and contributing to international dialogues and multi-stakeholder platforms

## Evolution Toward Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

At its inception, **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)** was largely government-led, with limited engagement from NGOs and the private sector. Over time, this has evolved into a more inclusive and collaborative model.

Today, NoWNET actively promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships that integrate:

- Government leadership
- Private sector innovation and investment
- Scientific expertise from academia and research institutions
- Community engagement through civil society

The network places strong emphasis on **public–private partnerships (PPPs)** and increasingly highlights the roles of the **private sector and youth** as key drivers of innovative and impactful water solutions.

## Thematic Priorities and Emerging Focus Areas

In recent years, NoWNET has strengthened its focus on several priority areas:

- **Water Cycle Management under changing climate and socio-economic conditions**: Promoting co-benefits for water management, flood risk reduction, and climate action
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration**: Enhancing linkages across water, energy, agriculture, and urban sectors
- **Collective Action and Partnerships**: Bridging stakeholders across sectors and borders
- **Learning from Practice**: Drawing lessons from both successful and less successful experiences, particularly in developing countries

## Global Engagement and Knowledge Platforms

Since 2019, NoWNET members have actively contributed to international dialogue through sessions at **Stockholm World Water Week**, addressing themes such as:

- **Private Companies' Roles Towards Water-Resilient Society, No-One-Is-Left-Behind (2019)**
- **Co-Benefits of Implementing Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for Water Resources and Flood Risk Management (2020)**
- **Nature as a Partner: Implementing Nature-Based Solutions Globally (2021)**
- **Nature-based Solution for Climate Action with Sound Watershed management (2022)**
- **Water Partnerships for Collective Action – bridging borders between stakeholders (2024)**
- **Accelerating Climate Action: Cross-Sector Partnerships for Water Resilience (2025)(discussed EU Water Resilience Strategy)**
- **Inclusive Basin Partnerships Transforming Water Security Across Regions (2026)**

Furthermore, NoWNET played a leading role in engaging its members in **the first UN Water Conference in 2023**, where we successfully planned and implemented the side

event *"Promoting Water Action Through Multi-Stakeholder Private Sector Engagement."* Our commitment to global water security continues to drive efforts to strengthen international cooperation, leverage innovative financing, and promote partnerships among governments, businesses, and local communities to achieve **sustainable and resilient water management**.

Through its collaborative and partnership-driven approach, NoWNET serves as a catalyst for **transformative water action**, bridging policy, practice, and partnerships to deliver sustainable and inclusive solutions worldwide.

## Members

**Europe Members**

- **Denmark**：Danish Water Forum (DWF)
- **Finland**：Finnish Water Forum (FWF)
- **France**：French Water Partnership (FWP)
- **The Netherlands**：Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP)
- **Portugal**：Portuguese Water Partnership (PWP)
- **Switzerland**：Swiss Water Partnership (SWP)
- **Sweden**：Swedish Water House (SWH)
- **UK British Water (join from 2025)**

**Asia-Pacific Members**

- **Japan *Secretariat**：Japan Water Forum (JWF)
- **Korea**：Korea Water Forum (KWF)
- **Australia: Australia Water Partnership (AWP) (join from 2026)**

**Global Partnership**

- Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- World Water Council (WWC)