Population growth, urbanisation and economic growth create enormous pressure on the global (drinking) water system. Worldwide 663 million people do not have access to an improved water source or use untreated surface water while 2.4 billion people do not have access to sanitation facilities. In a public-private collaboration (2017-2030) with the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and together with their local partner companies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the ten Dutch water companies contribute to increasing access to sustainable water services. The name of this collaboration is WaterWorX.

WaterWorX aims to
increase sustainable access to drinking water to 10 million people, by:

1. strengthening the financial, technical and social sustainability of the local partner water companies in order to make sustainable drinking water available to millions of people in developing and transition countries

2. strengthening the enabling environment of laws & regulations, financing and policies in which water companies are encouraged to function properly and enhance their performance

3. increasing access to water infrastructure investment finance, by developing investment proposals and engaging with domestic and international financing organisations and banks

The origins of WaterWorX
In 2015, former Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Minister Ploumen pledged that the Netherlands would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 6 by giving 30 million people access to sustainable and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. This proposal has been detailed in the new DGIS* WASH policy 2016-2030. WaterWorX is the joint programme of ten Dutch water companies set up to ensure a substantial contribution to this DGIS WASH Policy.

*Directorate General for International Cooperation

Through Water Operator Partnerships (WOPs) between Dutch and local water companies, WaterWorX is working on long term sustainable water services by improving operation and maintenance of the local water companies and getting their finances in order. This has a positive effect on the willingness to finance (loans for) large-scale investments in water infrastructure making it possible to connect large numbers of people to water and sanitation. To further increase the impact, the programme has adopted a sector-wide approach aimed at strengthening the enabling environment and obtain political support for change in a number of countries.
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