

# Evolving water governance practice

## Raising awareness and promoting education on drinking water in Austria

	<b>Promoter of the practice:</b>
	Institution: Vienna Water
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**Location :** City of Vienna, Austria



**Timeframe:** October 1973 → ongoing



**Scale (s):** Regional, Local



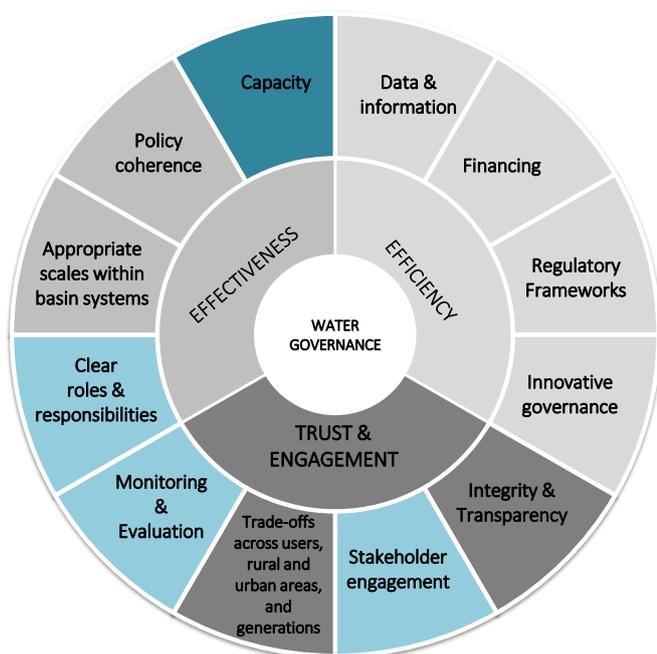
**Water function(s):** Drinking water supply  
Sanitation and water quality  
Water resources management

Stakeholders involved	
Central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education</li> <li>Ministry of Health</li> <li>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management</li> </ul>
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Vienna</li> </ul>
Service provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vienna Water</li> </ul>

### Brief description of the practice

Since 1973, the City of Vienna (Austria) runs an **education programme** on water to build environmental awareness among citizens from an early age. According to Vienna Water, this educational programme provides easily accessible information on Vienna's drinking water supply, the global water cycle, how drinking water is distributed, how wastewater is collected and on the process of sewerage treatment. The objective is to build ownership among local residents on the high intrinsic value of water and on the need to preserve the environment to ensure a sustainable future for the city. The programme **specifically targets low-income families and immigrants/refugees** who did not grow up in an environment with high-quality drinking water supply. In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education, the programme reaches all educational levels (i.e. from primary schools to universities).

### OECD Water Governance Principle (s)



■ Most prominent Principle (s)    ■ Other related Principle (s)

Access the OECD Principles in 16 languages [here](#)

### Governance gaps in implementing the practice according to the practice promoter

- **Lack of awareness** among citizens of the value of water and the need to preserve the environment
- Room for improving the engagement of **under-represented** and **vulnerable** stakeholder groups in the water public debate

## Reported links to OECD Principles

<p><b>Principle 1: Roles and responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water competencies of the City of Vienna are distributed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Executive City Councillor for the Environment and Vienna Public Utilities</b> is responsible for policymaking and implementation.</li> <li><b>Executive City Councillor for Education, Integration, Youth and Personnel</b> is responsible for policymaking and implementation regarding school education.</li> <li><b>Municipal department Vienna Water</b> is realizing the program to build environmental awareness</li> <li><b>The Federal Ministry of Health</b> monitors drinking water quality and is also among the project partners of the educational programme “Drinking Water at Elementary Schools” initiated by Vienna Water in co-operation with national and municipal health institutions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vienna Water states that close cooperation and coordination across levels of government has helped share the financing burden of the education programme: 1/3 is provided by the <b>Federal Ministry</b>, represented by the national funding office for health promotion (<i>Fonds Gesundes Österreich</i>), 1/3 by <b>Wiener Gesundheitsförderung</b>, an organisation that is under the umbrella of the Executive City Councillor for Public Health, and 1/3 by <b>Vienna Water</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle 4: Capacity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vienna Water provides educational material to <b>raise awareness among children</b> on the benefits of Vienna’s drinking water supply. Vienna Water <b>also invites students</b> to visit their premises and attend the Water School, which is free of charge and <b>targeted to children from 8 to 15 years old</b>. Two museums located at the spring zones of the Vienna Spring Water Mains (Water Main Museum Kaiserbrunn and Water Main Museum Wildalpen) are <b>additional destinations for schools and other target groups</b>. The Water Main Hiking Path (an educational hiking trail along the course of the First Vienna Spring Water Main) is composed as easy one-day trip <b>for the entire family</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle 10: Stakeholder engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vienna Water organises public events and makes available multi-lingual brochures to engage citizens in the water debate. <b>Special attention is dedicated to under-represented and underprivileged stakeholder groups</b>.</li> <li>The programme is an ongoing process of bottom-up education that “uses” children as ambassadors to their parents and friends of basic environmental education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle 12: Monitoring and evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “water school” project performs evaluations through personal interviews with teachers and pupils to measure its success and the attainment of the targets. In addition to providing information and education, interaction with the water service provider is promoted and <b>evaluated through regular surveys</b>. These were conducted biannually and are currently conducted every three years. Questions range from general satisfaction with drinking water supply, quality and cost of drinking water to contact with Vienna Water.</li> </ul>

## Reported link to SDGs



### Online information:

[City of Vienna - Water](#)

[Vienna's Educational Programme \(only in German\)](#)

[Vienna Water School](#)

[Water Playground \(only in German\)](#)

[Documentary on Vienna's Water \(Cannes, 2012\)](#)