“I am pleased to be part of this effort and see all seven organizations working together to get more utilities engaged in performance measurement to increase public confidence in our sector.”
Billy Turner, President
Columbus Water Works

“This effort provides water utilities with a helpful roadmap to excellence as they strive to manage their systems for today’s customers and for future generations.”
Gary Zimmerman, Executive Director
American Water Works Association

Collaborating Organizations
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
www.amwa.net
American Public Works Association
www.apwa.net
American Water Works Association
www.awwa.org
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
www.nacwa.org
National Association of Water Companies
www.nawc.org
United States Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov
Water Environment Federation
www.wef.org

Effective Water Utility Management:
The Key to Sustainability

Managing for Clean and Safe Water

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February 2008
Effective Utility Management: The Key to Sustainability

Drinking water and wastewater utilities in cities and towns across the nation provide a vital service in protecting public health and the environment. These water utilities face critical challenges including: rising costs, increasing performance requirements, energy and climate considerations and aging infrastructure.

In May 2007, six national water utility professional organizations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency signed an historic agreement identifying Ten Attributes of Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities and agreed to promote their use in effective utility management across the water sector. Sound local wastewater and drinking water infrastructure is not only essential to the protection of public health, it is a foundation of robust local and regional economies. These attributes are what effectively managed utilities focus on to achieve long-term sustainability.

Ten Attributes of Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities

- Product Quality
- Employee and Leadership Development
- Financial Viability
- Community Sustainability
- Stakeholder Understanding and Support
- Customer Satisfaction
- Operational Optimization
- Operational Resiliency
- Infrastructure Stability
- Water Resource Adequacy

“This significant agreement charts a course, locally and globally, for wise management of water systems and precious water resources.”

Benjamin H. Grumbles
Assistant Administrator for Water
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

In addition to the Attributes, the May 2007 Agreement identifies five Keys to Management Success, designed to assist utility managers in the implementation of these Attributes. These five focus areas provide a pathway to facilitate implementation of the Attributes.

Keys to Management Success

- Leadership
- Strategic Business Planning
- Organizational Approaches
- Measurement
- Continual Improvement Management

Looking to the Future

The partnering organizations recognize identifying successful attributes is only the first step. Several products to help utilities manage more effectively under this framework are being developed, including the following:

- Implementation Guide — to help utilities assess current operations and facilitate adoption of the attributes and keys to management success;
- Utility performance measures — to help utilities gauge progress; and
- On-line Resource Toolbox — to link utilities to resources and tools to help them manage for success.

Copies of the agreement, the Findings and Recommendations for a Water Utility Sector Management (which outlines the Attributes and the Keys to Management Success) and other relevant information and new documents can be found at www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure, and on the sites of the collaborating organizations.