



3RD AFRICA WSS REGULATORS CONFERENCE

Call for Submissions:

**THEME:
ADAPTIVE REGULATION-ADDRESSING EMERGENT ISSUES**

24-26TH SEPTEMBER 2024 | SUNBIRD MOUNT SOCHE-BLANTYRE, MALAWI



About ESAWAS

The Eastern and Southern Africa Water and Sanitation (ESAWAS) Regulators Association is a regional network of water supply and sanitation (WSS) regulators that seeks to enhance the regulatory capacity of members to deliver quality and effective regulation to achieve public policy objectives through cooperation and mutual assistance.

The Host

The Water Services Association of Malawi (WASAMA) was established 'to act as the authoritative body articulating the views of the water services industry'.

The Africa WSS Regulators Conference

Since 2007, ESAWAS has held an annual conference that brings together regulators to deliberate on issues to enhance WSS regulation and service provision. From 2022, the regional regulator's conference evolved to a continent-wide gathering of institutions with primary WSS regulatory responsibilities from across Africa, hosted by ESAWAS. The Africa WSS Regulators Conference endorsed by ESAWAS Members, non-members and partners has become a standing platform for knowledge and experience exchange towards strengthening and promoting effective WSS regulation, among regulatory institutions within Africa and across the globe.



2024 THEME – ADAPTIVE REGULATION: ADDRESSING EMERGENT ISSUES

While the world is progressing to achieve SDG 6 targets on universal access to water supply and sanitation, Africa is lagging behind all. According to the 2022 WHO/UNICEF JMP report, between 2000 and 2022, the population of Africa has increased from 812 million to 1.43 billion. Yet, 411 million people in Africa still lack basic drinking water service and 779 million lack access to basic sanitation services. Significant inequalities persist between and within countries, including between urban and rural, and between sub-national regions. JMP estimates that achieving universal coverage (>99%) by 2030 will require a 23x increase in rates of progress for safely managed sanitation and a 12-fold increase in current rates of progress on safely managed drinking water.

The progress to meeting SDG targets and sustaining improvements post-SDGs is affected by emergent issues that apply pressure on the WASH sector. These include:

- **climate change** effects that are impacting water and sanitation access, causing service disruptions and raising the need for efficiency in water use. The security of the food-water-energy nexus is also at risk.
- Increase in the frequency and severity of health **pandemics** that has raised demand for the availability and reliability of water and sanitation services.
- Rapid rural to urban **population migration and growth** against limited and inadequate existing infrastructure, in addition to evolving upgrades of rural areas, calls for increased capital investments and efficient management of systems.
- Proliferation of **deconcentrated informal service providers** that are trying to fill the gap where Utility/Municipal services are still absent, require professionalization in service delivery.
- Slow uptake of **digitalization and technology** advancements that have the potential to improve service operations and close data gaps.
- Economic downturns and **fiscal stress** experienced by many countries is waning even the current insufficient investments towards WASH.



More than halfway to the SDG targets, the time for accelerated action is crucially urgent. **Water supply and sanitation (WSS) regulators are faced with a challenging task** to drive improvements in WSS services in the realm of these emergent issues, among others. It has long been said that regulation must be dynamic – this means having an **adaptive approach** to regulation that adjusts and adapts as the environment changes. Appropriate regulation is critical for achieving effective operational efficiency and management in WSS service provision.

The 2024 theme, 'Adaptive Regulation: Addressing Emergent Issues' is thus intended to highlight how regulators are adapting regulation in the face of emergent issues for resilient, sustainable, affordable and professional WSS services. This includes learning, modifying or changing regulatory approaches in response to (and to be suitable for) new situations. Adapting regulation requires putting in place mechanisms that can mitigate negative effects, while taking opportunity of positive influencers to drive improvements in WSS services.

Call for Submissions

ESAWAS now invites submissions for presentations that demonstrate how regulators are modifying regulation to address emergent issues in water supply and sanitation services. The submission should be a **one-page** A4 Word document in **English** in Arial font 10 indicating the following:

- Name of Presenter
- Institution
- Title of Presentation
- Sub-Theme
- Brief description of emergent issue
- What is changing/changed in regulation as a result

The submission deadline is **30th June 2024** on conference@esawas.org

Presenters will be confirmed by 26th July 2024 by a panel of reviewers.

SUB THEMES

The conference will be held over three days (24-26 September) and the programme will aim to encompass the following sub-themes:

Sub-Theme	Description <i>(not exhaustive)</i>
Service Resilience and Emergency Preparedness	• <i>The regulatory role in supporting resilient services in sector responses to shocks and stresses that include climate change, economic, pandemics, population migration, aging and limited infrastructure etc</i>
Rural WSS	• <i>Regulatory frameworks and service delivery models for Rural WSS</i>
Off-grid/Non-networked WSS	• <i>Regulatory frameworks and service delivery models for Off-grid water supply and non-sewered sanitation</i>
Sector Financing and Commercial (Business) Orientation	• <i>The role of the regulator in attracting / unlocking investments for WASH including private sector</i> • <i>Supporting/promoting commercial/business orientation in management of WSS services</i>
Sector monitoring and Data Systems Strengthening	• <i>WSS Sector systems that improve regulatory and utility operations by closing data gaps e.g. digitalization, GIS, benchmarking, data tools, enterprise systems etc</i>
Service Provider-Regulator Engagements	• <i>Platforms for regulators and regulated for consultation, co-learning, capacity-development and feedback on issues affecting the sector</i>

INTRODUCING SIDE EVENTS

The Regulators Conference is hosted in plenary due to the targeted nature of the audience. However, the 3rd Africa Regulators Conference will for the first-time offer three parallel 2-hour hosted side events on 26th September in the following areas:

- Sector Governance
- Sector Financing
- Sector Monitoring/Systems

Interested partners are thus invited to submit one-page proposals for hosting a side-event at USD1,200 per session.

IMPORTANT DATES

Activity	Deadline
Call for Papers Open	1 st May
Call for Papers Closed	30 th June
Confirmation of presenters and programme	26 th July
Conference	24-26 September

MORE INFORMATION

Further details about the conference can be found at
<http://www.esawas.org/agm>