

Leadership Programme — 1st edition | Lisbon | 26-28 October 2026

Water and Sanitation Sector Governance and Reforms

WHERE WATER SECTOR REFORMS ARE SHAPED BY THOSE WHO LEAD THEM

Why



- ✔ **Access and quality gaps on water services demand accelerated action.** Millions still lack safely managed water and sanitation, and progress requires not only funding but strong leadership to drive reform and ensure accountability.
- ✔ **Mobilizing private capital and participation** in the water sector depends on credible regulatory frameworks, bankable project structures, and accountable institutions.
- ✔ **Fiscal constraints are reshaping the water sector.** Governments in emerging and developing economies face shrinking fiscal space. Public financing alone cannot close the investment gap, making sector reform and alternative financing urgent priorities.
- ✔ **The intersection of policy, regulation, and finance needs to be strengthened.** A program that brings together international financial institutions, governments, regulators and utilities creates a shared language and common frameworks for reform.
- ✔ **Leadership capacity is the missing link.** Technical solutions are largely known – leadership capacity is the missing link. Leaders must navigate political economy constraints, structure complex financing and sustain reform.
- ✔ **Peer learning accelerates reform.** Exposure to cross-country experiences, successful reform models, and IFI best practices within a structured leadership program helps them avoid common mistakes and adopt proven approaches to governance and sector reforms.

Concept

Not a training. Not a conference. A leadership reform lab.

- ✔ **Built around real country reforms** and executive dilemmas.
- ✔ **Senior-level peer exchange** in a closed, trust-based environment.
- ✔ **Focused on governance**, regulation, service provision, financing and leadership decisions.
- ✔ **Designed for depth**, relevance, and real-world impact.



Target audience

Applications are welcome from **senior leaders involved or interested in water sector reforms**, including:



Government officials leading water sector reform and policy.



Leaders and senior managers of regulatory authorities.



Representatives of international organisations and development partners.



Benefits

What leaders gain:

- ✔ **Direct exposure** to real sector reform decisions, successes and failures.
- ✔ **Peer testing** of live governance and regulatory challenges.
- ✔ **Strategic clarity** on reform pathways.
- ✔ **An enduring network** of reform-minded leaders.



Approach

A curated executive experience combining:

Case-based, leader-to-leader dialogue: High-stakes cases driving strategic conversations.

Field immersion: Linking policy, regulation and service delivery.

Peer clinics: Small, facilitated sessions where participants bring real reform challenges for collective sense making.

Leadership moments: Global reform outlook and guided leadership reflection.





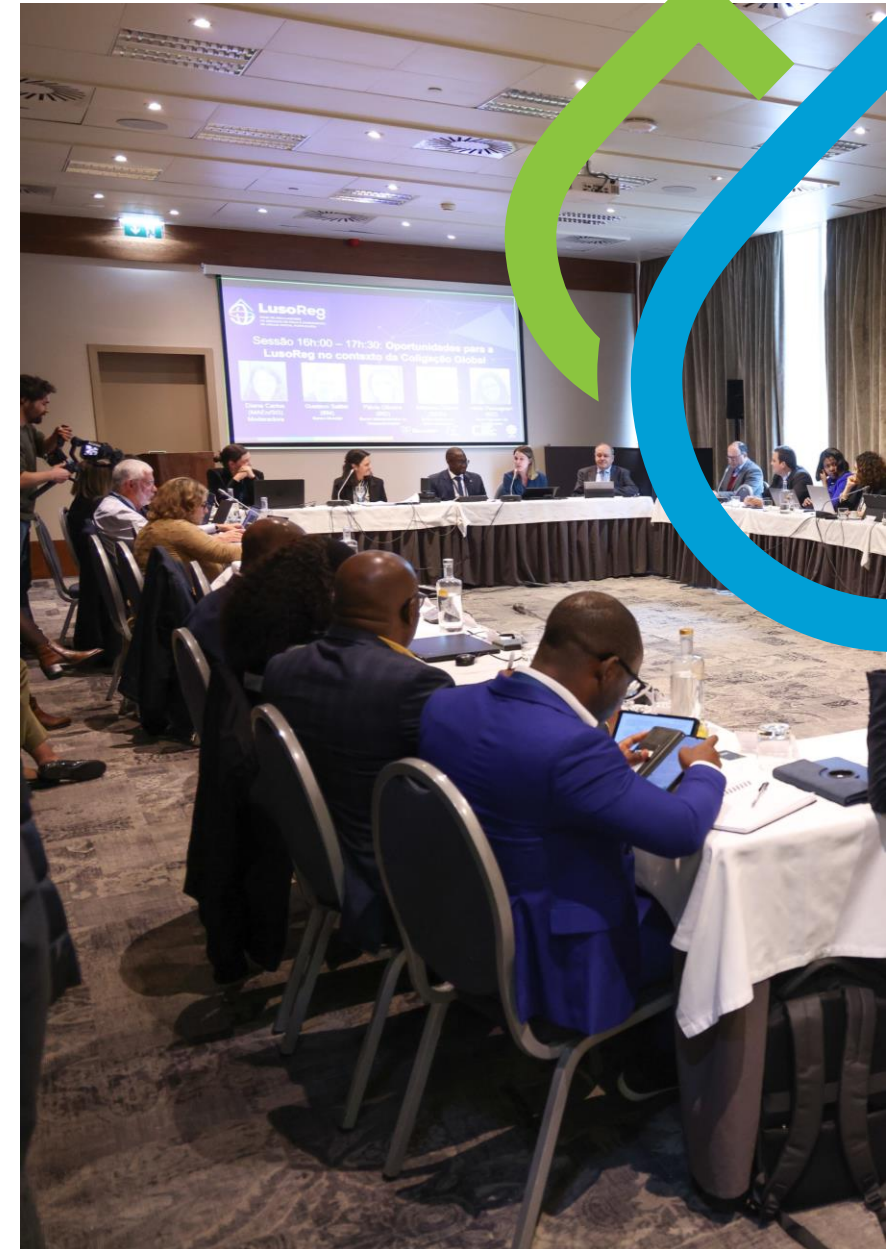
Great water sector leaders are defined not by the decisions they avoid, but by those they have the courage and judgment to make. The program is built around the sector's hardest trade-offs — equipping leaders to act decisively where others hesitate.



Executive dilemmas

Real decisions. Real trade-offs. Real consequences.

- ✔ **Independence vs. political reality** – regulating effectively without losing the mandate to act.
- ✔ **Investment vs. affordability** – attracting capital while protecting the social groups that need it most.
- ✔ **Climate resilience vs. service reliability** – building for future shocks without disrupting today's services.
- ✔ **Governance design vs. implementation at scale** – translating sound frameworks into effective, scalable practice.
- ✔ **Centralization vs. decentralization** – how to operate through the inter-governmental dynamics.
- ✔ **Speed of reform vs. institutional capacity** – pushing change while working within existing capacity constraints.





Participants leave not with “best practice”,
but with sharper judgment, stronger convictions,
and a network of peers that face the same pressures.

Structure

Insightful cases from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania – tracing the full reform journey from governance design to performance.

3
days

+20
hours of immersive learning

	Day 0: Context & building trust	Day 1: Governance & institutional foundations	Day 2: Regulatory leadership & accountability	Day 3: Financing & service delivery transformation
Arrival and relax		Making Water Sector Governance Work: Where Reform Begins	Setting the scene: making regulation effective	Setting the scene: unlocking financing and sustaining performance
		Setting the scene: building the foundations of sector governance	Governing for resilience and performance Case #3: Australia	Regulatory reforms, regionalization and service delivery models Case #6: Brazil
		Designing and implementing the turnaround Anchor case: Portugal	Sustained reform as a governance instrument Case #4: Colombia	Structuring governance to unlock private participation and financing Case #7: Senegal
			Peer clinics: Round 1	Peer clinics: Round 2
Welcome cocktail		Governing a sector "reset" Case #1: England and Wales	Positioning the regulator in a growing sector Case #5: Kenya	Managing long-term concessions Case #8: Manila, Philippines
		Governing privatized systems under water scarcity Case #2: Chile	Mutual learning discussion	Final takeaways & leadership commitments
		Closing reflections & key takeaways	Closing reflections & key takeaways	
		Evening social experience & dinner	Free time	Evening social experience & dinner

Programme

Day 1

Governance & institutional foundations

What you will learn:

How to structure the sector and define the reform pathway

Designing and implementing the turnaround

ANCHOR CASE: PORTUGAL

Traces Portugal's journey from a fragile starting point to a world-class water sector, offering participants a complete arc from political commitment to institutional redesign.

Governing a sector “reset”

CASE #1: ENGLAND & WALES

Once seen as the gold standard of water privatization, the E&W model collapsed amid pollution crises, financial distress and declining public trust, triggering a sector-wide reset. With a new integrated regulator emerging, this live transition explores why strong systems erode — and what it takes to restore credibility, investment and trust.

Governing privatized systems under water scarcity

CASE #2: CHILE

Explores how regulatory frameworks must evolve when scarcity threatens service continuity and investment returns. Sharpens judgment on resilience, risk allocation, and long-term planning.

Programme

Day 2

Regulatory leadership
& accountability

What you will learn:
What regulation can
drive and its limits

Governing for resilience and performance

CASE #3: AUSTRALIA

Illustrates how strong institutional design translates into adaptive, high-performing public utilities. Develops participants' understanding of the link between governance quality and service outcomes.

Sustained reform as a governance instrument

CASE #4: COLOMBIA

Reviews how regulatory policies can drive sector transformation when handled with political skill and social sensitivity. Addresses the tension between fiscal sustainability and affordability.

Positioning the regulator in a growing sector

CASE #5: KENYA

Examines how regulators assert authority and build credibility in contexts of rapid urbanization and capacity constraints. Strengthens participants' ability to lead regulation under pressure.

Programme

Day 3

Financing & service delivery transformation

What you will learn:

How to mobilise financing and deliver performance across different service delivery models

Regulatory reforms, regionalization, and service delivery models

CASE #6: BRAZIL

Draws lessons from one of the world's largest water sector reform ongoing programmes, including regulatory reforms, regionalization and service delivery models (public, private, hybrid and community based). National leadership to incentivize reform at the state and municipal level.

Structuring governance to unlock private participation and financing

CASE #7: SENEGAL

Shows how governance choices in institutional design and contracting, can make a sector attractive to IFIs and private investors.

Managing long-term concessions

CASE #8: MANILA, PHILIPPINES

One of the oldest water privatization experiences in the developing world. Examines how concession design shapes long-term outcomes, the role of political leadership, and the tension between private participation and public accountability in building resilient concessions.

Programme

- **PEER CLINICS: EXECUTIVE REFORM LABS**

Facilitated sessions where participants bring real reform challenges from their countries and work with peers in small groups to analyse the problem, test options, and define practical next steps.

- **EXECUTIVE MUTUAL LEARNING DIALOGUE**

A high-level exchange on how development partners and national leaders can shift from project-based interventions to systemic reform pathways, aligning finance, policy and technical assistance around clear national priorities.

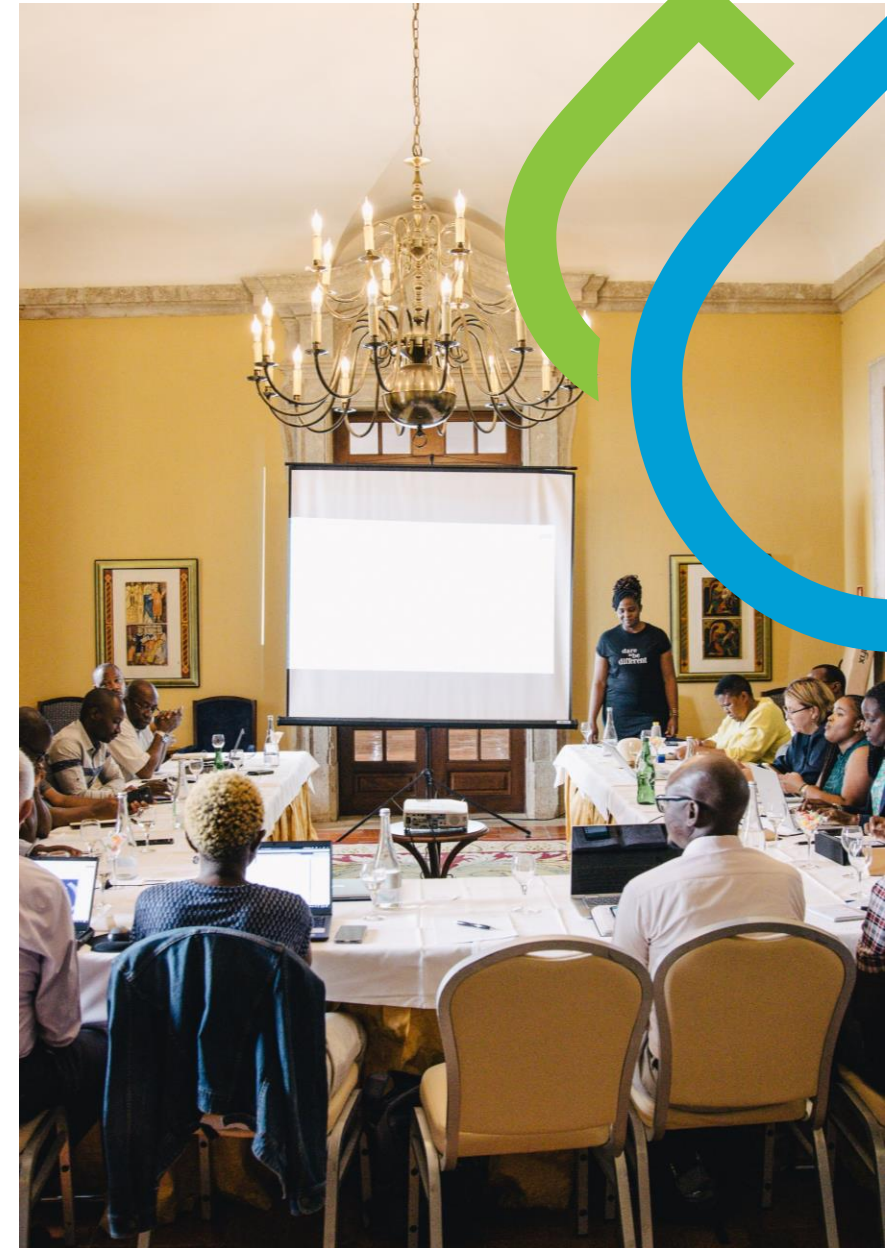
- **FINAL TAKEAWAYS AND LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS**

A focused closing session where participants distill key governance lessons and define one priority reform, one governance shift they can influence, and one concrete action to advance within 90 days.

What you will learn

Participants will gain practical clarity on how to design, implement and sustain water sector reforms:

- ✔ **How to put the system in place**
Structure sector governance systems and institutions.
- ✔ **Who does what and where the boundaries are**
Clarify roles of government, regulators, service providers — including contexts with informal and small-scale private operators — as well as other relevant stakeholders.
- ✔ **How to mobilise financing**
Structure bankable reforms and align financing with the right incentives.
- ✔ **How to sequence reform steps**
Identify priorities and define the right steps and order of action.
- ✔ **What regulators can drive and how to sustain performance**
Strengthen accountability, improve service provider performance, ensure sustainability, and act when performance falls short.
- ✔ **How to structure and manage PPPs**
Clarify roles, allocate risks, and understand when and how regulators intervene.





Each case is selected not for its success alone, but for its leadership dilemmas: the trade-offs, the pressures, and the judgment calls that define effective water sector governance.



Programme faculty

Delivered by international experts.



GUSTAVO SALTIEL

Strategic Adviser, LIS-Water;
Former Global Lead World Bank



RITA AMARAL

Executive Director, LIS-Water



JAIME M. BAPTISTA

Founder & Strategic Advisor,
LIS-Water; Former President,
ERSAR (Portugal)



YOGITA MUMSSEN

Practice Manager for Water
Sector Policies and regulation,
World Bank (tbc)

Programme secretariat

Provided by a team of LIS-Water experts.



JORGE C. GONÇALVES

Innovation and Training
Manager



XIMENA QUIROZ

Regulatory Specialist



CRISTINA PEREIRA

Event Manager



Details

- ✓ Delivered in English and other languages as needed
- ✓ In Lisbon, Portugal
- ✓ Dates: 26-28 October 2026



Portugal blends water governance heritage with innovation, providing an unique environment for strategic learning, collaboration, and global networking.





Participants will leave with concrete reform insights, practical strategies, and a powerful peer network to advance water sector governance and reforms.



Registrations

Check the conditions and apply.

REGISTRATIONS

- Registrations via form submission.

- Limited places. Curated cohort.

- **Programme fee (plus VAT 23% if applicable):**
 - Early bird: €4,000 (until May 30)
 - Regular: €4,500
 - Partner institutions: €3,500

- **The fee covers a fully immersive leadership experience*:**
 - Programme tuition
 - Reading and support material
 - Hotel accommodation for 4 nights (from Sunday to Thursday)
 - Meals: 4 breakfast, 3 lunch, 3 dinner
 - Coffee and refreshment breaks
 - Social programme and networking activities
 - Airport transfers

- **Does not include travel expenses and other personal costs.**



Community of practice

The programme is driven by a growing community of sector partners committed to advancing governance reforms and collective action in water supply and sanitation sector. [Join us.](#)



Delivered by LIS-Water

A global think tank focused on strengthening governance in the water supply and sanitation sector.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES





Building leadership and capacity

Powered by:

