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GLOBAL WATER RESEARCH COALITION

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ABSTRACT

The Global Water Research Coalition (GWRC) is an international research alliance comprised of the most important water and wastewater research organizations in the world. The USEPA is currently a partner of the GWRC. Through the GWRC, participating organizations are able to leverage research funds to address issues of mutual interest, thereby maximizing outcomes and minimizing duplication of efforts. Currently, these research efforts cover topics such as algal toxins, endocrine disrupting chemicals, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, nitrosodimethylamine, water quality in distribution systems, asset management and water reuse.
KEY TERMS: drinking water, wastewater,

The Global Water Research Coalition (GWRC) is a formal non-profit partnership among fourteen of the most prominent national water and wastewater research organizations in the world. The GWRC was officially formed in April 2002. The Coalition focuses on water supply and wastewater issues and renewable water resources. GWRC's function is to leverage funding and expertise among the participating research organizations, coordinate research strategies, secure additional funding not available to single country research foundations, and actively manage a centralized approach to study global issues.

The members of this joint venture are: Kiwa and STOWA in The Netherlands; the United Kingdom Water Industry Research; Awwa Research Foundation, the WateReuse Foundation, and the Water Environment Research Foundation in the United States; EAWAG in Switzerland; PUB in Singapore; TZW in Germany; CIRSEE and Anjou Recherche in France; the Cooperative Research Center for Water Quality and Treatment, and the Water Services Association of Australia; and the South African Water Research Commission.

Collectively, GWRC members provide management and expertise to the majority of the water and wastewater research being conducted throughout the world. Through its member organizations, GWRC represents the interests and needs of 500 million consumers and has access to a cumulative research program with an annual budget of more than $180 million. The GWRC is truly unique in bringing together the most important water research organizations in the world for the purpose of research coordination, collaboration and communication.

The GWRC has successfully served as a mechanism for cooperation and coordination among these leading water research organizations. Members benefit from their participation in the Coalition through the leveraging of funds on common research themes, the elimination of wasteful duplication by coordinated planning, the co-mingling of talent and

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resources toward a common goal, and intellectual stimulation provided by a global approach. The international water community benefits from the GWRC's activities by being able to reference a specific research strategy on various topics.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) became an official partner to the GWRC in 2003. Through this agreement, EPA has actively been involved in a number of GWRC activities. Examples include the evaluation of analytical methods and bioassays for the determination of endocrine disruptors in environment waters, the development of an International Guidance Manual on Management of Toxic Algae, and participation in workshops on high priority research topics such as on-line monitoring of contaminants in water, n-nitrosodimethylamine, pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCP), waterborne pathogens, and water reuse. GWRC members have actively participated in several EPA workshops and seminars regarding Asset Management, and EPA staff joined the GWRC workshops and meetings on this topic.

Within the ongoing GWRC activity on Emerging Contaminants, a large number of issues have been studied. Examples of review documents prepared from these efforts include: "Copper in drinking water and Alzheimer's Disease," "Minimum levels of magnesium and calcium (hardness) in drinking water to prevent cardiovascular diseases," and "Avian influenza: Is there a risk to water supplies?"