



**UN**  
**2023 WATER**  
**CONFERENCE**

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## **UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event**

### ***Wastewater Management in the Textile, Footwear and Leather Industry: Challenges, Progress & the Role of Education***

21 March 2023, 9.00 EST, Virtual

Organized by: ZDHC Foundation hosted by ZDHC Academy

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

The ZDHC Foundation Wastewater Guidelines and Sampling & Analysis Plan defines a single, common approach concerning wastewater discharge quality that goes beyond regulatory compliance, not only for conventional wastewater parameters but also for hazardous chemicals. Since the inception of the first version of the ZDHC Wastewater Guidelines, the ZDHC Academy has launched global unified training on Wastewater Management as well as on Wastewater & Sludge Sample Collection. In this session, leading brands, manufacturing suppliers, service providers & educational institutions supporting the ZDHC Academy shared their experience and explained how the industry can benefit from a globally offered, common standard and a unified capacity-building approach, specifically focusing on the challenges in water treatment. A training and capacity-building approach created, supported and rolled out throughout the industry. Together with collaborative organisations such as GIZ, WEF, IHE Delft and WWF, we shared our experience in wastewater treatment projects, improvement of standards, guidelines and capacity building. With this session, we wish to showcase and inspire you that the strength of cross-sectoral collaboration in relation to education, capacity-building and implementation can help us to reach the goal of reducing hazardous chemicals in wastewater discharge and, thereby, its impact on the environment and human health.

**Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))**

The UN-Water SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative, the inter-agency coordination platform on freshwater, sanitation, and hygiene-related capacity development work enables the United Nations system and its multi-stakeholder partners to 'deliver as one' in supporting countries to develop capacities to accelerate progress towards SDG 6.3 (6.3.1 & 6.3.2). In line with the inspiring work of this UN initiative, the ZDHC Academy strives to further develop ONE central capacity building and education Academy within its training and education platform, that focuses on Chemical Management, Wastewater, Effluent Treatment and Water Management for the textile, apparel, leather and footwear industry, together with its partner organisations in alignment with the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme. We believe that by creating one entry point for global capacity building, communicating standardised methods, innovations and sharing best practices a system change can take place that enables and empowers individual, organisational and communal change. The work of the ZDHC Academy on a sectoral level can feed into the goal of UN bodies to create a centralised Water Academy.

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/one-global-central-capacity-building-and-education-academy-focusing-chemical>

**Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- Introduction of the work of the ZDHC Foundation and ZDHC Academy as an aligned industry framework and capacity building platform.
- Challenges in the Textile, Apparel, Leather and Footwear Industry in relation to Wastewater Management and Effluent Treatment that we still encounter on a daily basis. Such as access to technology, data management, and access to training.
- Progress made by the industry up to date in working with aligned frameworks.
- Opportunities identified by stakeholders that could accelerate progress in relation to Wastewater Management, Effluent Treatment capacity building and implementation. Such as data management collaboration, scaling tools, training and building value chain relationships.
- Already available solutions and the role education can play in supporting uptake.

**Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- There is a clear willingness to change in the Industry, however raising awareness at different industry levels remains a key aspect to engage industry stakeholders.
- Next to people power, commitments and investments are needed between business partners to enable change.
- Governments (local) play an important role to set a framework for expectations and the need for innovation. Engagement with the government for support is crucial.
- The technology is available, however the awareness of technology needs and availability of financial resources are essential to scale relevant technology.
- A unified global centralised framework such as the Roadmap To Zero Programme and the ZDHC Academy make it easier for the industry to start with training and implementation.