

The Bonn Workshops

In October 2001 a workshop with representatives from water suppliers, regulators and specific experts was held in Bonn to consider assuring drinking water quality in the 21st century. The outcome was a set of principles with the goal of providing **good safe drinking water that has the trust of consumers**. The principles had many similarities to those espoused by water safety plans but presented in a rather different form. The principles considered a holistic approach to managing drinking water quality from source to tap through drinking water quality management plans in conjunction with verification of drinking water quality. These two processes are supported by the essential features of defining roles and responsibilities and, of particular relevance to WeKnow participants and contacts, knowledge sharing. To this one might add the generation of knowledge to aid the process.

This workshop was followed by a second in February 2004 in collaboration with WHO and IWA to develop a charter for safe drinking water. This will follow the Bonn Principles and be designated the Bonn Charter for Safe Drinking Water. A similar mix of participants attended the workshop to determine the needs to apply the principles and to identify potential barriers to their implementation. The charter is intended for application in all countries and has considerable relevance to Europe, particularly as the European Union extends its boundaries.

The basis is that safe drinking water is fundamental to a healthy community and to its economic development and the goal is the same as that from the Bonn Principles. The charter therefore builds on the Principles and lays out the requirements for applying the principles. The need for knowledge in the areas of identifying the hazards that are present and determining the risks of those hazards remains a key requirement. In addition there is a need for continued development of knowledge of treatment processes and the identification and development of a wider range of indicators of raw and drinking water quality, and particularly operational control parameters. A particularly important part of the charter is the identification of the need for staff with sufficient skills and training, which fits with the important role of WeKnow in training and knowledge exchange.

The Bonn Charter is to be formally launched at the IWA meeting in Marrakech and will be an influential document not only in Europe, but also throughout the world.

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