

# Christopher Gasson

(DON'T!)  
**WASTE WATER**

is the owner of Global Water Intelligence and an authority on water finance and markets



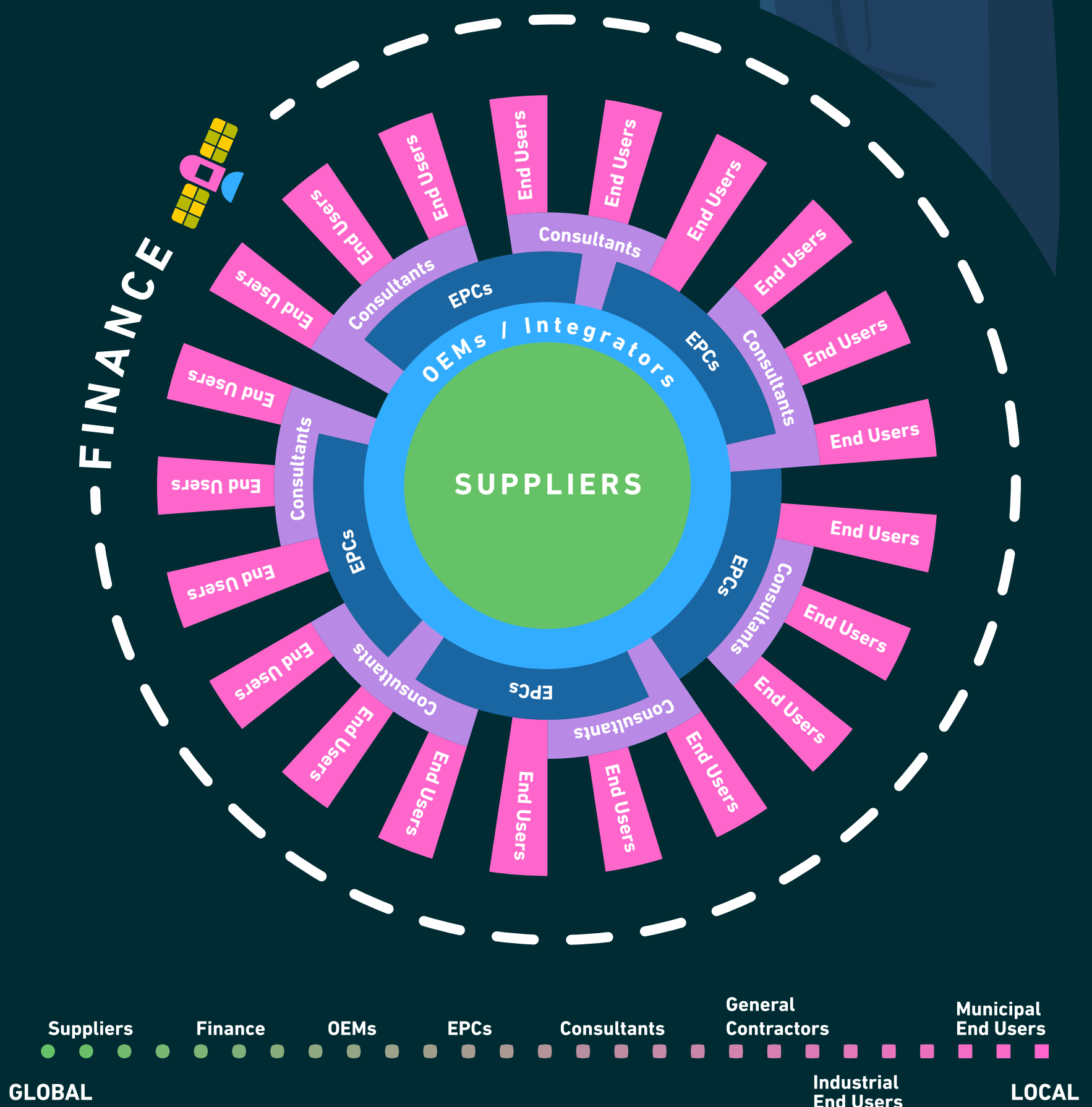
There's no such thing more different one to another than water and... water.

If you've ever started up a treatment plant, you know this to be true: water will always be different!

So, what brings the so-called "Water Industry" together?

There are **two** things which are international in water. One is money, and the other is technology.

Indeed, when you look at our sector, technology (so, suppliers and OEMs) and finance are the only two links in the chain that are really touching every single project:



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Hence, this edgy positioning Christopher holds with GWI:

... if you're going to run a magazine called "Global Water Intelligence," it would be global water stupidity not to focus on those things!

Why edgy? Well, simply because:

Most people or organizations bringing people together in the water industry are afraid to talk about money.

*Why would you put money into something nature puts together for free? Isn't it immoral to charge for something vital? Will you say to a child dying of drought in Africa, he'd better spend money on good water?*

**Do we have a BINGO?**

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All the concerns above are legit. Yet, they're also missing the elephant in the room:

Water is immensely capital intensive! For \$1 of revenue, you need \$7-8 of infrastructure investment. And if you don't talk about how you're going to attract that \$7-8 of infrastructure investment, you might as well get out of the water industry right now. You're wasting your life!



revenue

investment



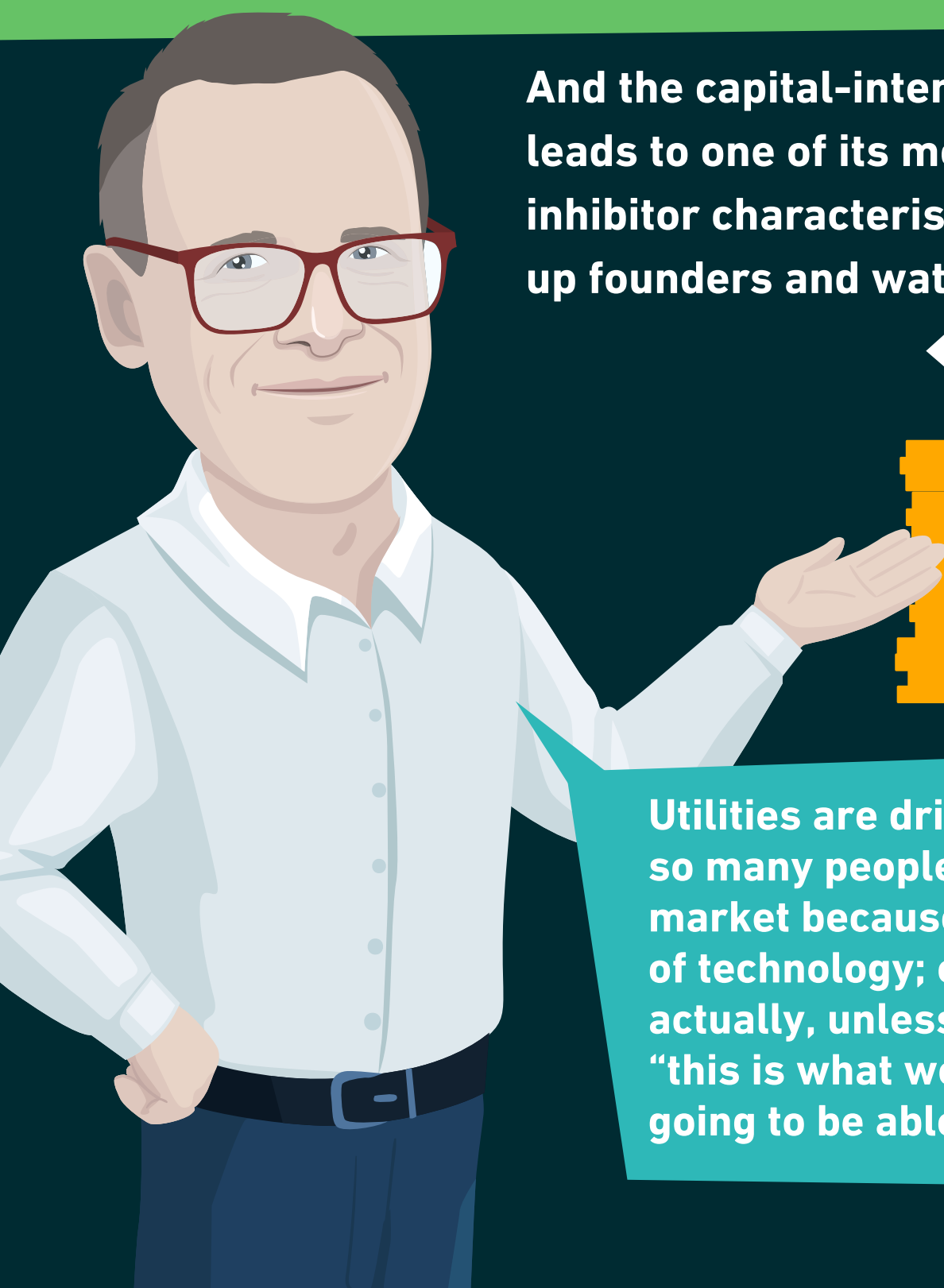
\$1



\$7-8

There's a reason why finance is so deeply linked to any water project: **there's no free lunch!**

And the capital-intensive nature of the Water Market leads to one of its most well-known innovation inhibitor characteristics/reason to depress for start-up founders and water sales guys.



Utilities are driven by priorities. And this is why so many people find it difficult to sell into that market because they think "I've got this piece of technology; everyone should want it!" But actually, unless the boss or the mayor says, "this is what we need to be doing," you're not going to be able to do it.

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This is also why SDG 6's targets are stranded and progressing at a quarter of the speed they should.



... which is a pity for a variety of reasons.

But even more, when you consider this:  
**Safe. Water. Is. Profitable!**



We looked at the cost of good water, and we looked at the cost of bad water. We added up all these costs and used the world bank methodology to price these things. What we discovered was that actually, good water pays for itself!



So the reason why we're actively failing at SDG 6 is not that we're missing "charity money" to bring water to the poorest.



(And indeed, we don't really lack money in the Water Sector at all, right now, given the ESG investment wave.)



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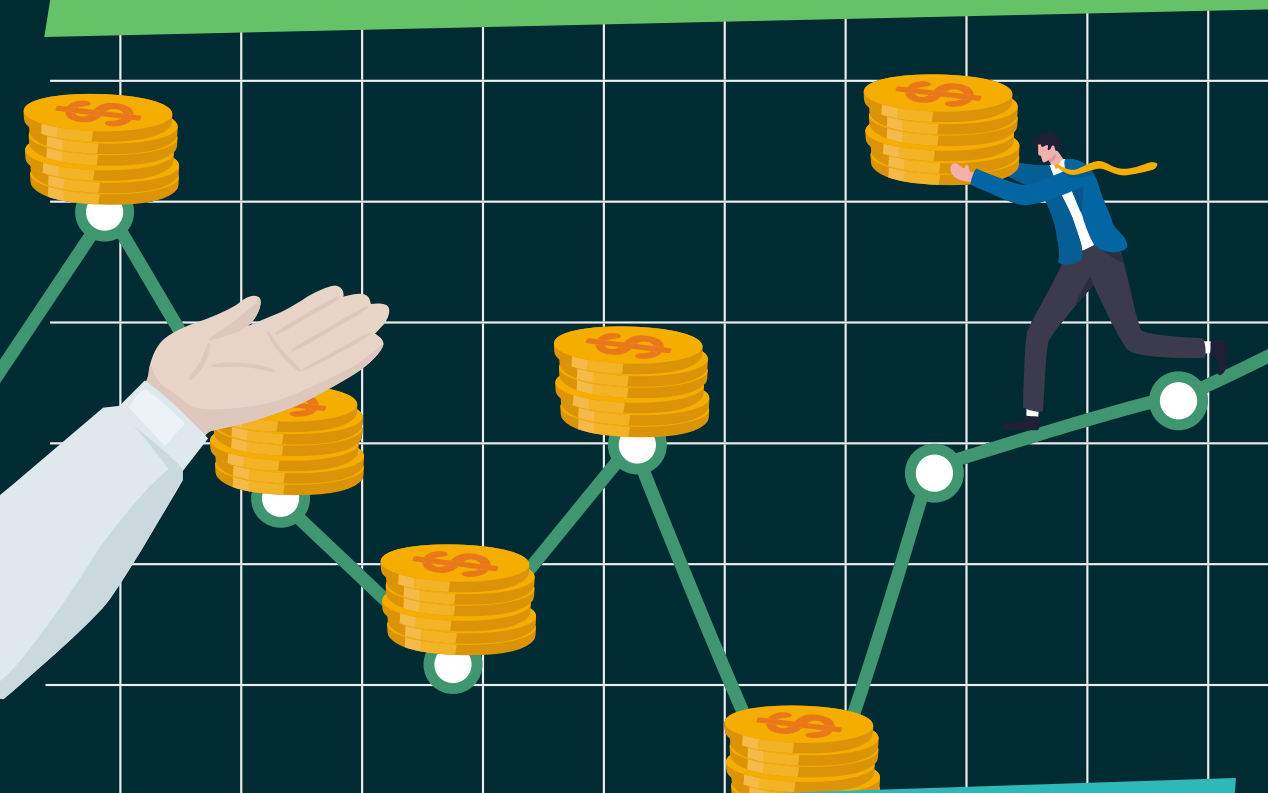
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The problem lies elsewhere:

85% of the money going into Sub-Saharan Africa goes to less than 20 different utilities. For those, the finance community says: "these guys really know what they're doing. And if we give them money, they will take a big step towards solving SDG 6."



Because yes, safe water is profitable. But you need to deploy it right for it to work!



If you just leave people to develop water services on their own. It's quite likely they'll end up with incredibly inefficient things and so forth. They need to understand how other people do things and how they might learn from them. And then adapt these learning points to their own culture.

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That's how we'll turn safe water into not only a profitable item but also an incredibly sustainable one in all acceptions of the term.

The ESG investment wave is hence a blessing if we play it right.



So it's about time for us to connect the dots and create the opportunities for those two streams, finance & tech, to power a triple win.

**That has to be our pledge!**

### **We also covered:**

- How a whole load of people talks about saving the world while skipping the thing which really matters: the money to save it.
- How climate change brings a third international compound in water
- How describing water consumers as stakeholders is wrong (and why)
- How the link between money and water can be proven by the absurd, whenever you deprive the latter of the former
- How the profitability of wastewater treatment can be more tricky to establish - and what to do about it
- How GWI was a 162-subscriber struggling magazine 20 years ago, how it evolved into today's world reference, and what that changes and enables
- Predicting the future and how it's impossible, being catastrophically wrong, needing the sound of two hands clapping to be successful, the SUEZ-Veolia drama, desalination... and much more!

**Don't miss a single bite:  
head over to [dww.show](https://dww.show)!**

