

A common vision for European Water Innovation



Dear WssTP friends,

We continue to advance with our attempts to streamline and professionalize our strategies, our activities, as well as access to, and use of, all our resources, always with the firm objective to bring the highest possible value to our members.



‘Water must be given a distinct value in order to avoid misuse and overuse’ says **Dr. Stefan Uhlenbrook, Coordinator of the UNESCO WWAP**



In this regard, let me mention in first place that a new updated strategy for the strengthening of the WssTP Working Groups has been put in place. Our Working Groups have a quintessential role not only for the implementation of the Clusters workplan, but also towards the achievement of the WssTP Vision and SIRA, as well as for providing technical expertise, R&I deliverables and going to the market, among others. Our WG leaders are the best available WssTP ambassadors and must play not only a big and important part in the WssTP community, but also be instrumental in how WssTP is perceived, and able to convey its messages.

Regarding our branded events, a new edition of Water Market Europe especially focused on Food & Beverages concluded last month in Brussels with over 100 participants and was able to activate a total of 180 B2B meetings. Investors and finance experts had an opportunity to share their insights about this market, and we were able successfully to set the stage for water technologies to reach also this market and for new business collaborations to be born. The next Water Market Europe event will be the WME Roadshow Belgium scheduled for May 7th.

Water Innovation Europe, our main institutional event, will focus this year on the water-energy nexus. Water and energy are both essential for our society and economy and connected through many interdependencies. Both are also key factors in climate change, but unfortunately not both are weighted equally. During WIE 2019, we shall debate how water services can respond to the needs of the energy sector, how both resources can contribute to a Water (and Energy)-Smart Society. We will also put the focus on those connecting interdependencies between water and energy and see how we can build environments able to promote cross-fertilization.

The MEP Water Group and the World Water Assessment Programme of UNESCO are co-organising on April 3rd a public session on the new UN World Water Development Report: “Leaving no one behind: sustainable water management and governance from a European perspective”. The main policy messages and findings from the report will be presented during the public session, followed by a high-level panel discussion. To gain more insights into the new WWDR 2019, read our exclusive interview with Stefan Uhlenbrook, Coordinator of the UNESCO WWAP!

Enjoy Spring!

Tomas Michel, WssTP President

The theme of this year’s report is ‘Leaving No One behind’. Why have you specifically chosen this theme?

The theme “Leaving no one behind” is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Many in society are not able to fulfil their human rights to water and sanitation and it is usually those who are already vulnerable and marginalised, on grounds such as their gender, socio-economic status, age, disability, ethnic background etc. These members of society encounter the most obstacles when trying to access these rights.

It is for this reason that this year we are drawing specific attention to this pertinent topic, which up until now has been largely overlooked, resulting in ill-equipped sustainable development policies and practices in water management and other areas.

The report looks at water services from a societal perspective. Why is it important to address the societal dimension of water today?

Managing water without taking into account all members of society will inevitably lead to negative outcomes for many and will contribute to a reinforcement of inequality patterns. We must take a step back and contemporarily assess the different dimensions within water management systems, to identify and assess the factors that produce such inequalities in water and sanitation.

If we fail to do this, policies and water management practices will continue to leave many behind. On top of that, taking a societal approach to water services is becoming more pressing with growing pressures such as rapid urbanisation and environmental adversities including climate change.



In the report, you mention the access to water as an universal right but at the same time evoke the necessity to have an affordable price for all users. Does it mean that a balanced price can be a smart tool to take into account the value of water and also to ensure access to water for everyone?



'Innovation in water cannot come from technology suppliers alone. Society will face many water-related issues, which can only be solved with society involved' by Tom Vereijken, Leader of the WssTP Cluster 'Water Innovation System'

Why is it important to have a Cluster dedicated to the theme 'Water Innovation System'?

Innovation in water cannot come from technology suppliers alone. Society will face many water-related issues, which can only be solved with society involved. The relation with the Sustainable Developments Goals is illustrative: Water is an aspect in many of the SDGs. Technology is a decisive factor, but solutions will come from the exchange between parties. This exchange should be systematic, and long term oriented. This is why I am glad that WssTP has intrinsically organised this within the organisation.

How is the Cluster 'Water Innovation System' going to drive the way to the implementation of the WssTP Water Vision 2030?

We have done the homework: Roadmap, Key Performance Indicators, Planning, etc. are in place. Now comes the action: we need good examples to inspire others to join, team up and actually make projects of the multiple good ideas we have spotted.

There are multiple supporting instruments to help out, like for instance the [Vida project](#), designed to support SMEs with 100% subsidy to demonstrate water innovations related to food production. We support these developments, but require end users to participate, since we are strong believers that innovation should be demand driven.

What are the key actions the Cluster has identified to bring research and innovations from the SIRA to the market?

There are many, but one key element is the creation of small groups of players focusing on a single project, and actually working to solve a problem together. Interdisciplinary cooperation is difficult, we need facilitators to accomplish successful projects. There is an exciting role for WssTP here!



The question of whether water should have a price or not has been the source of much contention, and still remains, one of the hardest and most politically charged dilemmas in the water governance realm - especially in poorer regions of the world. However, water must be given a distinct value in order to avoid misuse and overuse. This falls under Hardin's theory of 'The tragedy of the commons' (which has also sparked debate), suggesting that when resources are accessible to everyone without adequate regulation in place, they end up being misused. Putting a price on water as a regulatory measure has proved to be successful, however, this needs to be designed carefully and with the full participation of stakeholders, to avoid detrimental outcomes (such as not taking into account affordability). Having structured tariffs that are sensitive to the circumstances and needs of different users can support making the human rights to water and sanitation a reality for all.

As the report shows, if the degradation of the natural environment and the pressure on global water resources continue at current rates, 45% of global GDP and 40% of global grain production will be at risk by 2050. Poor and marginalized populations will be disproportionately affected, further exacerbating already rising inequalities. How would you see Europe affected under these conditions?

Since water shapes society and is part of the motor of the economy, there must be a healthy and harmonious balance between the available water resources and water demand and usage. When this balance is disturbed (by pressures including rapid urbanization, environmental degradation or unsustainable usage), someone will inevitably end up "paying the price". Those who "pay the price" are generally those members in society who are already disadvantaged, as well as the ecosystems that support society and the economy in the long run. Being the largest consumer of water, the agricultural sector will be dramatically affected by water stress (droughts or floods). Other heavily water-dependent sectors include mining, paper and pulp, chemical and pharmaceutical industry and energy, will also be affected.

However, water stress will be felt beyond the directly affected sectors and countries and regions. In an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, water problems do not take place in isolation and they concern every single one of us, and people in Europe are no exception. Impacts include pricing of various goods and services, global/regional trade, and can even reach as far as stimulating international migration and political instability.

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Join WssTP!



Do you want to collaborate with a pan-European network and beyond? Impact the EU RTD&I strategy? Promote innovative and progressive innovations in the water sector? With more than 200 members, WssTP is the voice of the water-related innovation in Europe. Join us and become a WssTP member by filling in this [form](#)! Services to members are at the heart of the WssTP strategy. Our activities are based on 3 key programmes:

- The **WssTP Collaboration Programme**: Network, exchange knowledge and experiences, and collaborate along the water value chain through our Working Groups and Water Knowledge Europe.
- The **WssTP Market Programme**: Bring your research results and innovative solutions to the market in Europe and beyond through WssTP Water Market Europe programme.
- The **WssTP Advocacy Programme**: Play your part in raising awareness of the value of water for our society and economy through our Water Innovation Europe.

For more information, please contact [Loic Charpentier](#).



Successful Conclusion of LIFE SAVING-E project!

On 25 March 2019, the final SAVING-E Infoday was held in Barcelona, attracting approximately 50 national and European stakeholders. During the Infoday, participants got a comprehensive overview of the SAVING-E project, with the project's consortium presenting its final results and main outcomes. Experts from the project discussed with participants, opening up the floor for feedback and further debate. The SAVING-E Infoday was a great occasion to celebrate the project's closure and bring together various interested stakeholders, fostering networking among them and increasing their engagement. Download [HERE](#) the project's Layman's report. Learn more about [SAVING-E](#).



Welcome 2 New Members



Adler HTE, Italy

Adler HTE has been designing and producing software for land reclamation consortia for over 40 years. It supports its clients in the management of land registry and irrigation, as well as in the issuing of rolls and in the reporting of payments. It provides top-notch professionals and uses cutting-edge technologies. *For more information, please click [here](#).*



CEW, The Netherlands

The Centre of Expertise Water Technology (CEW) is the Netherlands leading knowledge and innovation centre for applied research and product development in the field of water technology. The CEW brings together expertise from education, research, government and industry. CEW works together with students and knowledge workers on applied research and product development. In this way the CEW trains future staff for the high-profile Water sector. *For more information, please click [here](#).*

AGENDA

3 April 2019

MEP Water Group Event Leaving No-one Behind

11 April 2019

Regions and Cities Making the SDGs Happen

7-8 May 2019

22nd European Forum on Eco-Innovation: Closing the Loop

8-10 May 2019

River Basin Management 2019

28 May 2019

4th European Climate Change Adaptation Conference

5-6 June 2019

BlueTech Forum 2019

12-13 June 2019

WssTP Water Innovation Europe 2019

20 June 2019

Water and Wastewater Networks: Delivering Cost-Effective Resilience

26-28 June 2019

Resilient Cities 2019

30-31 October 2019

WssTP Water Knowledge Europe 2019

www.wsstp.eu

On Twitter: [@wsstpeu](#)

On LinkedIn: [The WssTP Group](#)