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Result Factsheet

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: Empowering Communities in Water Governance

[Link to the resources](#)

RESULT Type:
Scientific or techno R&D



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Description

Put citizens at the heart of water governance with the **InnWater Citizen Engagement Framework!** This practical methodology guides local authorities, water managers, and community leaders in designing inclusive Citizen Engagement Roadmaps tailored to their unique contexts. Built on the vision of River Basin Water Forums, it offers step-by-step tools to define why engagement matters, who to involve, and how to build lasting dialogue between citizens, policymakers, and service providers. The Citizen Engagement Framework is embedded in the InnWater Governance Platform and designed to connect with existing local communities and participatory structures, such as River Basin Forums and citizen groups, ensuring both digital integration and real-world anchoring.

The framework ensures that diverse voices including vulnerable groups are heard and integrated into decision-making. It supports pilot sites and beyond in moving from simple information sharing to true co-creation of solutions. With adaptable guidelines, tested approaches, and practical assessment tools, the Citizen Engagement Framework strengthens trust, accountability, and collaboration for sustainable water governance.

Join us in transforming participation from consultation to co-creation, ensuring that communities are not just informed, but empowered to shape the future of their rivers, cities, and water systems!

TARGET AUDIENCES

EU and Member State Policy-making institutions

To raise awareness and possibly influence policy by supporting participatory water policies that build trust and accountability.

Civil society organisations and community groups

To raise awareness and possibly influence policy, amplifying diverse voices (including women, youth, and vulnerable populations), in water governance.

Research and Technology Organisations

Organisations To collaboration and sharing of knowledge, testing and refining engagement methods for effective participatory approaches.

For National and EU policymakers

To strengthen compliance with the Water Framework Directive and support citizen-driven governance reforms.

We specially need

We are seeking partnerships with local authorities, water managers, and civil society organisations to pilot and expand the Citizen Engagement Framework across Europe. Additional support from research institutions and policymakers is welcome to refine methodologies, share best practices, and integrate the framework into formal governance processes. We are also looking for funding opportunities and networks that can help sustain training, workshops, and knowledge exchange beyond the project's lifetime.

SDG's



Unique value proposition

Unlike traditional participation guidelines, the Citizen Engagement Framework provides a flexible, step-by-step roadmap that adapts to local contexts while keeping inclusiveness and co-creation at its core. It bridges policy, practice, and community action by combining the Quintuple Helix approach with practical tools like the Citizen Engagement Roadmap and River Basin Water Forum vision. This ensures that citizen involvement moves beyond consultation to genuine influence, empowering communities to co-design solutions and fostering long-term trust in water governance.

Use beyond the project life

The framework serves as a long-term guide for participatory water governance, supporting authorities and communities in building inclusive engagement processes beyond Inn Water's lifetime. Its practical relevance is illustrated by application examples in the project's Pilot Sites across Europe, showing how the methodology can be adapted to diverse cultural, political, and hydrological contexts. While remaining freely accessible, the Framework could also give rise to advanced services such as consulting, replication support, and professional training to ensure sustainability and potential revenue generation.

Impacts

- **Scientific:** Provides structured methods for analysing and evaluating citizen engagement.
- **Societal:** Strengthens trust, inclusion, and collaboration in water governance.
- **Environmental:** Supports sustainable water management by integrating citizens' perspectives into solutions.
- **Economic:** Reduces costs linked to conflicts and litigation, increases the efficiency of water policies, and creates opportunities for consulting and training.
- **Policy:** Enhances compliance with EU directives and promotes open, participatory governance practices.



Key benefits



Builds trust and accountability among citizens, policymakers and service providers.



Empowers diverse communities, including vulnerable groups, to co-create water solutions.



Supports Water Framework Directive compliance and strengthens sustainable governance.

Replicability

Designed as a flexible methodology, the framework can be applied across diverse basins, governance systems, and cultural contexts. Its step-by-step roadmap makes it easy to replicate in different regions and adapt to local realities.

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Legal requirements - IPR

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