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INN WATER

Promoting social innovation to renew
multi-level and cross sector water governance

D3.3 The InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology – A practical guidance tool and analysis framework for creating RBWF #V2

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Project Consortium

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deliverable D3.3 reports on the implementation, results and assessment of the InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology across five pilot sites, completing the process initiated under Tasks 3.1 and 3.2. Moving from methodological design to practical application and evaluation, the deliverable demonstrates how citizen engagement can be operationalised as a core component of water governance, contributing to inclusiveness, legitimacy and resilience in line with Specific Objective SO3. Central to this approach are **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)**, which are presented not as prescriptive participation plans but as adaptive pathways allowing pilot sites to define realistic ambitions, select appropriate tools and progressively strengthen engagement according to local governance conditions. Within this framework, **River Basin Water Forums (RBWFs)** are treated as a long-term governance vision rather than an immediate institutional output.

The implementation sections document how CERs were applied across five highly diverse pilot contexts and how engagement strategies evolved over time. Initial activities—particularly webinars—were used as broad entry points to reach a wide range of participants and are therefore treated as secondary indicators of engagement, as they do not in themselves distinguish between citizens and stakeholders. A key contribution of WP3 is the **explicit distinction between citizens and stakeholders**, with citizens defined as local community members not acting as representatives of organised interests. Using this distinction, pilot sites progressively identified and consolidated **core citizen participants** through more targeted and qualitative tools, including workshops, surveys, interviews, in-person questionnaires and citizen science initiatives. This shift enabled deeper engagement with local communities and with underrepresented or vulnerable groups who are typically absent from institutional decision-making processes.

The deliverable then assesses performance against SO3-related KPIs using a mixed-methods approach combining aggregated quantitative data with qualitative evidence. Results show that WP3 exceeded or substantively achieved most targets, particularly in terms of citizen reach, increased participation of local communities, awareness-raising among public authorities and capacity-building of professionals. Where numerical targets were narrowly missed, qualitative evidence confirms that the underlying purpose of the KPIs—embedding citizen engagement as a governance function—was effectively achieved. The synthesis highlights both achievements and persistent barriers, notably the time, facilitation capacity, trust-building and institutional openness required to sustain engagement beyond project timelines. Overall, D3.3 demonstrates that **effective citizen engagement is less about maximising participation numbers than about building credible, inclusive and context-sensitive pathways for involvement over time**, offering transferable lessons for democratic water governance and directly informing policy recommendations developed under WP6.

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Related deliverables

This Deliverable 3.3 is especially linked to *D3.2 The InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology A practical guidance tool and analysis framework for the creation of River Basin Water Forums #V1.*

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ACRONYMS

CA	Consortium agreement
C&D	Communication & Dissemination
CER	Citizen Engagement Roadmap
EC	European Commission
GA	General Assembly
PS	Pilot Sites
WP	Work Package

1. INTRODUCTION – OBJECTIVES OF TASKS AND DELIVERABLE

WP3 of the InnWater project focuses on strengthening trust, legitimacy, and effectiveness in water governance by advancing a coherent and operational approach to citizen engagement within a Quintuple Helix framework. In line with the project's overarching objective to promote social innovation in multi-level and cross-sector water governance, WP3 has progressively developed, tested, and assessed citizen engagement solutions at river basin level. **D3.3** completes the process initiated under **Task 3.1** and **Task 3.2** and directly addresses the objectives of **Task 3.3**. While previous deliverables focused on conceptual clarification and methodological design, D3.3 closes the loop by analysing how these approaches were implemented in practice across the five InnWater pilot sites and by assessing their results, limitations, and future potential.

Deliverable D3.1, *Citizen Engagement in Europe in the 21st Century*, established the analytical foundations of WP3 through a review of citizen engagement experiences across Europe and other policy domains. It positioned citizen engagement as a distinct governance practice that goes beyond formal consultation and symbolic participation. Building on this analysis, Deliverable D3.2, *The InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology*, translated these insights into a practical and operational framework. It defined InnWater's citizen engagement approach and introduced **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)** as strategic tools to support pilot sites in planning, structuring, and progressively strengthening citizen participation. D3.2 provided methodological guidance, analytical steps, and templates to support pilot sites in defining context-sensitive engagement strategies and in orienting their actions towards the longer-term vision of River Basin Water Forums.

D3.3 completes this trajectory by focusing on the **implementation and assessment** of the Citizen Engagement Roadmaps defined under D3.2 guidelines. In direct alignment with **Task 3.3**, it examines how citizen engagement methodologies were applied in diverse territorial contexts, how engagement activities evolved over time, and to what extent they contributed to advancing participation along the ladder of citizen engagement. The deliverable provides a socio-political analysis of citizen involvement at local level, with particular attention to future participation potential, the inclusion of underrepresented and vulnerable groups, and the interaction between local engagement processes and broader policy frameworks.

A central element of this deliverable is the **clear distinction between stakeholders and citizens**. Stakeholders are understood as organised actors representing institutional, economic, or sectoral interests—such as public authorities, utilities, professional organisations, NGOs, or businesses—who already have structured access to governance processes. Citizens, by contrast, are understood as individuals embedded in local communities and everyday life, who may not belong to formal organisations but are directly affected by water governance decisions. InnWater defines citizen engagement as a deliberate, multi-layered process that seeks to involve these citizens meaningfully, particularly young people and socially vulnerable groups, rather than limiting participation to organised interests.

In this respect, **D3.3 complements Deliverable D5.4**, which documents governance engagement and implementation processes across the pilot sites. While D5.4 focuses on the broader governance ecosystem and stakeholder-based implementation dynamics, D3.3 deliberately

concentrates on citizens to add value to the overall governance analysis. It explores how citizen engagement contributes additional social insight, legitimacy, and long-term sustainability to water governance, without duplicating the stakeholder-focused analysis presented elsewhere.

Structurally, D3.3 presents the full citizen engagement pathway across the five pilot sites, from the definition of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps to their implementation and assessment. It highlights key achievements, barriers encountered, lessons learned, and remaining gaps, and identifies pathways for consolidating and institutionalising citizen engagement beyond the lifetime of the InnWater project. The results presented feed directly into WP5 implementation reporting and WP6 policy recommendations, ensuring that citizen perspectives are systematically integrated into both practical and strategic project outputs.

By completing the process initiated in Tasks 3.1 and 3.2, this deliverable demonstrates how citizen engagement can move from concept to practice and from practice to learning, contributing to more inclusive, legitimate, and resilient water governance across Europe.

2. THE PATH TO RIVER BASIN WATER FORUMS: DEFINITION, IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT OF INNWATER CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAPS AT PILOT SITES

Within the InnWater project, **River Basin Water Forums (RBWFs)** are conceived as a **long-term vision** rather than a predefined or uniform governance structure to be replicated across territories. They represent an aspirational horizon for more inclusive, legitimate, and collaborative water governance at river basin level, where citizens, public authorities, and other actors of the Quintuple Helix can interact on a sustained basis. However, InnWater explicitly recognises that such forums cannot be imposed as a rigid objective, nor can they follow a single institutional model. Cultural, socio-political, administrative, and environmental contexts differ significantly across pilot sites, shaping both the feasibility and the form that citizen engagement may take.

For this reason, WP3 has positioned **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)** as the **strategic pathway** towards RBWFs. Rather than prescribing the creation of new governance bodies, CERs function as adaptive tools that help pilot sites reflect on where they stand, define realistic engagement objectives, and progressively strengthen citizen participation over time. In some contexts, this pathway may lead to the consolidation or revitalisation of existing participatory structures; in others, it may support incremental improvements in information, consultation, or deliberation without immediately resulting in a formal forum. The RBWF thus remains a guiding vision, while the CER provides a concrete, context-sensitive mechanism to move in that direction.

This section presents how WP3 accompanied pilot sites along this pathway by supporting the **definition, implementation, and assessment** of their Citizen Engagement Roadmaps. The process unfolded in three main stages, each corresponding to a specific analytical and operational purpose, and collectively forming the backbone of the assessment presented in this deliverable.

First stage: Definition of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps.

The initial stage focused on supporting pilot sites in defining their CERs, based on the methodological framework introduced in D3.2. WP3 organised two rounds of one-to-one sessions with each pilot site, complemented by joint coordination meetings with WP5, to guide reflection on objectives, scope, and feasibility of citizen engagement. These exchanges enabled pilot sites to analyse their local context, identify governance challenges, clarify the role of citizens in addressing these challenges, and position themselves along the ladder of citizen participation. The outcome of this stage was the completion of the three analytical steps of the methodology—problem characterisation, local community engagement assessment, and selection of engagement approaches—resulting in a pilot-specific CER. The completed guidance forms produced during this phase are documented in **Annex 1**.

Second stage: Implementation of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps.

During the third year of the project, WP3 worked closely with pilot sites to support the implementation of their CERs. This stage involved adapting planned actions to emerging constraints and opportunities, identifying gaps in participation, and refining engagement tools to

improve both the quantity and quality of citizen involvement. Particular attention was given to reaching underrepresented and vulnerable groups and to shifting the focus from large-scale participation towards more meaningful and informed engagement. To this end, pilot sites complemented webinars and public events with targeted qualitative tools, including semi-structured interviews, in-person questionnaires, and online surveys. The instruments used at this stage are presented in **Annexes 2, 3, and 4**.

Third stage: Assessment of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps.

The final stage focused on assessing how CERs evolved in practice and how they contributed to citizen engagement objectives. WP3 conducted a third round of one-to-one sessions with each pilot site to review implemented actions, analyse qualitative and quantitative results, and identify achievements, barriers, and lessons learned. This assessment feeds directly into the synthesis presented in this deliverable, as well as into WP5 implementation reporting and Task 6.4 on policy recommendations. **Annex 5** also presents specific CER updates for each Pilot Site.

Together, these stages illustrate how CERs operate as dynamic, learning-oriented pathways towards more inclusive river basin governance. Rather than measuring success solely through the formal establishment of RBWFs, InnWater evaluates progress through the quality, inclusiveness, and continuity of citizen engagement processes developed at pilot site level. In this context, the citizen engagement processes and participation roadmaps were informed by the principles established in the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. These principles guided the design and implementation of engagement activities, with particular attention to gender balance, inclusion of vulnerable or underrepresented groups, accessibility of participation formats, and diversity in citizen representation. The degree to which these principles could be operationalised varied across pilot sites depending on local contexts, the maturity of existing participatory structures, and the type and availability of citizens engaged in each territory.

3. PILOT SITE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAPS DEFINITION

This section presents the resulting CERs for each PS as defined through the methodological guidelines described in D3.2.

Pilot Site 1 - La Réunion (France)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement in water resource management on Réunion Island faces several significant challenges, as highlighted in the diagnostic phase of the InnWater La Réunion project. First, **public awareness and prioritization of water issues are low**. Despite acknowledging the importance of water management, the general population does not perceive it as a priority, as evidenced by limited interest in recent public consultations conducted by the Water Agency. This underscores the importance of **public awareness and education**, with future efforts focused on conducting targeted campaigns, leveraging tools like social media, partnerships with ecological associations, and innovative approaches such as mobile applications to improve outreach and public understanding of water-related issues.

A further challenge lies in mobilizing citizen participation in decision-making processes, particularly in integrating collective preferences and ensuring accountability in the co-construction of public policies. Efforts to involve marginalized groups, such as single-parent households, and focus on identifying vulnerable populations using geographical analyses and local expertise, are crucial steps in overcoming these barriers. Actions at the **neighbourhood level**, rather than city-wide, provide more targeted opportunities for engagement, addressing disparities in areas like natural parks or regions with significant immigrant populations. Existing engagement efforts have primarily been led by a few active associations, such as ACCRO, Sillage, and Met Ensemble Aurère, which have undertaken localized initiatives addressing water pricing, ecological transitions, and joint resource management. Expanding these initiatives, **developing "Ambassadors de l'eau"**, and involving youth and retirees at the neighbourhood level will foster broader community engagement and leadership. These ambassadors can play a crucial role in promoting awareness and participation, engaging young representatives in schools, and leveraging existing climate action representatives for water management tasks.

To strengthen collaboration, **integrated citizen and stakeholder dialogues** will be essential. Creating systematic opportunities for citizens and key sectors, such as agriculture, to engage in discussions about water-related challenges and solutions will enhance cooperative problem-solving. Immediate actions include organizing assemblies or focus groups where citizens can provide feedback on policy choices and learn about complex issues like water pricing and quality. Long-term strategies should aim for **participatory budgeting** in water management to ensure fairness and transparency.

Plans to collaborate with youth-focused associations represent a step forward, but these efforts are constrained by a lack of specific expertise in water issues. Addressing this gap through **research-driven approaches** and capacity-building within the InnWater team will ensure that engagement efforts are informed, inclusive, and impactful. Establishing **short and long-term**

visions—including immediate actions like fostering dialogues and long-term objectives such as systemic citizen engagement in water governance—will provide a roadmap for sustainable progress.

STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Réunion Island presents a diverse and complex demographic landscape that poses several challenges to citizen engagement. The island's population of approximately 869,000 is characterized by a relatively **young demographic** (53% under 40) but also a growing elderly population (21% over 60). This age diversity implies the need for tailored communication and engagement strategies to accommodate varying interests and capacities. Although **women make up a larger proportion** of the population (53%), their employment rate (48%) lags behind men's (53%), with high levels of **underemployment** (12%). Economic participation gaps can limit the ability of women to actively engage in civic issues. High poverty rates (36% overall, 51% among households under 30) and income disparities create significant barriers to engagement, particularly in rural and isolated areas like *les Hauts*. Vulnerable groups such as **single-parent families**, **unemployed youth**, and the **elderly** in poverty face systemic obstacles in accessing participatory platforms. Réunion's rich cultural and religious diversity stemming from its history of migration (African, Indian, Malagasy, European, and Chinese communities) enhances its social fabric but may also introduce challenges in achieving equitable representation in decision-making. Differences in language use, cultural practices, and social norms could potentially **affect inclusive communication** and the building of trust in participatory processes.

As far as connectedness and representativeness of the community in formal associations, despite the existence of 14,000–15,000 associations, the ratio of associations per capita is below the national average, indicating a **lower level of grassroots organizational activity**. This disparity varies significantly across the island's regions, potentially leaving some communities underrepresented. With a relatively high employment rate within associations (11.4% of private sector jobs), the sector plays an essential role in social and economic integration. However, the majority of associations are small and under-resourced, **limiting their capacity to act as strong connectors between communities and decision-makers**. There is a lack of comprehensive data on the frequency and impact of community activities, events, and meetings at community level. Anecdotal evidence suggests a need for greater coordination and outreach to ensure consistent and inclusive participation.

In relation to governance and decision-making, there is **limited citizen involvement**. While formal mechanisms for public participation in water governance exist, they are underutilized. Informal networks and leadership within ecological and local movements may fill gaps but can sometimes lack transparency or inclusivity. At institutional level, local professional chambers (e.g., agriculture, commerce) and water management actors engage in decision-making but often operate independently, creating potential silos that limit integrated and citizen-centric approaches.

Communication channels are diverse but have limited reach. Communication channels include social media, local newspapers, and occasional awareness campaigns. However, engagement is inconsistent and may fail to reach marginalized groups, particularly in rural and isolated areas like *les Hauts*. In observing and identifying local leadership through key figures, local artists and ecological movement leaders play a role in mobilizing communities. However, concerns about

accountability and inclusivity in leadership practices highlight the need for structured and transparent spokesperson roles.

In line with the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, the assessment for La Réunion paid particular attention to barriers affecting the participation of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including women, unemployed youth, single-parent households, and geographically isolated communities. Citizen engagement activities and recommendations therefore emphasize neighbourhood-level approaches, culturally sensitive communication, accessibility, and the inclusion of diverse community profiles in participatory processes. However, persistent socio-economic inequalities and uneven community representation remain important challenges for achieving fully inclusive citizen engagement.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing Socio-Economic Barriers

1. **Target Marginalized Groups**: Focus on empowering vulnerable populations, such as single-parent households, women, and youth, by providing targeted support and ensuring their meaningful participation in civic processes.
2. **Neighbourhood-Level Initiatives**: Design and implement actions at the neighbourhood level to achieve more tailored and impactful engagement, addressing local disparities effectively.
3. **Demographic Insights**: Utilize indirect and qualitative data collection methods, like participant observation, to better understand the needs of marginalized communities without breaching privacy or sensitivity.

Strengthening Local Organizations

4. **Capacity Building for Local Associations**: Enhance the capabilities of local organizations through training, resources, and funding, enabling them to advocate effectively and mobilize citizens for water-related and broader civic initiatives.
5. **Development of "Ambassadors de l'eau"**: Establish a network of water ambassadors, including youth and retirees, to foster leadership, community engagement, and knowledge-sharing at the neighbourhood level.

Communication and Outreach

6. **Culturally Sensitive Campaigns**: Implement multilingual and culturally relevant communication strategies to resonate with Réunion Island's diverse population and improve outreach effectiveness.
7. **Public Awareness and Education**: Conduct campaigns and interactive sessions, such as forums or exhibits, to educate citizens on water challenges, policy choices, and the importance of sustainable resource management.

Improving Access and Inclusivity

8. **Connect Isolated Communities**: Address logistical barriers by improving transportation and developing remote engagement tools to ensure rural and geographically isolated populations can participate in governance processes.
9. **Inclusive Citizen Assemblies**: Organize inclusive citizen forums and assemblies to present policy options, gather feedback, and facilitate participatory decision-making processes.

Promoting Transparency and Trust

10. **Accountability Measures in Leadership**: Establish transparent and inclusive practices for selecting community leaders to enhance trust in participatory governance frameworks.
11. **Participatory Budgets**: Explore collective budget management and participatory budgeting methods in water governance to promote fairness and accountability.

Enhancing Governance and Collaboration

12. **Integrated Governance Structures**: Foster collaboration between professional chambers, water management bodies, and civil society organizations to create cohesive and inclusive decision-making frameworks.
13. **Integrated Stakeholder Dialogues**: Facilitate systematic dialogues between citizens and stakeholders, such as agricultural groups, to collaboratively address water-related challenges.
14. **Research-Driven Approaches**: Leverage findings and insights from pilot sites to refine and inform engagement strategies, ensuring actions are data-driven and responsive.

STEP 3. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

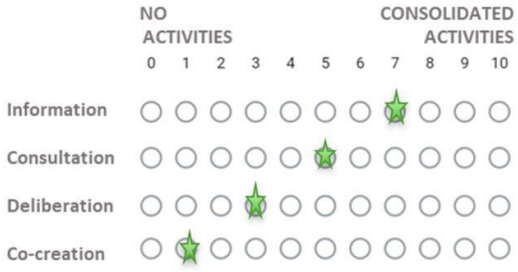

Figure 1 Position in the ladder of citizen participation - Pilot Site 1 - La Réunion (France)

Information. Information activities on water management in La Réunion are relatively developed compared to the other dimensions of participation. Public authorities, research institutions, and water agencies regularly disseminate information on water resources, drought risks, climate impacts, and environmental protection through reports, awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and public events. However, information remains mostly top-down, fragmented, and not always adapted to local communities' practical needs.

Consultation. Consultation mechanisms exist but remain limited in frequency and influence. Stakeholders such as municipalities, water users, farmers, environmental associations, and citizens are occasionally consulted through meetings, workshops, or formal planning procedures

linked to water management and climate adaptation strategies. Nevertheless, these consultations are often project-specific.

Deliberation. Deliberative processes are present to a moderate extent, particularly through multi-stakeholder exchanges promoted within water governance and environmental planning frameworks. Different actors can discuss challenges related to water allocation, ecosystem preservation, and climate resilience. However, deliberation remains constrained by institutional structures and unequal participation capacities among stakeholders.

Co-Creation. Co-creation initiatives are still at an early stage and remain weakly institutionalised. Although some collaborative projects involving public authorities, researchers, and local actors exist, there are very few long-term platforms where stakeholders jointly design, implement, and monitor water management solutions. Citizen participation in actual co-development and shared governance processes therefore remains limited.

The current situation in La Réunion shows relatively strong efforts in information sharing, moderate levels of consultation and deliberation, and only limited development of co-creation practices. This highlights the need to strengthen long-term participatory structures and collaborative governance mechanisms to support more inclusive and adaptive management.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

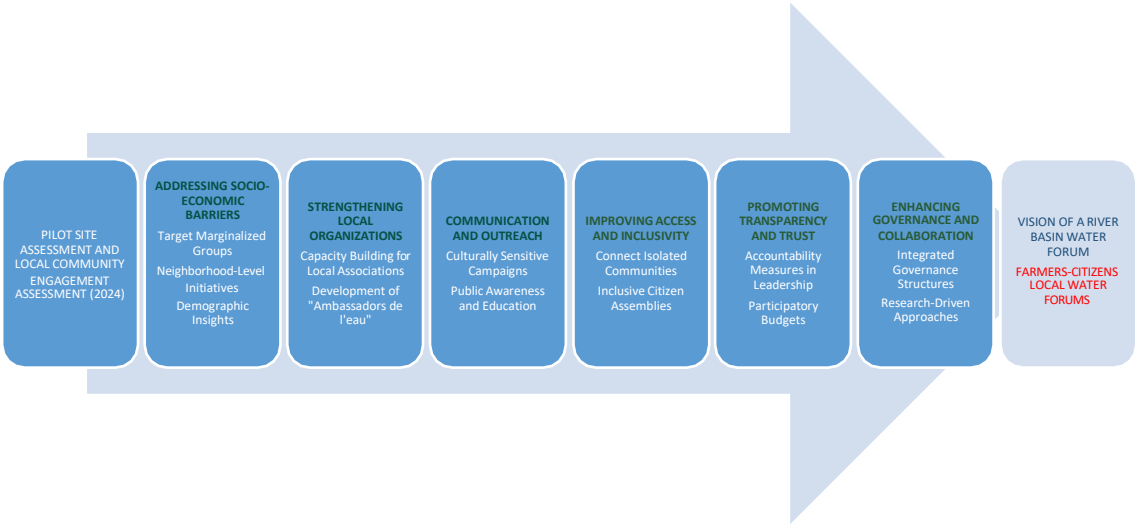

Figure 2: Citizen Engagement Roadmap - Pilot Site 1 - La Réunion (France)

Pilot site 2 – Brenta (Italy)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The Brenta River Basin faces several challenges in fostering effective citizen engagement, particularly due to **gaps in public awareness and limited resources**. The establishment of the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta as the management authority introduces a new framework that

integrates water and biodiversity management, yet this significant institutional achievement has **not been effectively communicated** to the public. Consequently, local citizens remain largely unaware of how these changes may **impact water pricing and the importance of their involvement in biodiversity efforts**. This gap underscores the need for a clearer **outreach strategy to involve citizens** and civil society in meaningful ways that enhance collaboration for the area's conservation goals.

While initial engagement efforts, such as a communication platform and webinars, have begun to address this issue, further steps are required to build a sustainable structure for citizen participation. Although the establishment of a River Basin Water Forum (RBWF) is envisioned as a future platform for broader engagement, immediate resources and staffing constraints hamper direct citizen-focused initiatives. Current projects, like InnWater, lack the funds necessary for targeted community involvement, and the priority remains on institutional setup, delaying citizen engagement until at least March 2025. As such, the project's success hinges **on balancing institutional development with securing the resources needed to foster long-term community participation** in water and biodiversity management activities.

STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

The Middle Brenta River area faces several challenges in achieving effective citizen engagement, shaped by the region's demographic, social, and governance dynamics. The **aging population**, coupled with a significant **migration of young people**, creates a demographic imbalance that **limits the diversity of perspectives** in local governance and decision-making. The region's predominantly right-leaning political stance often **deprioritizes environmental issues**, making it difficult to gain traction for conservation efforts. **Linguistic and cultural barriers** further complicate communication, as many residents prefer the local dialect over standard Italian or English.

Concerning community connectedness, the lack of a shared identity among the 15 municipalities hinders cooperative action. Most **associations are informal** and primarily focused on cultural events rather than environmental initiatives. This fragmented approach has prevented the region from attracting funding for environmental projects and promoting itself as a unified territory. While some associations, such as fishermen's groups, play an active role in monitoring and reporting environmental issues, most community activities revolve around **traditional festivals** rather than addressing water and biodiversity challenges.

Governance frames around misalignment and perception issues. The Consiglio di Bacino Brenta, despite its role in water and biodiversity management, struggles with public misunderstandings of its responsibilities. The *Parco Fiume Brenta* initiative is often mistaken for a formal park, leading to misplaced criticism and expectations. Additionally, other water management authorities view the Consiglio's new biodiversity monitoring role with suspicion, creating further friction. Existing **communication channels** like social media, newsletters, and the water tariff system have reached some segments of the community but have not effectively engaged or educated the public on environmental and management issues. Resource constraints like limited staffing and financial resources within the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta pose significant barriers to implementing comprehensive citizen engagement initiatives.

In line with the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, the assessment for the Middle Brenta River area considered barriers affecting inclusive citizen participation, particularly those linked to demographic imbalance, youth outmigration, limited engagement of women and younger generations, and uneven community representation across municipalities. Recommendations therefore emphasize tailored communication strategies, involvement of local associations and community leaders, and the development of more inclusive engagement activities capable of reaching underrepresented groups and strengthening territorial cohesion. However, fragmented local identities, limited institutional resources, and the predominance of informal community structures continue to constrain the development of fully inclusive citizen engagement processes.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building a Shared Identity and Awareness

1. **Foster a shared territorial identity** by strengthening the Parco Fiume Brenta brand through storytelling and success stories to build pride and collaboration. The Parco Fiume Brenta brand needs to be also associated and better linked with the new management authority of the area (Consiglio di Bacino Brenta) to give credit and a more institutional shape to the initiative, avoiding misunderstandings.
2. **Broaden environmental awareness** by integrating conservation themes into cultural events and partnering with associations for workshops and activities.

Localized and Inclusive Engagement

3. **Engage community leaders**, such as mayors and association presidents, as spokespersons to amplify outreach efforts.
4. Develop **tailored communication strategies** to reach diverse groups, including campaigns for underrepresented groups like women and youth.
5. Leverage the upcoming MAP-Brenta project to activate **citizen science and volunteer programs** to engage residents in activities like biodiversity monitoring and waste collection.

Data-Driven and Transparent Processes

8. Utilize demographic and network data to **target key communities** and associations effectively.
9. **Develop digital platforms** to communicate environmental and social costs in water tariffs, fostering transparency and public understanding, involving the local water utility (ETRA)

Enhance Resource Allocation and Partnerships

10. **Clarify governance roles** at regional level, overcoming cultural barriers and management overlap risks with other regional entities (e.g. Genio Civile), then conduct campaigns to explain responsibilities and improve trust in the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta.
11. **Seek additional funding** through EU grants and partnerships with private stakeholders to bolster capacity.
12. Collaborate with local businesses, schools, non-profits, and associations to pool resources, provide tools, and share expertise, enabling the organization of sustainable and inclusive, **coordinated community-driven initiatives**.

STEP 3. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

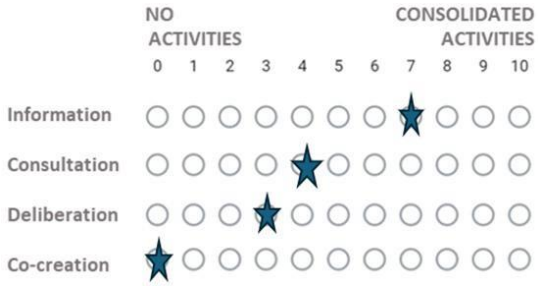

Figure 3 Position in the ladder of citizen participation - Pilot site 2 – Brenta (Italy)

Information. Information activities related to water management in the Brenta pilot site are relatively well established. Regional authorities, basin management institutions, irrigation consortia, and research actors provide technical information, monitoring data, and updates on water availability, flood risks, irrigation management, and climate adaptation measures. Awareness-raising initiatives and communication campaigns are regularly implemented, although the information can still be highly technical and not always easily understandable or accessible for all citizens and stakeholder groups.

Consultation. Consultation processes are present at a moderate level and mainly occur within formal planning and management procedures. Farmers, local authorities, water users, environmental organisations, and technical stakeholders are consulted through thematic workshops, and participatory events linked to river basin management, irrigation planning, and environmental policies. However, consultation often remains institutional and project-oriented, with limited opportunities for continuous public engagement or influence on final decisions.

Deliberation. Deliberation mechanisms are limited but emerging. Some multi-actor platforms and technical discussion forums allow stakeholders to exchange views on water allocation, agricultural needs, ecosystem conservation, and climate resilience strategies. Nevertheless, deliberative spaces remain relatively narrow in scope and are often dominated by institutional or technical actors, which can reduce broader societal participation and balanced dialogue.

Co-Creation. Co-creation practices are still very limited within the Brenta pilot site. While collaboration between institutions, technical experts, and sectoral actors exists in specific projects, there are few long-term participatory processes where stakeholders and citizens jointly design and implement water management solutions. Collaborative governance and shared decision-making structures therefore remain at an early stage of development.

The current state of participation in the Brenta pilot site shows strong development in information activities, moderate consultation processes, limited deliberative structures, and very weak co-creation practices. Strengthening inclusive participation and long-term collaborative governance mechanisms will be essential to support integrated and adaptive water management in the territory.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

Figure 4 Citizen Engagement Roadmap - Pilot site 2 – Brenta (Italy)

Pilot site 3 – Figueres (Spain)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement on water scarcity faces significant challenges, primarily due to limited resources, lack of political commitment, and the constrained timelines necessitated by the emergency nature of the problem. Current efforts, confined to providing practical information on water-saving measures through municipal channels, lack the depth needed to foster active community participation or long-term behavioural change. This reactive approach does not comprehensively address the complexity of water scarcity issues.

Identifying and encouraging leaders with strong sectoral knowledge and extensive local networks who are recognized by both citizens and authorities has been a focus, with the intention of fostering engagement and facilitating collaborative initiatives. This leadership is envisioned as a critical component for driving structured engagement initiatives, such as workshops and seminars tailored to key stakeholders. These sessions, particularly targeting farmers and the agricultural sector, should address water management and scarcity while raising awareness through exhibitions and public information events.

Cross-sector collaboration has been encouraged among high water-use sectors like tourism, agriculture, and industry, aiming to integrate diverse perspectives into water governance. Although civil society participation remains limited, initial consultation processes could lay the groundwork for more inclusive frameworks. Awareness campaigns can complement these actions, sharing detailed information about water issues, including drought impacts, to enhance public understanding.

Looking ahead, the establishment of a formal structure, such as a River Basin Water Forum (RBWF) or a **Community of Users**, is a core objective. Such a platform would institutionalize stakeholder engagement and enable shared governance. Leadership development remains

crucial, with an emphasis on supporting individuals or institutions capable of championing collaborative water management efforts. To address barriers to participation, communication strategies should be tailored to vulnerable groups, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. The short-term timeline for engagement, driven by the urgency of the situation, further exacerbates the challenge of **mobilizing citizens meaningfully**. Without adequate **political backing and a well-defined strategy**, the capacity to support impactful citizen engagement remains limited, highlighting a critical gap between intention and implementation.

STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement in water management is hindered by a **lack of interconnectedness** among diverse interest groups, **limited community activity**, and an **absence of inclusive governance structures**. Although various associations exist (e.g., water supply companies, agricultural groups, environmental entities, and tourism sectors), they operate in silos, prioritizing their **own interests rather than collaborating** on shared water management goals. Community activities and communication **efforts are sporadic** and insufficiently geared towards fostering active participation or cross-sector dialogue. Furthermore, the absence of institutionalized platforms for decision-making and the lack of key opinion leaders within the community exacerbate the challenges, **leaving citizens without a clear voice** or representation in water governance.

In line with the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, the assessment for Figueres considered the importance of fostering more inclusive and representative citizen engagement processes in water governance. Particular attention was given to the need for broader participation beyond organized sectoral interests, encouraging greater involvement of diverse community profiles and strengthening spaces for cross-sector dialogue and collective representation. However, the current fragmentation among interest groups, the absence of institutionalized participatory structures, and the limited presence of community leadership continue to constrain the development of more inclusive and collaborative engagement processes.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building Leadership and Participation

1. **Identify and support local leaders** who can bridge gaps between citizens, interest groups, and policymakers, fostering trust and mobilizing community engagement. Conduct targeted interviews or workshops to identify change agents and leadership strategies.
2. Institutionalize regular consultation processes and participatory planning sessions to **integrate community voices** into water governance frameworks.

Strengthening Communication and Awareness

3. Develop and implement **diverse communication tools**, including social media campaigns, participatory events, and interactive community meetings, to raise awareness about water issues and governance.

4. Launch continuous **awareness-raising initiatives**, starting with informational seminars and exhibitions, to enhance public understanding of water scarcity challenges and the need for sustainable practices.

Expanding Collaboration

5. **Foster cross-sector collaboration** by organizing joint initiatives among tourism, agriculture, and industrial sectors, breaking silos to achieve shared conservation goals.
6. Establish a formal structure such as a River Basin Water Forum (RBWF) or a **Community of Users** to serve as a platform for inclusive collaboration among stakeholders, promoting shared goals and representing collective interests.

STEP 3. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

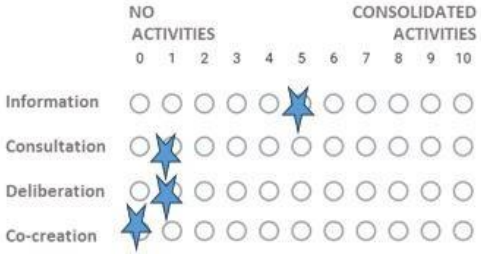

Figure 5 Position in the ladder of citizen participation - Pilot site 3 – Figueres (Spain)

Information. Some general information about water management is available from the ACA (Regional Entity for Water Management), but it is not tailored to the specific needs of the territory. There is a lack of detailed data, such as water consumption volumes and groundwater volumes, which limits a comprehensive understanding of the local water situation. While ACA might have more data, it is not fully shared with stakeholders.

Consultation. Consultation is minimal and sporadic, with only one notable engagement process taking place seven or eight years ago (2017-2018) during the drafting of The Muga management plan by the regional government. There is no active consultation process to address current challenges, such as the ongoing drought.

Deliberation. Deliberation structures are limited and insufficient for meaningful stakeholder dialogue. A specific table exists for discussing water allocation volumes, but it is narrowly focused and does not facilitate broader discussions on water management challenges.

Co-Creation. Co-creation structures are entirely absent in the territory, with no platforms or processes for stakeholders to collaboratively develop solutions.

The current state of engagement in water management reveals gaps in detailed and accessible information, infrequent and limited consultation processes, minimal structures for deliberation, and a complete absence of co-creation initiatives, highlighting the need for significant improvements in all areas.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

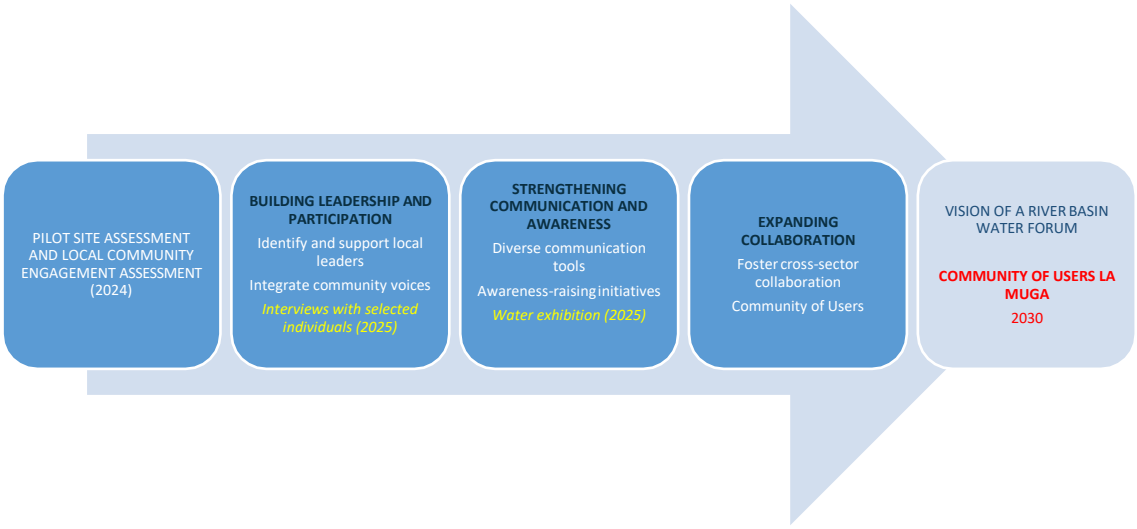

Figure 6 Citizen Engagement Roadmap - Pilot site 3 – Figueres (Spain)

Pilot Site 4 – West Country (United Kingdom)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The primary goal of citizen engagement in the pilot site is to raise awareness about the health of the river, focusing on **water quality and quantity**. However, several challenges limit the effectiveness and reach of these efforts. One significant challenge lies in **broadening the demographic diversity of volunteers** participating in citizen science initiatives. Current participants are predominantly **retirees**, which limits the representativeness of the data collected and the community perspectives shared. Additionally, while the existing Citizen Science Investigations program has successfully engaged over 1,000 volunteers and generated a wealth of data, the demand for participation far exceeds available resources**. Limited capacity and funding** restrict the ability to scale up these activities to meet interest levels.

Another challenge involves creating a **structured framework for citizen voices to influence decision-making at a higher level**. Although a River Basin Water Forum existed under the Water Framework Directive, it was disbanded in 2014, leaving a gap in formal citizen representation. The existing network of Catchment Partnerships offers a foundation for reinstating a forum, which could connect local insights to regional and national policy discussions. Addressing these challenges will require targeted outreach to underrepresented groups, enhanced funding, and the establishment of a formalized citizen engagement framework.

STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement in the West Country faces multiple demographic, organizational, and structural challenges. The region's population is skewed towards retirees, with **limited representation of younger demographics and ethnic minorities**, making it difficult to capture

diverse perspectives. Although the area includes pockets of wealth due to tourism and second homes, significant deprivation persists in some areas, creating socioeconomic disparities that can hinder uniform community participation.

While local connectivity has improved, as evidenced by the growing number of river interest groups (many originating from citizen science efforts), the absence of a formal governance structure linking these groups to water management authorities limits their influence. Although Catchment Partnerships offer a platform for discussion, they **lack institutional authority to drive decision-making** or ensure community perspectives directly inform policy. Communication channels, such as social media and local events, facilitate information sharing but may not sufficiently reach or engage all community members.

In line with the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, the assessment for the West Country considered the importance of broadening citizen participation beyond traditionally engaged groups and improving the inclusion of underrepresented communities. Particular attention was given to demographic imbalances linked to ageing populations, limited representation of younger generations and ethnic minorities, and socio-economic disparities affecting participation capacities across the territory. Recommendations therefore emphasize accessible engagement formats, targeted outreach activities, and governance structures capable of strengthening inclusive representation and connecting local citizen initiatives with regional water management processes.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive Participation

1. **Expand demographic representation** by developing targeted programs for youth, marginalized, and underrepresented groups through educational initiatives, partnerships with schools, and accessible engagement strategies.
2. Conduct **integrated social network analyses** to map relationships among community groups, volunteers, and governance entities, guiding collaboration strategies.

Enhanced Communication

3. **Reframe communication strategies** to resonate with specific community groups, using both traditional media and newer digital platforms.
4. **Non-committal engagement**. Design interactive and creative activities, such as family-oriented events and exhibits, to attract diverse participants and spark interest in water governance.

Scalable Governance and Vision

5. **Secure sustainable funding** and resources to support citizen science programs and expand their reach while maintaining quality and accessibility.
6. Formalize community participation by **creating governance charters** that define roles and mechanisms for integrating local voices into regional water management policies.
7. Develop a **nested governance framework** connecting small local groups to larger regional forums, enabling coordinated action across scales while preserving local insights.

STEP 3. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

Position in the ladder of citizen participation

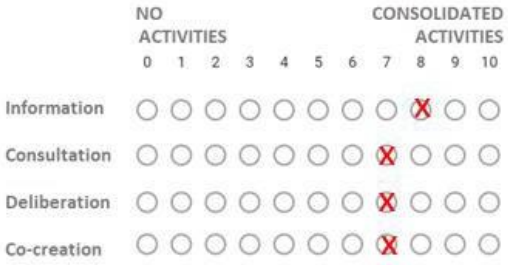

Figure 7 Position in the ladder of citizen participation - Pilot Site 4 – West Country (United Kingdom)

Information. Information and communication activities related to water management in the West Country pilot site are highly developed and well consolidated. Water utilities, local authorities, environmental agencies, and community organisations actively disseminate information on water conservation, drought management, water quality, flooding risks, and climate adaptation through digital platforms, public campaigns, educational initiatives, and regular stakeholder communications. Information is broadly accessible and supported by long-standing institutional practices.

Consultation. Consultation processes are also strongly established within the territory. Stakeholders, including local communities, water users, farmers, NGOs, businesses, and public authorities, are regularly consulted during the development of water management plans, environmental strategies, and infrastructure projects. Formal consultation procedures and public engagement exercises are commonly integrated into governance and planning frameworks, allowing stakeholders to provide feedback and express concerns.

Deliberation. Deliberative participation is well developed and supported by structured multi-stakeholder forums and partnership approaches. Different actors engage in dialogue on water allocation, catchment management, ecosystem restoration, resilience strategies, and long-term sustainability objectives. These deliberative spaces promote exchange between institutional actors and local stakeholders, although participation levels and influence may still vary depending on the process and stakeholder group involved.

Co-Creation. Co-creation activities are also relatively consolidated in the West Country pilot site. Collaborative initiatives involving public authorities, research institutions, NGOs, local communities, and water sector actors support the joint development of solutions for sustainable water management and climate adaptation. Participatory projects and partnership-based approaches demonstrate a stronger culture of shared governance compared to many other territories, although there is still room to further strengthen citizen-led and community-driven initiatives.

The West Country pilot site demonstrates a comparatively advanced level of citizen participation across all dimensions of the ladder, with particularly strong development in information sharing, consultation, deliberation, and collaborative governance practices. The challenge moving

forward lies in maintaining inclusive participation and reinforcing long-term co-creation capacities to support resilient and adaptive water management.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

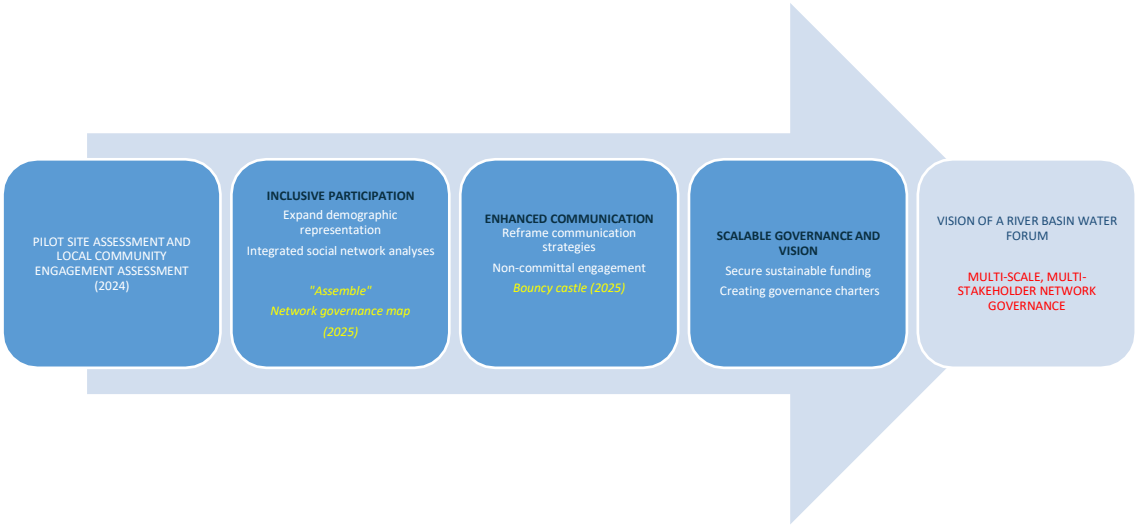

Figure 8 - Citizen Engagement Roadmap - Pilot Site 4 – West Country (United Kingdom)

Pilot site 5 – Tisza (Hungary)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement in the pilot site centres on fostering a **sense of stewardship among citizens, particularly farmers**, for the sustainable management of water and landscapes. A key challenge lies in addressing the **conflicting priorities of land use**: while enhancing water retention in winter can provide long-term benefits for water availability and biodiversity, it requires farmers to dedicate a portion of their cultivated land, specifically low lying parcels suitable for water retention, a prospect that meets significant resistance. This resistance is exacerbated by existing EU agricultural subsidies, which incentivize intensive farming over environmentally sustainable practices. To be frank, CAP incentives have started to shift toward more ecological practices, but this is a slow process in many member states, including Hungary. Efforts to engage farmers must navigate these **economic and cultural barriers** to secure their cooperation and create successful pilot agreements that could serve as models for broader adoption.

The immediate focus is on **engaging farmers as pivotal stakeholders**, given that they own the land required for enhanced water management in the landscape. Success with this group is also seen as a gateway to broader community involvement and policy reform. Overcoming this challenge requires targeted, **trust-building initiatives**, such as winter meetings with farmers, to align their interests with sustainable land and water management goals. If executed effectively,

these efforts could lead to a ripple effect, encouraging greater biodiversity, soil protection, labour opportunities, and long-term policy changes that support integrated water management. They can also serve as positive examples for other locations. Key actions have already been undertaken, including **workshops on water retention and climate adaptation**. These sessions have raised awareness about the impacts of climate change on water resources and introduced tailored solutions, such as mapping exercises and interactive discussions, to help farmers visualize the benefits of sustainable practices.

Additionally, **initial steps toward collaborative governance** have been initiated through discussions on shared water management practices between farmers and municipalities, setting the stage for broader participation. This is an early stage effort that may (or may not) yield results by the end of the InnWater project.

Looking ahead, the project aims to institutionalize and scale up citizen engagement. The establishment of formal governance structures, such as local water forums, will facilitate regular communication between citizens and water authorities, institutionalizing citizen participation. Improving communication frameworks remains a priority, with strategies designed to make content accessible to diverse audiences. Additionally, **policy recommendations** will facilitate efforts to **scale up participation** and secure long-term objectives.

STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Citizen engagement in Jász Nagykun Szolnok County, part of the North Great Plains region, faces several challenges rooted in **demographic, economic, and social structures**. The region's **low population density, rural character, and income levels below the national average** suggest limited resources and opportunities for broad civic participation. Vulnerable groups, such as the Roma community, face systemic challenges that hinder their engagement. While the area benefits from robust agricultural activity and a few active associations, many community members remain **disconnected from formal decision-making structures**. The reliance on consultative bodies, such as the Tisza River Sub-basin Water Management Council, provides some avenues for participation but highlights a **need for stronger grassroots** involvement.

Communication barriers also present significant challenges. Although KÖTIVIZIG maintains active communication channels through social media, local press, and public meetings, engagement levels vary significantly among associations, with groups like angling and farming associations showing more active involvement. The **absence of a unified, community-driven platform for water governance** limits the broader public's ability to contribute effectively to decision-making processes.

In line with the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, the assessment for the Tisza pilot site considered the importance of improving the participation of vulnerable and underrepresented groups in water governance processes. Particular attention was given to socio-economic disparities affecting rural communities, the limited participation opportunities available to women and subsistence farmers, and the systemic barriers faced by the Roma community. Recommendations therefore emphasize targeted outreach, inclusive communication strategies, and the strengthening of grassroots

participation mechanisms capable of fostering more equitable and representative citizen engagement in local water governance.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaborative Awareness and Education

1. **Partner with farmers** at workshops and community forums to raise awareness about water retention and climate adaptation, integrating success stories to build trust and showcase tangible benefits.
2. Develop tailored educational programs, including on-site demonstrations and **farmer-to-farmer exchanges**, to promote sustainable land and water retention practices.
3. Implement **targeted outreach programs** for underrepresented groups, such as subsistence farmers, women, and the Roma community, fostering their inclusion in water management initiatives.

Enhance communication

4. Design **communication strategies** tailored to diverse audiences, including profession-sensitive approaches, including those less active online.
5. Identify and **support opinion leaders** from diverse backgrounds to mediate between farmers, municipalities, and water authorities, ensuring equitable representation and advocacy.

Building Collaborative Governance

6. **Strengthen grassroots networks** by formalizing smaller associations, enabling consistent engagement with governance structures and empowering local voices.
7. Make **policy recommendations** and advocate for policy changes that provide incentives and compensation for sustainable water practices, making them a viable investment for stakeholders.
8. Establish **formal governance structures**, such as local water forums or community-based organizations, to institutionalize citizen engagement and facilitate regular dialogue between stakeholders.

STEP 3. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

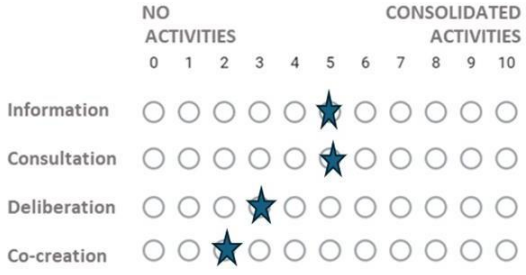

Figure 9 Position in the ladder of citizen participation - Pilot site 5 – Tisza (Hungary)

Information. Information activities in the Tisza pilot site are moderately developed through communication by water authorities, municipalities, and agricultural organisations on drought risks, irrigation, and water availability. Information mainly targets technical and institutional stakeholders, especially farmers, who are considered the priority group due to their central role in water use and vulnerability to water scarcity. Broader public awareness activities remain more limited.

Consultation. Consultation processes are present at a moderate level and mainly involve farmers, agricultural representatives, water authorities, and technical experts through workshops and stakeholder discussions. The initial priority is to secure farmers' cooperation before extending participation to wider citizen groups. In later stages, consultation activities could also involve neighbourhood associations, cultural entities, and local communities through surveys and awareness initiatives.

Deliberation. Deliberative structures remain relatively limited and are mostly linked to thematic workshops and institutional exchanges on irrigation, drought management, and climate resilience. Dialogue exists between key stakeholders, but broader multi-stakeholder deliberation and continuous engagement mechanisms are still underdeveloped.

Co-Creation. Co-creation activities are still at an early stage, with few long-term structures for jointly designing and implementing water management solutions. Existing workshops aim to stimulate collaboration between stakeholders, but participation often remains closer to consultation than to genuine shared decision-making processes.

Overall, the Tisza pilot site shows moderate development in information and consultation activities, while deliberation and especially co-creation remain limited. Indicators for monitoring engagement include the number of workshop participants, gender balance, and the extent to which workshops generate active stakeholder participation and emerging co-creation processes rather than passive involvement.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

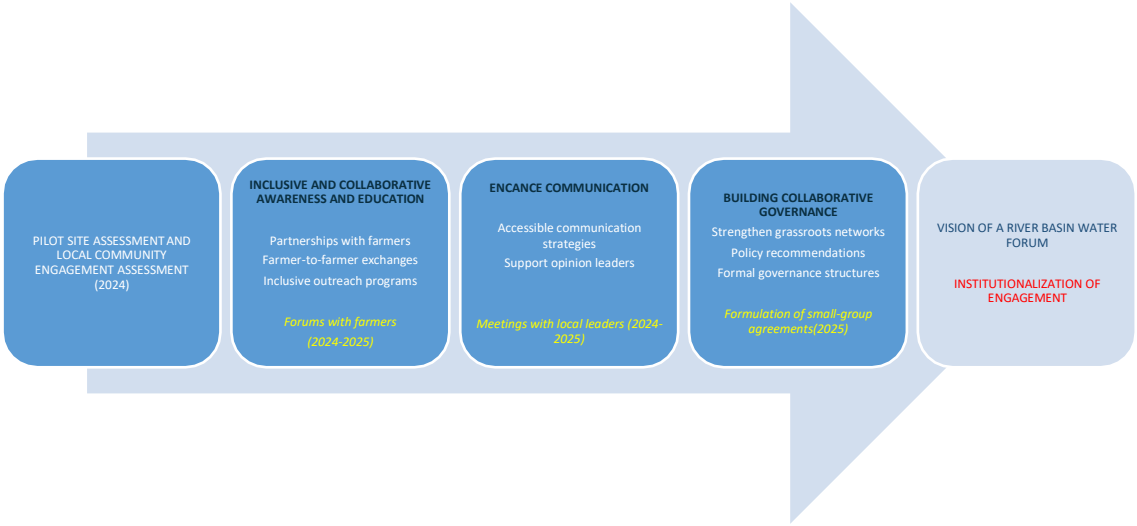

Figure 10 Citizen Engagement Roadmap - Pilot site 5 – Tisza (Hungary)

4. PILOT SITE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ROADMAPS IMPLEMENTATION, RESULTS AND ASSESSMENT

This section examines how the Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs) defined by each pilot site were translated into concrete engagement actions and assesses their outcomes in relation to the objectives set under WP3. While all pilot sites were guided by a shared Citizen Engagement Methodology and common conceptual framework, engagement pathways, tools, and results necessarily differ according to local governance structures, socio-economic conditions, institutional cultures, and existing traditions of participation. Citizen engagement was not treated as a uniform intervention, but as a **context-responsive and adaptive process**. Each pilot site implemented its CER in line with realistic local conditions, balancing ambition with feasibility. As a result, progress along the ladder of citizen participation varies across sites—from awareness-raising and structured consultation to co-construction—reflecting differences in starting baselines and structural constraints rather than differences in commitment or effort.

Building on the distinction between stakeholder engagement and citizen engagement, the analysis in this section focuses specifically on **how citizens—understood as individuals rooted in local communities rather than organised sectoral actors—were engaged in practice**, and what this revealed about inclusiveness, legitimacy, and governance capacity at local level. Across all pilot sites, the implementation of CERs followed a **flexible and adaptive approach**. While initial roadmaps provided strategic orientation, engagement activities evolved over time in response to contextual constraints, timing, and emerging opportunities. In practice, implementation progressively shifted from an emphasis on broad participation towards **more targeted and qualitative forms of engagement**, aimed at giving underrepresented and vulnerable groups a clearer voice in water governance processes. To support this shift, pilot sites complemented planned activities—such as webinars, seminars, and public meetings—with additional qualitative tools, including semi-structured interviews, in-person questionnaires, and online surveys. These instruments made it possible to capture citizens' lived experiences, perceptions, and priorities, and to assess engagement not only in terms of participation numbers, but also in terms of **depth, diversity, and perceived influence on decision-making.**

To ensure clarity, comparability, and evaluability, results for each pilot site are presented using a **harmonised analytical structure, comprising**:

- a concise pilot site snapshot;
- a synthesis of context, roadmap intent, and implementation approach;
- quantitative and qualitative evidence of engagement reach and quality;
- an assessment against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap, including position on the ladder of participation;
- key lessons learned and priority actions for the road ahead.

This section focuses on **synthesis and assessment**, highlighting evidence of progress, limitations encountered, and learning generated through implementation. Detailed Citizen Engagement Roadmap updates, including full indicator sets, methodological details, and supporting evidence, are provided in **Annex 5** for transparency and traceability.

Taken together, the pilot site assessments demonstrate that meaningful citizen engagement in water governance depends less on the replication of fixed formats than on the ability to adapt methods to local realities, build trust incrementally, and create credible pathways from participation to influence. The diversity of trajectories observed across pilot sites therefore constitutes a core result of InnWater, offering transferable insights for the design of participatory water governance processes across diverse European contexts.

Pilot Site 1 – La Réunion (France)

Territorial context	Island territory with high socio-economic vulnerability, strong territorial disparities (North/South), linguistic diversity (Creole/French), and historically low citizen participation in water governance
Primary citizen focus	Young people (18–29), including students, early-career professionals, and socially disadvantaged youth
Citizen Engagement Roadmap ambition	Progress from information and consultation towards meaningful participation and co-construction
Current position on ladder	**Co-construction achieved (project-based)**
Distinctive feature	Integration of vulnerable youth into governance discussions with analytical policy feedback

Context, Objectives and Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Citizen engagement in La Réunion was designed as a core pillar of the InnWater project, with the objective of supporting the co-construction of public policies related to water governance and the WEFE nexus, while improving their social acceptability. This approach responds to a local context characterised by high youth unemployment, territorial inequalities between the north and south of the island, linguistic diversity, and limited historical participation of citizens in formal water governance processes. The diagnostic phase identified several structural challenges: low public prioritisation of water issues despite their strategic importance; limited participation in formal consultations; barriers affecting vulnerable groups (young people, unemployed citizens, single-parent households, residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods); and fragmented engagement largely driven by a small number of local associations. These findings directly informed the design of the La Réunion Citizen Engagement Roadmap.

The roadmap adopted a progressive and realistic ambition: moving up the ladder of participation from information and consultation towards participation and co-construction, while prioritising neighbourhood-level engagement and underrepresented groups. It emphasised capacity-building before participation, mixed citizen–stakeholder dialogues, adapted communication formats, and the use of indicators to assess inclusivity, continuity, and influence on decision-making.

Implementation of Citizen Engagement Actions and Citizen Profiles

Citizen engagement in La Réunion was implemented through a multi-layered strategy combining structured, project-wide governance activities with targeted, locally anchored actions. A Working Group (WG) was established at the start of the project, composed of 14 members representing 10 institutions across water policy, agriculture, energy, health, research, and socio-economic development. Citizen perspectives were embedded through the participation of a deputy Member of Parliament engaged on the Right to Water and a civil society organisation active in social and environmental justice. Importantly, engagement extended well beyond the WG. A diversified mix of engagement formats was deployed, including webinars and public events, online surveys, Summer School activities and Serious Games, dedicated youth workshops, and informal continuity tools such as WhatsApp groups.

Citizen Engagement Reach and Outputs

- 36 unique citizens engaged through InnWater webinars
- 51 survey responses linked to the pilot site
- ~20 university students involved via Summer School and Serious Games
- ~20 young citizens engaged through two dedicated youth workshops
- 10 concrete policy proposals co-developed by young citizens

A defining feature of the La Réunion approach was its differentiated treatment of youth as a heterogeneous group. Engagement activities involved vocational students (Bac+2), university students (Bac+5), early-career researchers, and socially disadvantaged young people aged 18–29 recruited via Maisons de l'Emploi and neighbourhood socio-cultural centres. Many of these participants had interrupted educational trajectories, were unemployed, and had never previously participated in water governance processes. Participation was deliberately preceded by full-day capacity-building and awareness sessions, particularly on links between freshwater pollution and coral reef degradation, before integration into WG meetings.

Citizen Insights and Evidence of Participation Quality

Survey and workshop results converge in highlighting a strong participation potential among young and vulnerable citizens when engagement is accessible, understandable, and demonstrably impactful.

Survey Insights from Citizen Engagement in La Réunion

- Profile: Predominantly young (18–29), students or unemployed, with low prior participation
- Baseline: Limited previous engagement but high willingness to participate or remain informed
- Key enablers:
  - Clear and simple information
  - Visible outcomes from participation
  - Locally accessible formats (time and place)
- Preferred channels: Informal and digital tools (social media, messaging applications)

Youth engagement was not symbolic. Two dedicated youth workshops were directly integrated into WG meetings, enabling young participants to co-develop 10 policy proposals (e.g. neighbourhood composting schemes, incentives for sanitation compliance, awareness-raising on individual wastewater systems). Several of these proposals are currently being tested through the InnWater Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model, creating a direct and visible link between citizen input and analytical policy assessment.

Assessment Against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Alignment with roadmap	Strong – roadmap objectives largely achieved
Level of participation	Co-construction reached through youth integration into WG
Inclusivity	High – targeted engagement of vulnerable and underrepresented youth
Capacity-building	Strong – participation preceded by training and awareness
Evidence of influence	10 policy proposals; several tested via CGE modelling
Institutionalisation	Limited – engagement remains largely project-based

Achievements

- Effective shift from consultation to co-construction
- Successful engagement of underrepresented youth at neighbourhood level
- Strong emphasis on capacity-building prior to participation
- Use of InnWater analytical tools to enhance legitimacy and policy relevance
- Adapted communication and facilitation addressing linguistic and cultural barriers

Barriers Encountered

- Low baseline awareness and confidence among citizens
- High facilitation and resource requirements for vulnerable groups

- Attrition and uneven participation within the WG
- Limited institutional uptake beyond the project framework

Key Lessons Learned

1. Low participation reflects structural barriers rather than lack of interest.
2. Vulnerable citizens require time, preparation, and trust-building to engage meaningfully.
3. Participation is strongest when it leads to visible influence on policy choices.
4. Informal digital tools are essential for continuity and trust.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

- Institutionalise citizen engagement through permanent forums or assemblies
- Develop a structured network of "Ambassadeurs de l'eau"
- Broaden inclusion to women, single-parent households, and elderly populations
- Strengthen feedback loops linking citizen input to decisions
- Formalise indicators for continuity, inclusivity, and impact

Overall Assessment

Citizen engagement in La Réunion is largely on track, with particularly strong results in inclusion, capacity-building, and co-construction. The next critical phase will be to transform successful, project-based engagement into durable governance practices that persist beyond the InnWater project.

Pilot Site – Brenta (Italy)

Territorial context	Fragmented basin governance across 15 municipalities, multiple water-related authorities, weak shared territorial identity
Primary citizen focus	Citizens engaged mainly through civil society organisations and intermediaries
Citizen Engagement Roadmap ambition	Progress from information-sharing towards structured consultation and, in the longer term, co-construction
Current position on ladder	**Consultation achieved; selective steps towards co-construction**
Distinctive feature	Use of innovative, non-technical formats and intermediary organisations to include underrepresented perspectives

Context, Objectives and Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Citizen engagement in the Brenta pilot site was conceived as a strategic enabler of trust, transparency, and shared understanding within a complex and fragmented water governance context. The Middle Brenta River area is characterised by multiple institutions responsible for drinking water, irrigation, hydraulic safety, and biodiversity, combined with historically limited direct citizen involvement in basin-level governance. Demographic trends, including an ageing population, youth outmigration, and socio-cultural diversity, further constrain inclusive participation.

The Citizen Engagement Roadmap explicitly acknowledged these structural constraints. Rather than aiming for immediate broad citizen mobilisation, it prioritised institutional consolidation, awareness-raising, and structured consultation as necessary foundations for deeper engagement. The longer-term ambition was to move progressively up the ladder of participation—from information and consultation towards co-construction—potentially through a River Basin Water Forum, once institutional clarity and trust had been strengthened. Within this framework, citizen engagement aimed to clarify governance roles and responsibilities, build trust between institutions and civil society, open governance processes to underrepresented perspectives through intermediaries, and test innovative engagement and communication formats adapted to the local context.

Implementation of Citizen Engagement Actions and Citizen Profiles

Citizen engagement in Brenta was implemented through a multi-level, institutionally embedded strategy building on the LIFE Brenta 2030 experience. InnWater capitalised on existing networks while expanding engagement to address water governance and Environmental and Resource Costs (ERCs). The Consiglio di Bacino Brenta (CBB), acting as pilot site leader and drinking water authority, played a central coordinating role. Engagement involved actors across regional, catchment, and local levels, including municipalities, the local water utility (ETRA), irrigation boards, research institutions, environmental and fishermen associations, socio-environmental cooperatives, private enterprises, landowners, farmers, recreational users, and journalists. Citizens were primarily engaged through organisations and associations, reflecting the institutional nature of basin governance.

Engagement formats combined online webinars for information and consultation, in-person participatory workshops on governance, water, biodiversity and ERCs, qualitative interviews with underrepresented actors, and innovative communication formats integrating art, science, and storytelling.

Citizen Engagement Reach and Outputs

- 14 webinar participants identified as citizens linked to Brenta
- Multiple in-person participatory workshops involving municipalities, utilities, associations and private actors
- ~110 participants in the interdisciplinary Atlas of the Shores workshop
- 4–5 underrepresented actors intentionally engaged (outside the CBB User Advisory Committee)
- 1 Steering Committee formally established for integrated water and biodiversity (Natura 2000) governance

Over the project period, engagement progressively shifted from online meetings to in-person workshops, which proved more effective for dialogue between technical and non-technical participants. The flagship Atlas of the Shores artistic workshop brought together technicians, scientists, artists, and journalists, creating a space where technical knowledge, local narratives, and emotional connections to the river could intersect. Tangible outputs (e.g. a water dictionary, filmed materials, journalistic tools) were produced, while trust and mutual understanding among diverse actors were strengthened.

Citizen Insights and Inclusion of Underrepresented Perspectives

Specific attention was paid to underrepresented perspectives, defined not by socio-demographic criteria but by exclusion from existing governance bodies, particularly the CBB User Advisory Committee. Following revised criteria, several actors were intentionally engaged. Among them, Cooperativa Sociale Jonathan played a particularly important role. This socio-environmental cooperative, active in women's empowerment, youth work, green jobs, and family support, is not traditionally involved in water governance. Its participation brought insights rooted in social vulnerability, gender inclusion, and everyday life. These insights confirm that citizen engagement in Brenta is most effective when it is locally grounded, collective, emotionally meaningful, and supported by trusted intermediaries.

Interview Insights from Civil Society Engagement

- Emotional attachment: Water perceived as a shared space of memory, identity, and health, not only a managed resource
- Participation patterns: Engagement is episodic and issue-driven, increasing when citizens are directly affected (e.g. pollution) or motivated by solidarity
- Underrepresented groups:
  - Young people under 30 (opinions present, spaces lacking)
  - Families facing social or economic difficulties
  - Foreign residents facing cultural or linguistic barriers
- Barriers: Time constraints, lack of confidence (especially among youth), limited institutional openness, participatory events perceived as non-empowering
- Enablers: Trusted intermediary organisations, collective formats, appropriate communication channels, and visible outcomes from participation

Assessment Against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Alignment with roadmap	Strong – roadmap objectives largely respected
Level of participation	Consultation achieved; selective co-construction elements
Inclusivity	Moderate – inclusion via intermediaries, gaps remain
Innovation	High – non-technical and artistic formats effectively deployed
Governance outcomes	Establishment of a Steering Committee
Institutionalisation	Partial – engagement remains largely project-based

Achievements

- Clear progress from fragmented information-sharing to structured consultation
- Effective use of innovative, non-technical engagement formats
- Inclusion of underrepresented social perspectives through intermediaries
- Tangible governance outcome through creation of a Steering Committee

Barriers Encountered

- Persistent fragmentation of water governance and role confusion
- Limited human and financial resources for direct citizen mobilisation
- Engagement largely dependent on invited participation
- Continued underrepresentation of young people, vulnerable families, and foreign residents

Key Lessons Learned

1. Institutional clarity is a prerequisite for engagement in fragmented governance contexts.
2. Trust-building through consultation and transparency must precede deeper participation.
3. Narrative, emotional, and artistic approaches effectively complement technical tools.
4. Intermediary organisations are essential for engaging underrepresented groups.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

- Transition from project-based engagement to permanent participatory structures (e.g. River Basin Water Forum)
- Strengthen territorial identity and storytelling around Parco Fiume Brenta
- Broaden inclusion of young people, women, socially vulnerable families, and foreign residents
- Leverage upcoming initiatives (e.g. MAP-Brenta) for citizen science and volunteering
- Secure additional resources to scale engagement beyond institutional stakeholders

Overall Assessment

Citizen engagement in Brenta is largely on track given its starting conditions, with solid progress in consultation, transparency, and governance consolidation. The next critical phase will be to transform institutionally guided and project-based engagement into durable, inclusive, and more citizen-driven participation beyond the InnWater project.

Pilot Site 3 – Figueres (Spain)

Territorial context	Highly fragmented and predominantly top-down water governance; acute drought and water scarcity pressures
Primary citizen focus	Small municipalities, elderly citizens, young people, residents of vulnerable neighbourhoods
Citizen Engagement Roadmap ambition	Progress from information and sporadic consultation towards structured consultation, deliberation, and co-creation
Current position on ladder	**Consultation achieved; early elements of deliberation emerging**
Distinctive feature	Combination of basin-wide seminars and large-scale face-to-face citizen outreach

Context, Objectives and Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Citizen engagement in the Figueres pilot site was designed in response to a highly fragmented governance context and the absence of structured spaces for dialogue at basin level. At project start, water-related decision-making in the Muga Basin was perceived as distant, technical, and driven by higher administrations, with limited capacity for local communities or small municipalities to influence outcomes. At the same time, recurrent droughts and water scarcity created acute social, economic, and environmental pressures, strongly affecting everyday life.

The Citizen Engagement Roadmap therefore adopted a pragmatic, stepwise approach. Rather than immediately seeking broad citizen mobilisation, it prioritised articulation of local actors, awareness-raising, and structured consultation as necessary foundations. The longer-term ambition was to progress towards deliberation and co-creation, potentially through a River Basin Water Forum or a Community of Water Users, once a shared territorial vision and minimum leadership capacity were established.

Within this framework, citizen engagement aimed to create a stable space for dialogue among local actors and communities, amplify the voice of small municipalities and less visible groups, capture lived experiences of drought and scarcity, and prepare the territory for more inclusive governance arrangements.

Implementation of Citizen Engagement Actions and Citizen Profiles

Citizen engagement in Figueres was implemented through a dual-track strategy combining structured seminars with organised actors and direct, face-to-face outreach to citizens. A central pillar of engagement was the organisation of seven InnWater seminars between November 2023 and 2025. These seminars brought together territorial actors involved in water management, including mayors and councillors from 22 municipalities, many with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. While formally stakeholders, these actors often acted as de facto community representatives, voicing everyday concerns related to drought restrictions, water supply insecurity, and local vulnerability.

Across the seminars, 66 unique individuals participated. A filtering exercise distinguished institutional stakeholders from those closer to citizen profiles, including participants who explicitly requested to take part in a personal capacity. This illustrates the blurred boundary between "stakeholders" and "citizens" in this pilot site, where small municipalities play a key intermediary role.

Recognising that seminars alone could not capture the voices of ordinary citizens, engagement was complemented by a large-scale, face-to-face citizen survey conducted between October and December 2025. Around 50 questionnaires were collected by trained fieldworkers using tablets, through deliberate street-level outreach.

Citizen Engagement Reach and Outputs

- 15 webinar participants identified as citizens linked to La Muga
- 22 municipalities involved, including micro-municipalities (<1,000 inhabitants)
- 66 unique seminar participants identified
- ~50 citizen questionnaires collected face-to-face
- Strong representation of elderly citizens, young people, and long-term residents

Survey locations were deliberately selected to reach underrepresented groups, including senior centres, secondary school exits, disadvantaged neighbourhoods, markets, and public spaces. This approach ensured inclusion of citizens typically absent from formal governance processes.

Citizen Insights and Evidence of Participation Potential

Survey results confirm strong local embeddedness, with many respondents having lived in the area for decades or their entire lives. Awareness of drought and water scarcity is high, reflecting lived experience of recurring restrictions and impacts.

Survey Insights from Citizen Engagement

- Local attachment: Respondents predominantly long-term residents with deep territorial knowledge
- Age profile: Strong inclusion of middle-aged and elderly citizens (45+, including 60+)
- Participation gap: Low prior participation but clear interest in being informed or involved
- Responsible behaviour: Widespread adoption of household water-saving practices
- Information gaps: Uneven awareness of municipal and technical measures

These findings indicate strong latent engagement potential. Citizens are already actively contributing to water management through everyday practices, even if they remain largely absent from formal governance. The ongoing drought acted as a catalyst, motivating both organised actors and citizens to seek collective solutions and a shared basin-wide vision.

Assessment Against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Alignment with roadmap	Strong – roadmap objectives largely achieved
Level of participation	Consultation achieved; early deliberation emerging
Inclusivity	High – elderly citizens, youth, and small municipalities reached
Continuity	Moderate – engagement remains project-based
Governance readiness	Improved – embryonic basin-wide community established
Institutionalisation	Limited – no permanent participatory body yet

Achievements

- Clear transition from fragmented information-sharing to structured and repeated consultation
- Successful inclusion of small municipalities often excluded from basin-scale processes
- Effective face-to-face outreach to elderly citizens, young people, and disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Evidence of strong awareness and responsible behaviour despite low formal participation
- Creation of a shared territorial space for dialogue that did not previously exist

Barriers Encountered

- Engagement remains time-limited and project-based
- Absence of permanent participatory institutions
- Limited resources to sustain continuous interaction
- Persistent governance fragmentation and leadership gaps
- Citizen participation still largely indirect (survey-based)

Key Lessons Learned

1. Articulation of local actors is a prerequisite for citizen engagement in fragmented territories.
2. Citizens are concerned and active in practice, even when absent from formal governance.
3. Face-to-face methods are essential to reach underrepresented groups.
4. Small municipalities act as critical intermediaries between citizens and basin governance.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

- Transition from seminars to permanent participatory structures (River Basin Water Forum or Water Users Community)
- Strengthen territorial leadership capable of representing the basin collectively
- Improve tailored communication on governance and technical measures
- Develop participatory formats allowing ongoing citizen interaction beyond surveys
- Ensure citizen input informs decisions on major infrastructure and basin-scale options

Overall Assessment

Citizen engagement in Figueres is largely on track given its very low starting baseline, with strong progress from information provision to structured consultation and early deliberation. The next phase will be critical to consolidate these gains into durable, inclusive governance structures that embed citizen engagement beyond the InnWater project.

Pilot Site 4 – West Country (United Kingdom)

Governance context	Highly decentralised and networked: bottom-up Catchment Partnerships alongside top-down institutions (flood committees, water companies, regional bodies)
Primary citizen focus	Citizens reached through community engagement and citizen science; barriers analysis focused on underrepresented "missing middle"
Citizen Engagement Roadmap ambition	Strengthen existing partnerships, improve connectivity across governance levels, and progress from awareness towards consultation and influence within emerging regional water planning
Current position on ladder	**Between information and consultation; strong diagnostic capacity achieved**
Distinctive feature	Region-wide network consolidation plus targeted "barriers-to-participation" outreach to ordinary citizens

Context, Objectives and Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Citizen engagement in the West Country takes place within a governance environment fundamentally different from other pilot sites. Water governance is not organised around a single river basin forum or local authority–led structure, but through a constellation of bottom-up Catchment Partnerships operating alongside top-down institutions. This creates strong potential for grass-roots engagement, while also generating challenges in coordination, influence, and inclusivity. The Citizen Engagement Roadmap for the West Country explicitly recognised this complexity. Rather than creating a new participatory body, it focused on strengthening connectivity across existing community-based structures, improving communication between governance levels, and diagnosing who is included—and excluded—from current engagement mechanisms. A central concern from the outset was that, while Catchment Partnerships are community-oriented, they still fail to reach large parts of the population, particularly people constrained by time, confidence, or access.

Within this framework, the pilot aimed to build on existing grass-roots partnerships without duplication, improve awareness of water quality and climate impacts, identify barriers faced by

underrepresented citizens, strengthen the "missing middle" between bottom-up initiatives and top-down decision-making, and lay foundations for future influence within emerging Regional Water Planning structures.

Implementation of Citizen Engagement Actions and Citizen Profiles

Citizen engagement in the West Country followed two deliberately complementary pathways:

(i) **Partnership-based engagement** to consolidate regional networks; and

(ii) **Direct, informal citizen outreach** to identify barriers faced by underrepresented citizens.

The partnership pathway focused on the Catchment Partnership network, involving nine partnerships across the region. Over the project period, the Westcountry Rivers Trust hosted five webinars/workshops (four online and one in person), complemented by technical sessions on governance assessment tools, data platforms, and network analysis. These activities primarily engaged partnership hosts (predominantly NGOs), Environment Agency coordinators, and regional representatives, supporting shared reflection on governance strengths, weaknesses, and overlaps. A key outcome was the agreement to continue collaboration beyond the project through the creation of a West Country Catchment Partnership Forum, providing a durable coordination structure.

Recognising that partnership engagement alone does not capture ordinary citizens or underrepresented groups, the second pathway prioritised face-to-face engagement in informal community settings. In summer 2025, the project conducted a Community Barriers Assessment at three public events, engaging 40 members of the public using a short, informal questionnaire. Participants interacted with rivers through everyday activities such as walking, cycling, boating, wildlife watching, running, and community recreation.

Complementary activities reinforced citizen-level engagement and system-wide diagnostics. Citizen Science Evenings recognised volunteers contributing to river monitoring, and a regional network analysis mapped 411 individuals across partnerships, identifying 63 key "connectors" that link groups together. This analysis highlighted increased connectivity compared to earlier assessments, while also revealing reliance on a small number of highly engaged individuals.

Citizen Engagement Reach and Outputs

- 40 citizens consulted directly on barriers to engagement (Community Barriers Assessment)
- 1,000+ citizen science volunteers active across the region
- 411 individuals mapped in regional network analysis
- 63 key connectors identified (connectivity increase compared to previous assessments)
- West Country Catchment Partnership Forum created to continue collaboration beyond the project

Citizen Insights and Evidence on Underrepresentation

Survey results strongly confirm that low participation is not due to lack of interest, but to structural and everyday barriers that systematically exclude large parts of the population.

Although the citizen sample is modest (40 respondents), the findings are consistent and highly relevant for identifying underrepresentation patterns.

Survey Insights from the West Country Pilot Site

- High awareness, low agency: ~90% aware of environmental issues; 46% did not know who to contact to report problems
- Strong connection to rivers: 98% interact with rivers through everyday recreation, but this rarely translates into formal participation
- Main driver of underrepresentation: time poverty (work and caring responsibilities), limiting engagement and volunteering
- Confidence and efficacy barriers: concerns about "causing problems" and doubts about impact; demand for feedback and tangible outcomes (31% wanted visible results; 25% wanted feedback after sharing views)
- Observed exclusion patterns: respondents predominantly older, white, non-disabled, and car owners, mirroring the existing volunteer base; younger people, minorities, people with disabilities, and those without car access remain largely absent

These findings highlight a clear governance gap: many citizens care, observe, and would engage, but lack clear and accessible pathways to act and be heard. Underrepresentation in this context is therefore primarily structural—linked to capacity, time, confidence, and access—rather than motivational.

Assessment Against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Alignment with roadmap	Strong on awareness, diagnostics, and network consolidation
Level of participation	Between information and consultation; limited direct influence
Inclusivity	Uneven – dominated by retirees and highly motivated volunteers
Connectivity	Strong improvement – regional connectors identified and strengthened
Governance pathways	Partial – citizen science strong, but weak links to binding decisions
Institutionalisation	Emerging – Forum created; citizen voice not yet embedded in formal planning

Achievements

- Strong awareness and engagement through citizen science and community-based partnerships
- Creation of a durable regional structure (Catchment Partnership Forum) to sustain collaboration

- Clear, evidence-based understanding of barriers faced by underrepresented citizens
- Innovative use of system-wide tools (network analysis, governance assessment) to diagnose inclusion and connectivity

Barriers Encountered

- Participation uneven and dominated by retirees and highly motivated volunteers
- Working-age citizens, carers, young people, and some minority groups remain underrepresented
- Limited funding and staff capacity constrain scale and continuity
- Lack of a formal mechanism linking citizen voices to binding decisions and regional planning

Key Lessons Learned

1. High awareness does not automatically translate into participation or influence.
2. Underrepresentation is structural, driven primarily by time, capacity, and confidence constraints.
3. Network connectivity is as important as participation numbers in decentralised governance systems.
4. Citizen science is a powerful entry point, but insufficient without governance pathways for influence.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

- Design low-barrier, flexible engagement formats suited to busy lives (working-age adults and carers)
- Broaden inclusion beyond existing volunteer profiles (youth, minorities, people with disabilities, non-car owners)
- Strengthen feedback loops so citizens can see tangible impacts of their input
- Secure sustainable resources for engagement and coordination capacity
- Establish (or re-establish) a formal citizen participation mechanism linked to emerging Regional Water Planning Authorities
- Apply governance and network tools at regional scale to address the “missing middle” between community initiatives and decision-making

Overall Assessment

Citizen engagement in the West Country is on track with the roadmap’s short-term objectives, particularly in awareness, diagnostics, and coordination across decentralised partnerships. The next critical phase is to convert strong citizen concern and activity into durable, inclusive, and influential participation within formal water governance, especially as Regional Water Planning structures evolve.

Pilot Site 5 – Tisza (Hungary)

Governance context	Highly centralised decision-making; weak traditions of participatory governance; low civic self-organisation, especially in rural areas
Primary citizen focus	Local farming communities and other place-based actors affected by drought and water scarcity
Citizen Engagement Roadmap ambition	Build awareness, trust, and dialogue as foundations for future consultation and co-construction
Current position on ladder	**Between information and early consultation; strong trust-building and diagnostic outcomes**
Distinctive feature	Shift from group workshops to one-by-one engagement to manage risk, trust, and power asymmetries

Context, Objectives and Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Citizen engagement in the Tisza pilot site was implemented within a highly constrained governance and societal context, characterised by centralised decision-making, limited traditions of participatory governance, and low levels of civic self-organisation, particularly in rural areas. These structural conditions strongly shaped both the ambition and feasible pathways for engagement. From the outset, the Citizen Engagement Roadmap recognised that large-scale, open participation formats would be unlikely to deliver meaningful outcomes, and that engagement would need to prioritise depth, trust-building, and realism over breadth.

The roadmap therefore focused on local communities most directly affected by water scarcity and drought, particularly farmers cultivating their own land in the Middle Tisza region. Farmers were treated not as a homogeneous stakeholder group but as a diverse local community, including smallholders, medium-sized family farms, larger operations, and water-intensive producers. Small and medium-scale farmers without irrigation infrastructure were identified as structurally vulnerable, facing climate risk, economic uncertainty, and limited influence over water governance decisions taken at higher administrative levels.

Within this framework, citizen engagement aimed to raise awareness of drought and water retention, create safe spaces for dialogue with vulnerable communities, understand barriers to collective action, test the relevance of InnWater analytical and governance tools, and lay the groundwork for future, more institutionalised participation.

Implementation of Citizen Engagement Actions and Citizen Profiles

Citizen engagement in the Tisza pilot site evolved adaptively over time, responding to participant feedback and changing contextual conditions, including the severe drought of 2025. Initial engagement relied on farmer-focused workshops and group discussions in Karcag, supported by webinars introducing the InnWater project and its analytical framing. These activities confirmed strong interest and awareness of drought impacts, soil moisture depletion, and irrigation

constraints. However, group discussions gradually became constrained as expectations for substantial financial compensation emerged, particularly among larger farmers acting as opinion leaders. These dynamics limited open exchange and reduced the effectiveness of collective formats for implementation-relevant dialogue.

In response, the project deliberately shifted its engagement strategy towards **one-by-one interviews and targeted personal meetings**. This methodological shift proved critical, enabling nuanced discussion of lived experiences, including coping strategies during drought, soil management challenges, perceptions of irrigation necessity and limits, and views on governance responsibilities and institutional trust. Conducted during the 2025 drought, interviews captured water scarcity as an immediate lived reality, marked by soil moisture deficits and yield losses. Engagement also expanded beyond agriculture to include local environmental NGOs, anglers, hikers, birdwatchers, municipal actors, tourism-related stakeholders, and nature protection professionals—groups that are typically underrepresented in Hungary due to limited resources and weak political voice.

Citizen Engagement Reach and Outputs

- 33 webinar participants identified as citizens linked to Tisza
- ~29 in-depth interviews conducted
- ~25% of interviewees speaking primarily as citizens (not organisational representatives)
- Multiple farmer-focused workshops in Karcag (2024)
- Engagement of NGOs, municipal actors, and nature professionals
- Online survey reaching diverse profiles (students, retirees, self-employed, women)
- Application of Water Governance Assessment (WGA) and InnWater analytical tools

Citizen and Community Insights

Survey and interview evidence provides a detailed picture of how local communities experience water governance, vulnerability, and participation, and explains why trust-based, small-scale engagement is essential in this context.

Citizen and Community Insights from Surveys and Interviews

- Strong local embeddedness: Participants are long-term residents with deep place-based knowledge
- Climate stress as lived reality: The 2022 drought repeatedly cited as a turning point, with yield losses, irrigation failures, and economic insecurity
- Soil and land management central to vulnerability: Compaction, erosion, and low organic matter limit water retention; transition risks disproportionately affect smaller farmers
- Conditional openness to water retention: Willingness increases when framed as risk management with clear responsibilities and reliable compensation
- Participation gap: Strong concern but limited participation due to low trust, unclear channels, and weak expectations of impact

- Beyond agriculture: Tourism and recreation actors highlight sensitivity to rapid water-level changes and communication failures

Overall, reluctance to engage is primarily institutional and economic rather than attitudinal, reflecting governance uncertainty and livelihood risk rather than resistance to change.

Assessment Against the Citizen Engagement Roadmap

Alignment with roadmap	Strong – realistic ambitions respected
Level of participation	Information to early consultation
Depth of engagement	High – trust-based individual dialogue
Inclusivity	Partial – gaps remain (women, Roma, smallholders)
Diagnostic capacity	Strong – governance and incentive barriers clearly identified
Institutionalisation	Limited – no stable participatory structures yet

Achievements

- Deep, trust-based engagement with vulnerable farming communities
- Successful adaptation from group workshops to individual dialogue
- Inclusion of underrepresented actors beyond agriculture
- Robust evidence base on governance, incentive, and coordination barriers
- Meaningful awareness-raising under difficult institutional conditions

Barriers Encountered

- Misaligned economic incentives, particularly under the CAP
- Weak traditions of collective action and low institutional trust
- Centralised governance limiting local influence
- Absence of stable local participatory structures
- Continued underrepresentation of women, Roma communities, and smallholders

Key Lessons Learned

1. Engagement must reflect livelihood risks and uncertainty to be credible.
2. Depth matters more than breadth in low-trust contexts.
3. Governance and incentives are stronger constraints than technical water availability.
4. Workshops support awareness, but individual formats are essential for implementation-relevant dialogue.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

- Continue small-scale, trust-based engagement with farmers and local communities
- Target outreach to currently absent groups (women, Roma, subsistence farmers)
- Establish formal local participatory spaces to institutionalise dialogue
- Align policy incentives with water retention and soil protection objectives
- Embed citizen perspectives into regional and national planning processes

Overall Assessment

Citizen engagement in the Tisza pilot site is **on track with the roadmap's short-term objectives**, delivering a robust diagnosis and meaningful dialogue under challenging institutional and societal conditions. The critical next step (beyond InnWater) is to translate this understanding into **durable, institutionalised participation**, supported by aligned incentives and governance reforms.

5. CROSS-PILOT SYNTHESIS: PATTERNS, PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

This section synthesises how Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs) were implemented across pilot sites, what they achieved, and which structural factors shaped their performance. Rather than reviewing sites individually, it identifies recurring patterns, shared constraints, and transferable insights across the five territories, offering a consolidated understanding of citizen engagement dynamics within InnWater. Beyond the pilot-level results, the analysis also reflects the broader InnWater engagement architecture, where WP3 citizen engagement activities and CERs interacted with WP5 pilot implementation processes, WP6 communication and GESI-related actions, and WP2/WP6 policy-oriented dissemination and replication activities. Although the degree of integration varied across pilot sites and activities, the project progressively evolved towards a multi-level engagement approach linking local participation, governance experimentation, inclusiveness, and policy learning.

A first key finding is that engagement trajectories are strongly path-dependent. Pilot sites started from very different baselines in governance culture, institutional openness, and civic capacity, resulting in non-linear and uneven progress along the ladder of participation. In some contexts, efforts focused on stabilising information and consultation, while in others the project enabled experimentation with deliberative or co-creative formats. This confirms the value of CERs as adaptive rather than prescriptive tools. Across all sites, structural barriers—such as time poverty, limited confidence, weak feedback loops, and institutional fragmentation—proved more influential than lack of interest. Where engagement was effective, it was typically supported by capacity-building, trust-building, and locally embedded intermediaries.

A second insight concerns underrepresentation. Although vulnerability took different forms across contexts, it consistently correlated with distance from formal governance arenas. Targeted, face-to-face methods were essential to reaching underrepresented groups, while purely digital or formal formats often reinforced participation biases. The synthesis also highlights the importance of perceived influence: engagement was strongest where citizens could see how their input informed discussions or decisions, and weakest where participation remained disconnected from governance processes.

Across the pilot sites, the implementation of the InnWater GESI Strategy (D6.1) and the 2024 Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion contributed to strengthening reflection on inclusiveness within citizen engagement processes, although the degree of operationalisation varied depending on local contexts and governance capacities. Pilot-site assessments

increasingly considered barriers affecting the participation of women, youth, socio-economically vulnerable groups, geographically isolated communities, and other underrepresented populations. In response, several Citizen Engagement Roadmaps incorporated more accessible formats, targeted outreach strategies, neighbourhood-level approaches, and collaboration with trusted local intermediaries or associations. Nevertheless, structural inequalities, uneven participation capacities, and the predominance of institutional or organised actors continued to limit fully inclusive participation across many contexts, highlighting the need for longer-term and locally adapted engagement efforts.

Finally, the analysis confirms that River Basin Water Forums function best as a shared long-term vision rather than a fixed institutional endpoint. Progress was achieved not through the rapid creation of new bodies, but where CERs strengthened continuity, inclusiveness, and coordination within existing structures. Overall, the findings position citizen engagement as a long-term governance investment, where the main added value lies not only in the number of engagement activities implemented, but in the progressive development of transferable governance capacities, adaptive participation methodologies, and enabling conditions for longer-term institutional uptake and more inclusive water governance practices. A long-term governance investment, bridging pilot-level experience with WP6 policy recommendations and reinforcing the value of adaptive, context-sensitive engagement pathways.

6. WP3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: MONITORING, RESULTS AND ASSESSMENT

This section consolidates the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to Work Package 3 – Quintuple Helix Trust & Engagement, as defined in the InnWater Grant Agreement and operationalised through Tasks 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. While previous sections of this deliverable present detailed pilot-level implementation results, the purpose of this section is to provide a clear, cross-cutting overview of WP3 performance, demonstrating how citizen engagement outcomes contribute to the project's expected impacts. KPIs are reported using a **mixed-method approach**, combining quantitative indicators (e.g. number of citizens engaged, diversity of participants, engagement formats implemented) with qualitative indicators (e.g. depth of participation, perceived legitimacy, governance readiness). This reflects the nature of citizen engagement as a governance process that cannot be assessed solely through numerical participation metrics.

ADDRESSING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE SO3: OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Specific Objective SO3 aims to develop and test citizen engagement approaches supported by digital and non-digital tools, and to demonstrate their added value for the sustainability, inclusiveness and legitimacy of water governance. WP3 contributes to SO3 by operationalising citizen engagement through **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)**, implemented across five pilot sites and adapted to diverse institutional, socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Rather than pursuing uniform outputs, WP3 adopted a process-oriented and adaptive approach, recognising that meaningful citizen engagement depends on local governance capacity, trust levels, and the ability to reach citizens beyond organised stakeholder groups. Progress towards SO3 has therefore been assessed through a combination of quantitative participation targets and qualitative indicators of inclusiveness, capacity-building and governance influence, in line with the KPIs defined in the Grant Agreement. The following subsections report WP3 performance against each SO3 KPI, drawing on evidence presented in Sections 3 and 4 of this deliverable and the related annexes.

In this context, WP3 did not assess citizen engagement solely through participation volumes or event delivery, but through the extent to which engagement processes contributed to more inclusive, legitimate, and governance-relevant forms of participation. Particular attention was therefore given to dimensions such as continuity of participation, diversity and representativeness of participants, involvement of underrepresented groups, progression towards deliberative and co-creative formats, and the capacity of engagement activities to support institutional learning and governance readiness. While the project timeframe does not allow for robust longitudinal assessment of long-term behavioural transformation or societal impacts, the evidence collected across pilot sites demonstrates the project's contribution to strengthening enabling conditions for more adaptive, participatory, and transferable water governance practices.

KPI #6: 30 VOLUNTEER CITIZENS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN EACH PILOT SITE RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM (RBWF).

Across the five pilot sites, WP3 achieved broad and sustained citizen participation, though not always through formally constituted River Basin Water Forums (RBWFs) with a fixed membership of 30 volunteers per site. Aggregated participation data show that 368 unique citizens engaged across pilot-site webinars and engagement activities (200 reported in D5.3 and 168 in D5.4), substantially exceeding the overall target of 150 citizens at project level. This result reflects a deliberate methodological choice to treat **RBWFs as a long-term governance vision**, operationalised through **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)** rather than as a rigid project output. CERs provided a flexible pathway for progressively building the social and institutional conditions required for RBWFs, adapted to local governance contexts.

Within this framework, WP3 adopted a **more restrictive and demanding definition of "citizen"**, clearly distinguishing local community members from organised stakeholders. This distinction enabled pilot sites to progressively **identify and consolidate those participants who genuinely act as citizens**, and who are therefore most relevant to the RBWF vision along the CERs. Applying this approach, each pilot site mobilised a substantial core of locally embedded citizens: in La Réunion, 36 citizens were engaged through webinars and around 40 through surveys and workshops; in Brenta, 14 through webinars, more than 100 through workshops, and four underrepresented citizens through interviews; in Figueres, 15 through webinars and more than 50 through surveys; and in Tisza, 33 through webinars and 29 through interviews. In the West Country, 40 citizens were directly involved through in-person surveys and more than 1.000 participated as citizen scientists. As detailed in D3.3, the characteristics and diversity of these participants vary across pilot sites, reflecting local socio-economic and governance conditions.

Overall, WP3 not only exceeded the quantitative KPI but did so in a manner that strengthens **legitimacy, inclusiveness and governance relevance**. By combining wide participation with qualitative selectivity, the project established **robust citizen cores** that are directly aligned with the RBWF vision and capable of sustaining river basin governance processes beyond the project's lifetime, fully in line with SO3.

- **KPI target:** 30 volunteer citizens per demo-site RBWF (150 total)
- **Quantitative result:** 368 unique citizens engaged across pilot sites
- **Methodological approach:** RBWFs treated as a long-term vision, implemented through CERs
- **Qualitative added value:** Clear distinction between citizens and stakeholders; targeted identification of locally embedded citizen cores
- **SO3 alignment:** High – meaningful participation prioritised over formal compliance, strengthening inclusiveness and governance legitimacy

KPI#7: INNWATER METHODOLOGY ADOPTED BY 15 NON-PROJECT MUNICIPALITIES/WATER UTILITIES/RIVER BASIN AUTHORITIES

WP3 has demonstrated substantial uptake of the InnWater methodology beyond the consortium, with 14 external public authorities applying at least one InnWater tool (target: 15). Adoption was assessed as effective integration of citizen engagement principles into governance practice, not merely formal endorsement.

Replication includes the Greek Water Regulator (MSM & WGA), a Turkish governmental water authority (platform & WGA), the La Réunion Water Office (MSM), Seine-Aval actors (CGE model), and the French Biodiversity Agency and Po River authorities (WGA). In Hungary, TRV Water Utility and the Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority engaged with the MSM through REKK-led activities. Additionally, six Summer School participants declared their intention to apply InnWater tools in new contexts.

Despite narrowly missing the numerical target, the diversity of institutions and tools adopted confirms that the KPI objective—embedding InnWater's citizen-centred methodology in public water governance—has been effectively achieved, fully aligned with SO3.

- **KPI target:** 15 non-project municipalities, water utilities or River Basin Authorities adopting the InnWater methodology
- **Result achieved:** 14 non-project public authorities with demonstrated methodological uptake
- **Mode of adoption:** Practical integration of InnWater citizen engagement tools and principles into governance processes
- **Qualitative added value:** Uptake across diverse institutional levels and territorial contexts, supporting participatory and deliberative governance
- **SO3 alignment: High** – effective transfer of a citizen-centred governance methodology achieved despite a marginal numerical shortfall.

KPI#8: PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDERS FROM AT LEAST 25 MUNICIPALITIES NOT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT TO BE TRAINED IN THE FULL INNWATER APPROACH.

WP3 met and exceeded its target for training professional stakeholders from non-project municipalities and public administrations, reaching 29 professionals against a target of 25. Training focused on building public actors' capacity to design and sustain citizen engagement processes in water governance, not merely on technical tool use.

Evidence includes 12 professionals trained through partner webinars (RP1), 8 participants from the Hungarian Regulation Authority trained during UR/REKK exchange events, and 3 municipal/public administration representatives engaged through the Summer School. One replicator from a public administration was trained in at least two InnWater tools (WGA plus another tool), demonstrating deeper methodological uptake. In La Réunion, MSM training reached French water and sanitation stakeholders, including 5 representatives from inter-municipal public cooperation establishments (EPCI) and the Department. The WGA tool was also presented to 20 River Basin Organisation representatives at EURO-INBO, and further reinforced through the final WP5 webinars.

The diversity of institutional profiles trained—regulators, municipalities, RBOs and public water authorities—confirms that WP3 effectively strengthened governance capacity for citizen-centred water management, fully aligned with SO3.

- **KPI target:** Professional stakeholders from at least 25 non-project municipalities trained
- **Result achieved:** 29 professional stakeholders trained
- **Focus of training:** Citizen-centred governance, participatory design and use of InnWater engagement tools
- **Qualitative added value:** Enhanced institutional capacity to enable and sustain meaningful citizen participation in water governance
- **SO3 alignment: High** – capacity-building directly supports inclusive and participatory decision-making

KPI#9: 100 HITHERTO UNINVOLVED MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE INNWATER SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

WP3 achieved and exceeded the target of informing public authorities about the InnWater Social Engagement Approach, with **199 municipal, regional and national government bodies reached**, against a target of 100. From a WP3 perspective, this KPI was not treated as a dissemination metric alone, but as a means to **increase institutional awareness of citizen engagement as a governance function** in water management. Information activities therefore focused on communicating the rationale, principles and added value of citizen-centred governance, rather than on project visibility. Public authorities were reached primarily through pilot-site webinars, meetings and cross-cutting events addressing citizen engagement and participatory governance. These formats enabled public actors not previously involved in the project to become familiar with the InnWater engagement logic, including the distinction between citizens and stakeholders and the role of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps as pathways towards more inclusive governance arrangements. By reaching authorities across multiple administrative levels, WP3 contributed to creating a **shared understanding and enabling environment for citizen engagement** beyond the pilot sites.

Overall, this KPI has been achieved both quantitatively and qualitatively. The scale of outreach, combined with the focus on governance-oriented content, confirms that WP3 has effectively laid the groundwork for wider institutional uptake of citizen engagement practices in line with SO3.

- **KPI target:** 100 previously uninvolved municipal, regional and national public authorities informed
- **Result achieved:** 199 public authorities reached
- **Nature of information:** Awareness-raising on citizen engagement as a core water governance function
- **Qualitative added value:** Increased institutional understanding of participatory governance principles and tools
- **SO3 alignment: High** – enabling conditions created for broader adoption of citizen-centred water governance

KPI#10: 20% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LOCAL COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR WATER.

WP3 achieved the objective of increasing local community participation in water-related development and decision-making processes, clearly exceeding the 20% target at project scale. As no harmonised baseline was available at project start, progress was assessed comparatively between reporting periods. In D5.3, 200 unique local community members had been engaged

across pilot-site activities. By the end of the project (D5.4), an additional 168 participants were recorded, bringing the total to 368 unique individuals. **This represents an 84% increase in engagement between reporting periods, substantially surpassing the 20% target.**

While baseline conditions differed across pilot sites, comparative assessment confirms a consistent upward trend in participation over the project's lifetime. From a WP3 perspective, this KPI was not evaluated solely in quantitative terms, but also in relation to changes in who participates and how. Engagement evolved from broad outreach activities towards more targeted and qualitative forms of participation, enabling local community members to contribute to deliberation, priority-setting and elements of co-creation rather than remaining passive recipients of information.

Citizen input informed pilot governance discussions and was aligned with the implementation of Citizen Engagement Roadmaps. **Overall, the KPI has been achieved both quantitatively—through a significant increase in participation—and qualitatively—through deeper, more meaningful forms of engagement**, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of water governance processes and directly supporting SO3's ambition to embed citizen engagement within decision-making practices.

- **KPI target:** 20% increase in local community stakeholders participating in water governance processes
- **Result achieved:** 84% increase between reporting periods.
- **Nature of participation:** Progression from outreach to deliberative and co-creative engagement
- **Qualitative added value:** Broader and more meaningful involvement of local community members in decision-making
- **SO3 alignment: High** – citizen participation strengthened in both scale and governance relevance

KPI#11: 50% DECREASE IN MINORITY AND VULNERABLE GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM WATER PROJECTS (BOTH DECISIONMAKING PROCESS AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS)

WP3 made substantive progress towards reducing the exclusion of minority and vulnerable groups from water projects, addressing both participation in decision-making and access to potential benefits. As no harmonised baseline was available at project outset, progress was assessed comparatively between reporting periods. In D5.3, 12 stakeholders from underrepresented groups were recorded as participating in pilot-site activities and events. By D5.4, 9 additional participants from underrepresented groups had been engaged, bringing the total to 21. **This represents a 75% increase in participation of underrepresented groups between reporting periods, indicating a significant reduction in exclusion barriers at project scale.**

From a WP3 perspective, this KPI was assessed through a mixed-methods approach, combining participation data with qualitative analysis of who was reached and how. Pilot sites deployed tailored tools—such as semi-structured interviews, in-person questionnaires and collaboration with trusted local intermediaries—to engage groups traditionally absent from water governance processes, including youth, elderly citizens, low-income populations and socially marginalised communities. Importantly, engagement enabled these groups not only to attend activities, but to articulate priorities, concerns and lived experiences relevant to governance discussions.

Overall, the KPI has been substantively achieved. While structural exclusion cannot be fully eliminated within a single project, WP3 demonstrably expanded the presence and voice of underrepresented groups in pilot governance processes, moving beyond tokenistic inclusion towards more accessible, legitimate and citizen-centred participation, in direct support of SO3.

- **KPI target:** 50% decrease in exclusion of minority and vulnerable groups from water projects
- **Result achieved:** A 75% increase in the participation of stakeholders from underrepresented groups between reporting periods, demonstrating a substantial reduction in exclusion
- **Engagement approach:** Targeted, qualitative methods tailored to vulnerable groups' capacities and contexts
- **Qualitative added value:** Improved accessibility, voice and legitimacy in governance processes
- **SO3 alignment: High** – inclusiveness embedded as a core principle of citizen-centred water governance.

7. CONCLUSION

This deliverable has documented and assessed the implementation of the InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology across five diverse pilot sites, completing the cycle initiated under Tasks 3.1 and 3.2. By moving from conceptual framing and methodological design to practical application and evaluation, D3.3 demonstrates how citizen engagement can be operationalised as a **measurable and impactful component of multi-level and cross-sector water governance**, with clear performance outcomes aligned to SO3.

The assessment confirms that citizen engagement, when deliberately designed and context-sensitive, delivers added value beyond conventional stakeholder participation. Across pilot sites, engagement activities exceeded several quantitative KPIs—particularly in terms of the number of citizens reached, public authorities informed, and professionals trained—while qualitative evidence shows that engagement processes brought forward local knowledge, lived experience and social priorities typically absent from institutional decision-making. The inclusion of young people, small local communities and socially or economically vulnerable groups proved especially important in broadening governance perspectives and strengthening legitimacy.

At the same time, results highlight that meaningful citizen engagement is neither automatic nor cost-free. Achieving KPI targets required time, facilitation capacity, trust-building and institutional openness to share influence. Where engagement was most effective, it was supported by clear objectives, adapted formats and visible links between citizen input and governance processes. Conversely, progress was constrained where participation remained disconnected from decision-making, feedback loops were weak, or structural barriers—such as time poverty, low confidence or institutional fragmentation—persisted.

A central conclusion is that **Citizen Engagement Roadmaps (CERs)** provide a robust and flexible mechanism for managing these constraints while maintaining performance against KPIs. By allowing pilot sites to define realistic ambitions, adapt engagement tools and progressively consolidate participation, CERs enabled the achievement of both quantitative targets and qualitative governance impacts across highly diverse contexts. The assessment also confirms the relevance of **River Basin Water Forums as a long-term governance vision rather than an immediate institutional output**. Progress towards more inclusive river basin governance was achieved not through the rapid creation of new bodies, but through incremental improvements in participation, inclusiveness and continuity—laying credible foundations for future RBWFs. In this sense, the project's added value lies less in demonstrating immediate behavioural transformation than in establishing transferable governance capacities, adaptive participation methodologies, and enabling conditions capable of supporting longer-term institutional and societal change.

Looking ahead, the durability of these impacts will depend on the ability of institutions to embed citizen engagement beyond project timelines, including by allocating resources, formalising participatory spaces where appropriate, and recognising engagement as a core dimension of governance performance. Overall, D3.3 provides strong empirical evidence that citizen engagement can be designed, implemented and assessed in ways that deliver **tangible governance impacts**, informing WP6 policy recommendations and offering transferable lessons for future water governance initiatives.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Completed citizen engagement guidance forms

Completed forms following guidance developed and presented as Annex 1 in D3.2. The InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology.

PILOT SITE 1 - LA REUNION (FRANCE)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT	
PROBLEM: what is citizen engagement for?	The InnWater La Réunion stakeholders' working group will be working on issues of their choice, linked to water resource management and the WEFE nexus, using the numerical economic tools developed within the InnWater project (the calculable general equilibrium model in particular). At this stage (diagnostic phase), the issues identified by the stakeholders relate to: (1) Investment in infrastructure and the question of financing (how?), in particular: • access to public drinking water services (7,000 people do not have access to public drinking water services in Réunion Island). • access to safe water (according to the regional health agency, 50% of subscribers are supplied by networks that do not guarantee sufficient health safety, and 5% are supplied by networks that pose a health risk). • extension of the public sewerage system (just over 40% of the population is not connected to the public sewerage system and, according to the professionals, 70% of individual systems do not comply with standards (and are the source of considerable pollution in certain areas of the island)). (2) Resource sharing/allocation of water rights between different uses (including prioritisation), particularly during periods of drought. It is therefore a question of introducing a moment of citizen participation into this work of co-constructing the public policies of the stakeholder working group with (1) the integration of information on collective preferences in a constrained context, i.e. on the basis of clearly identified trade-offs between the different public policies that one might wish to implement (on the issues given above) and, also, (2) a form of consultation, or even accountability, regarding the choice of the final public policy that would ultimately be preferred by the working group.
EXPERIENCE: What activities are you already conducting with/for local communities in relation to water? How do they relate/respond to the problem?	Every 5 years, the local Water Agency carries out a public consultation that took place within the "Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux", with a view to receiving comments from the public on this masterplan. The most recent consultation ran from 1 March 2021 to 1 September 2021 and involved the administration of a questionnaire (a large part of which related to the problem of flooding) which received 3025 responses. The main conclusions of this study are: • The majority of Réunion's population agree that water and its management are important, but it is not seen as a priority. • A large proportion of the population is not interested in water issues, and there is a real need to raise awareness. • Those surveyed expected to hear more about the quality of drinking water.

	Among the recommendations put forward to raise awareness among the population were (1) the use of social networks on private FB pages or via an association, (ii) working with ecological associations to find `water ambassadors', and (iii) a mobile application on water in Réunion (notifications, alerts, good reflexes, dangers, etc.). On the other hand, it would appear (according to feedback from several specialists) that citizen involvement in water issues on Réunion is rather rare. At this stage, however, the activities of three associations should be mentioned: • the A.C.C.R.O Association (with several hundred members), which has undertaken a number of initiatives relating in particular to the price of water (implementation of a special Green Meter pricing system, social acceptability of the price of water, etc.) and the organisation of the public drinking water and sanitation service (public service management versus public service delegation), • the association Sillage (a member of the InnWater La Réunion WG), which is also a member of the NGO Coalition Eau, which aims to support the implementation of concrete projects relating to resilience and the ecological transition in local districts. • the "Met Ensemble Aurère" association, which has launched and led a project to renew the water pipes in the Mafate cirque (which has no drinking water supply), with implementation based on joint management of the resource. Meetings are planned with the heads of these organisations to clarify the content of their activities and also to gather information on other citizen actions linked to resource management that may have been carried out in the area.
RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM: Is constituting a RBWF an objective? What are the expected outcomes of this RBWF? How do they relate to citizen engagement?	Reunion Island already has an RBWF. This body, formerly known as the "Comité de Bassin", has undergone an institutional evolution to become the "Comité Eau et Biodiversité de La Réunion". The answer to the last question (which is a complex one) seems to us to need to be established with the members of this institution (potentially, with the continuation of the interviews that we have begun for the production of this document (but this is a major task and it is not certain that we will be able to do it completely within the timeframe of this project)).
TIMELINE: What is the timeline for citizen engagement	In interaction with the work of the InnWater WG, with a first meeting in June 2025 devoted to trade-offs in a constrained context (see above) and a second in January 2026 for the "Citizen feedbacks" moment.
RESOURCES: Do you have capacity to support citizen engagement activities?	If the question concerns the capacity of the InnWater La Réunion team, the response would be negative, as there appears to be a lack of in-house expertise and relevant skills. Certain qualified individuals have been contacted for potential interviews, though mobilizing them may not be feasible due to the absence of a dedicated budget. Therefore, a project is being considered specifically for young people, in collaboration with an association known for its active and competent work in the field, albeit without specific expertise in water issues.
STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMEMENT ASSESSMENT	
DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of the basin affected area? Population, age, gender, ethnic diversity, religion, income,	Demographic characteristics Réunion Island is the most densely populated French overseas region, with a population of 868,846 at 1 January 2022, representing 1.3% of the French population (source: Insee, population estimates). There are 411,145 men and 457,701 women. The breakdown by age group is as follows: 29% for the 0-19 age group, 24% for the 20-39 age group, 27% for the 40-59 age group, 15% for the 60-74 age group and 6% for the 75+ age group. Of the 4 micro-regions/employment zones (North, East, South and

economic activity, vulnerable groups.	West), 24.6% of the population live in the North (Saint Denis region), 14.8% in the East (Saint Benoit region), 36.2% in the South (Saint Pierre region) and 24.5% in the West (Saint Paul region). The working population (as defined by the census) comprises 197,674 men and 193,156 women, for a working-age population (15-64 years) of 269,560 men and 294,717 women respectively (source: Insee, population census 2019). The employment rates (as defined by the census) are 69.3% for the population as a whole, 73.3% for men and 65.5% for women. The ILO employment rates are much lower: 50% for the population as a whole, 53% for men and 48% for women, which will be lower in 2023 (source: Insee, Enquête Emploi). These figures are well below the national averages of 69%, 71% and 66% respectively. However, the employment rate is on the rise (+3 points compared to 2019), which is due to the increase in the female employment rate (the male employment rate has remained stable over the period). The ILO unemployment rate is around 19% (18% for women, 20% for men) for the year 2023, a slight increase (+1 percentage point) compared to the year 2022, but down sharply over the decade (-9 percentage points compared to the year 2014). However, this rate is still very high compared to the national average (7.1% for 2023). We also know that underemployment (involuntary part-time work), which stands at 9% in Réunion (twice the national average), is higher among women (12% compared with 6% for men). Finally, Réunion has a high halo of unemployment, with 55,000 people, or around 10% of the working-age population, declaring that they would like to work but are considered inactive within the meaning of the ILO. Ethnic diversity and religion As French regulations prohibit the collection of information on people's ethnicity and religion, no statistics on these two variables can be provided. However, it is known that there is great cultural and religious diversity in Réunion. The following information, aimed at the general public, can be found on the website of the local Tourism Committee (where appropriate, reference can also be made to the numerous works of local historians, sociologists and ethnologists). `Reunion Island was first settled in the middle of the 17th century on virgin soil. The first settlers, the French, were soon surrounded by slaves from Africa, the `Cafres', or Madagascar. Later, they were joined by Indians, Tamils and people from the Coromandel coast (New Zealand). Their descendants are still referred to interchangeably as `Malabars'. The immigration of Indian Muslim craftsmen and traders, known as `Zarab", and Chinese, dates back to the nineteenth century. From the 1960s onwards, increasing numbers of French nationals from mainland France settled on Réunion. In the 1970s, Mahorais and Comorians in their turn came to settle on Réunion'. This socio-ethnic description (which appears therefore on the website of the local tourist office) is also completed by the mention of the `yab' group (or `petit blanc des hauts') who are `descendants of the more modest settlers who were pushed to the upper reaches of the island in the second half of the 19th century'. It should be noted that this ethnic diversity was accompanied by religious diversity (recruitment contracts stipulated freedom of worship) and a certain amount of miscegenation (with mixed marriages that may also have involved Madagascans and Mauritians). Income In 2021, gross disposable income per capita was €19,300 on the island, or 84% of the national level (source: Cerom Réunion 2021). This level of income is made up of 75% earned income (of which 62.5% wages and salaries), 15.7% pensions and annuities and 6.3% income from property. Social benefits account for 16.1% and income tax for -13.1% (source: Insee-DGFiP-Cnaf-Cnav-

	Ccmsa, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=DEP-974#chiffre-cle-9). Standard of living The median standard of living (disposable income per consumption unit) was 17,070 euros per year in 2018, well below the national average (by way of comparison, the median standard of living for mainland France was 21,250 euros in 2019). Inequalities (in living standards) are therefore quite high, with a first decile (of living standards) at 8820 euros per year, a ninth decile at 37,890 euros per year and an inter-decile ratio of 4.3 compared with 3.5 for mainland France. As a result, the poverty rate in Réunion will be 36%, with a poverty line of €1,120 per month (60% of the median standard of living), significantly higher than the rate in mainland France (14%) for the year 2020 (Insee, Statistical survey on resources and living conditions 2021). This rate is therefore close to the proportion of individuals in a situation of material and social deprivation, calculated on the basis of the Statistics on Resources and Living Conditions survey, which is carried out throughout the European Union and concerns 3 people out of 10 (half of whom are in a situation of extreme poverty, i.e. where the number of material deprivations exceeds 7 out of a list of 13). The standard of living of poor households in Reunion Island is close to the national average, with the median standard of living of poor people at 10,450 euros per year, compared with 10,740 euros in France. However, this relatively small gap needs to be put into perspective, given the much higher cost of living on Réunion. Vulnerable groups The poverty described above more specifically affects young households (the poverty rate is 51% for the population of households where the tax reference is aged under 30) and single-parent families (52% of the population of single-parent families live below the poverty threshold). We also know that, unlike in France, poverty is particularly high in small rural communities (around 50%). Insee has also identified six socio-demographic profiles of poor households, based on their employment status, age and whether they own or rent their home. The former are retired households (23% of poor households). The second (11% of poor households) are households that are integrated into the labour market, but with significant family responsibilities. The other four types of household are made up of those who are not in employment and whose resources come mainly from social benefits. These are young households under the age of 30, mainly young mothers in single-parent families (9% of poor households), and older households of homeowners with the lowest standard of living (18%). The last two profiles correspond to renter households, either in private housing (20%) or in social housing, often in urban areas and composed mainly of single-parent families (19%). Please refer to the INSEE document for more information on this characterisation. Source Panorama de la pauvreté à La Réunion, Insee Dossier La Réunion n°7, October 2023. https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/7706096 It should also be pointed out that, according to INSEE, poor people are no more likely than better-off people to live in areas exposed to environmental risks and nuisances, whether it be road noise (16% of the population), the quality of drinking water (according to the regional health agency : 5% of the population is supplied by networks that pose a health risk, with the specific problem of heavy rainfall affecting up to half the population (with drinking water that is unfit for consumption), the risk of flooding (one person in 10) and landslides (7% of the population). In particular, the Insse states: 'Poor people are only slightly more likely than wealthier people to live in areas exposed to

	these risks and nuisances: 33% of people living in monetary poverty live there, compared with 29% of the wealthiest people. Nevertheless, this gap is small compared to the gaps between the areas of the island where they live.' Exposure is also judged to be equivalent 'regardless of gender, family situation or housing type.' The special case of "les Hauts" In 2020, 180,000 people will live in "les Hauts", representing one in five of Réunion's population. More than nine out of ten people living in the Hauts region live in a house, and seven out of ten households own their own home. Income poverty is more prevalent, affecting 40% of the population. The population is also less educated and less well integrated into the labour market. "Les Hauts de La Réunion" is nevertheless not a homogenous area. To reflect this diversity, "les Hauts" are classified into three groups with common characteristics in terms of income poverty, employment, housing and family structure. The third and poorer group is made up of the cirques around the summit of the Piton des Neiges, part of the Hauts de l'Ouest and areas of the Sud Sauvage. These areas share a certain geographical isolation or remoteness from the main urban and economic centres of the region. This group includes 54,000 people, or 30% of the population of Les Hauts. The inhabitants of these areas have a low level of qualifications: 50% of people aged 15 or over completed their initial education without a diploma. Poverty also affects a significant proportion of the population (45%). Access to employment is also low, with only 41% of 15-64 year-olds in work. The proportion of owner-occupied households is particularly high (74%), and social housing is rare (only 2% of primary residences). For residents of these `isolated hills', access times to facilities and services are much longer than on the rest of the island. This is particularly true for training, employment and social integration, which are concentrated in the coastal urban areas. This geographical remoteness is reinforced by the lower rate of car ownership: 31% of households do not have a car, compared with 25% in the Hauts region as a whole. It should also be emphasized that "les Hauts" are also part of the National Park's accession area.
CONNECTEDNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS: how connected/networked is the local community? Number of associations/local action groups, type, number of members they have.	This is an ongoing work. At this stage, here follows the available information: Associations It is estimated that the number of active associations in Réunion is between 14,000 and 15,000, giving a ratio of between 163.7 and 175 associations per 10,000 inhabitants (Répertoire National des Associations), which is well below the national average of 215 per 10,000 inhabitants [Recherches et solidarités, 2020]. This ratio differs significantly from one inter-municipality to another (165.3 for the CIVIS (Saint Pierre area), 154.0 for the CASUD (Tampon area), 220.3 for the CIREST (Saint Benoit area), 118.6 for the TCO (Saint Paul area) and 221.8 for the CINOR (Saint Denis area)), which are currently responsible for managing the public drinking water and wastewater services. The number of volunteers is estimated to be between 127,000 and 137,000 (source IFOP - France Bénévolat - January 2022). In the sports sector, which is fairly well identified and monitored each year, there will be 1,705 clubs (members of approved federations) and 124,880 licence holders by 2021. By 2022, 21,400 people will be employed by associations, representing 11.4% of all private sector employees in Réunion (compared with 9.2% for France as a whole), for a population of 1,710 employing associations and a total wage bill of 487 million euros. Nearly 3 out of 4 associations have fewer than 10 employees (57.7 have fewer than 5), while 4.7% are large organisations with more than 50 employees (source: URSSAF). Most of these jobs (43.7%) are in the social sector (21.1% of associations), as in mainland France (48.8% of jobs).

	Education, sport and arts and entertainment account for 6.3%, 12.2% and 10.2% of associations respectively, and 11.2%, 3.4% and 2.1% of jobs. 60% of jobs in voluntary organisations are held by women. It is also known that the creation of associations, as well as the creation of salaried jobs within associations, has increased significantly over the last 20 years, at a rate well above the national level until 2016, the year in which the national public policy of `subsidised jobs' came to an end. Until it was discontinued in 2016, this public policy resulted in a large number of jobs being created (19,790 jobs in 2016, sources: Acoss-Urssaf-MSA), particularly in the field of social action with associations working to integrate people in difficulty, such as local youth missions, or in specialised facilities for people with disabilities (which has made it possible to make up some of Réunion's shortfall in terms of care facilities (in 2019, the care rate for adults with disabilities is 4.6 places per 1,000 people, compared with 8.2 per 1,000 in France [ARS, 2019]). Over the last 5 years, an average of 11.8 associations have been created per 10,000 inhabitants each year in Réunion, which is slightly higher than the national average (9.7). Today, only one in 10 associations is involved in the social sector, and most are now involved in the cultural sector (2 out of 5). Professional chambers As in all French regions, Réunion has 3 professional chambers: the Chamber of Trades and Crafts, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Agriculture. The Chamber of Trades and Crafts Founded by the Courtier Act of 26/07/1925, the Chambers of Trades and Crafts (of which there are 108 throughout France) provide a public service and represent the general interests of the craft industry at regional, national and European level. On a national scale, these chambers represent more than 250 trades (those registered in an official nomenclature known as the `Répertoire des Métiers') and 820,000 businesses (which must also meet a size criterion, i.e. have fewer than 10 employees, when they are registered in the Répertoire des Métiers). Réunion's Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat has been in existence for more than 50 years (it was created by decree on 8 May 1968) and currently represents 14,303 businesses. The main tasks of this organisation are to: • Maintain the Répertoire des Métiers, • Award the Artisan and Master Artisan diplomas, • Organising apprenticeships in craft trades, • Carrying out all studies useful for the development of the sector. The organisation's website mentions a number of training and integration projects funded by the ESF (almost 78,000 beneficiaries since 2014). Governance This organisation is administered by 2 bodies: a general assembly made up of 25 company directors elected for a period of 5 years and an administrative body. The last election was held in October 2021 in `a tense context' (as reported in the local press). The Réunion Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIR) The Chambers of Commerce and Industry are public bodies under the supervision of the State. Their role is to represent the interests of industry, commerce and services to the public authorities and also to foreign authorities. In this capacity, they carry out a range of tasks (providing support and guidance, vocational training, carrying out studies on issues relating to training, economic development and regional planning, etc).

	The Reunion chamber was created on 1 January 1983, 42 years ago. In 2022, it was categorised as a Small or Medium Enterprise, meaning that it employed between 250 and 499 people. In addition to providing certain services to businesses, until recently they managed a number of strategic facilities for Réunion (including Réunion Roland-Garros airport and Port-Réunion) and a number of training centres (including higher education, in particular the Réunion School of Management and Commerce). Governance These public institutions are managed by elected business leaders (40 members in the case of the Réunion Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The electorate (of which there are 49,000 in Réunion) is made up of company directors in their personal capacity (such as certain categories of traders) and commercial and industrial companies registered with the Réunion Trade and Companies Register (through their representatives), divided into three colleges (commerce, industry and services). The most recent elections (by electronic means) were held in May 2022 in a tense context, following the cancellation of an initial ballot held in November 2021 by the Administrative Court. Chamber of Agriculture Created in 1924, the Chambers of Agriculture are public establishments placed under the supervision of the State and administered by elected representatives representing all stakeholders in the agricultural, rural and forestry sectors. They are recognised as professional institutions with broad autonomy to carry out projects, actions and analyses for the benefit of farmers in all regions. On its website, the Réunion Island's Chamber of Agriculture states that it has the following four missions: • contribute to improving the economic, social and environmental performance of farms and their sectors; • support the entrepreneurial and responsible approach of farmers, as well as the creation of new businesses and the development of employment; • contribute, through the services it provides, to the sustainable development of rural areas and farm businesses, as well as to the preservation and enhancement of natural resources, the reduction in the use of plant protection products and the fight against climate change; • act as its representative in dealings with the public authorities and local communities. The plenary assembly of the Réunion Chamber of Agriculture currently has 37 elected members, drawn from and representative of the various components of the local farming community. It employs 171.16 full-time equivalents and its financial situation is judged to be `very deteriorated' in a recent report by the Cour des Comptes (which also states that, `without the rapid implementation of its recovery plan, it will no longer be able to meet its compulsory charges'). The next elections for members of the Chamber of Agriculture are due to be held on 31 January 2025.
ACTIVITY: how active are community members and associations? Type, number AND frequency of activities, communication, events, meetings.	To our knowledge, no statistics are available on this item. We hope to obtain some qualitative feedback from certain qualified personalities by conducting interviews.

GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONMAKING: What is the relationship of the local community with key water management actors? What formal or informal (institutionalised or not) entities, networks or initiatives are there in place for citizens to be involved in decision-making about water?	In progress. We will try, as far as possible, to hold interviews with the main stakeholders and qualified personalities to answer this question.
COMMUNICATION: What are the current channels of communication with the local community within the existing water governance structure? E.g. social media, local newspapers, mailbox …	The local water agency makes use of almost all these means of communication, in particular with occasional awareness campaigns. This may also be the case for some of the local water companies.
LOCAL SPOKESPERSON/OPINION LEADER: Are there key individuals that can speak for larger groups of the local community?	Based on the interviews conducted, it appears that some individuals are indeed involved, although certain practices may be questionable. Additionally, the role of local artists is emphasized, and within ecological movements, the issue of local leadership is also highlighted.

PILOT SITE 2 - BRENTA (ITALY)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT	
PROBLEM: what is citizen engagement for?	The problem with citizen engagement in the Brenta River project stems from a lack of effective communication about the area's new management framework, which integrates water and biodiversity management. Despite the important institutional achievement of designating Consiglio di Bacino Brenta as the authority overseeing the protected area, citizens and stakeholders remain unaware of this and its impact on water pricing. Engaging both the public and civil society organizations is essential to inform them about these changes, encourage participation in biodiversity management, and foster collaboration with local entities to ensure successful conservation efforts at the Parco Fiume Brenta.
EXPERIENCE: What activities are you already conducting with/for local communities in relation to water? How do they relate/respond to the problem?	A communication platform called Parco Fiume Brenta made of website, social and newsletter is already in place. More recently (September 2024) two key actions have been taken to enhance stakeholder engagement in the Brenta River project. First, a meeting is scheduled with 15 local municipalities to establish a new steering committee for biodiversity conservation within the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta (configured as the third WP5 local webinar in the PS#2 – Middle Brenta). This step builds on prior institutional work and aims to formalize the integrated management of water and biodiversity. Second, a webinar has been held to inform stakeholders,

	including citizens, associations, and public bodies, about the project's progress and future plans. The webinar highlighted the synergy between water protection areas and biodiversity conservation. A new project was won by the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta (called MAP-Brenta) and it foresees the engagement citizen and stakeholder groups through a campaign of 8 awareness raising and citizen science events during 2025.
RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM: Is constituting a RBWF an objective? What are the expected outcomes of this RBWF? How do they relate to citizen engagement?	An 'official' RBWF is already in place: it is the local consultation committee of the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta and serves as a platform for association-level participation; it may offer a foundation for future citizen-inclusive forums. The Consiglio di Bacino Brenta, with the support of Etifor, is currently working for adding a second institutional committee (representing the 15 municipalities of the Middle Brenta area) in light of the new management function related to biodiversity (water-biodiversity synergies). The concept of a River Basin Water Forum, which would expand engagement to include citizens, has been proposed, although its realization may take longer.
TIMELINE: What is the timeline for citizen engagement	There is a short timeline to involve the civil society organizations. Not in decision making, but to make them aware of this new management framework and involve them in the management activities (e.g. waste collection, monitoring activities, etc.). This step will necessarily follow the local institutional committee start-up phase which now has the priority. We aim at concluding it by March 2025.
RESOURCES: Do you have capacity to support citizen engagement activities?	The Consiglio di Bacino Brenta has limited staff and lacks capacity for direct citizen engagement. Current projects, like InnWater, lack sufficient funds, so discussions are ongoing to identify additional resources for territory-focused engagement efforts. Etifor can support the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta in this path but with the (limited) resources it has within InnWater, otherwise an assignment needs to be formalized.
STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMEMENT ASSESSMENT	
DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of the basin affected area? Population, age, gender, ethnic diversity, religion, income, economic activity, vulnerable groups.	The demographic of the middle Brenta River area is characterized by an aging population, with the majority being older adults, similar to broader trends in Italy. The community is predominantly right-leaning, with most local administrations supporting far-right figures (water and biodiversity conservation, environment in general, does not tend to be a political priority). The political position is in line with that of the national government who recently voted against the Nature Restoration Law, seeing it as a constraint provider rather than an opportunity to enhance the territory itself. This region is largely rural, with a significant number of farmers, and communication is often challenging due to linguistic and cultural barriers, as many residents prefer the local dialect over standard Italian or English. Gender imbalance is notable, with males dominating both administrative positions and local associations. Women and young people are underrepresented in decision-making roles, with the latter often migrating to larger cities for education and work. Despite their age, the older population holds significant administrative power and is not seen as vulnerable. In contrast, young people, who face limited local opportunities and must leave for better prospects, are considered a vulnerable group. Additionally, there are few immigrants, and gender and immigration issues are not prominent concerns in this largely homogeneous community.
CONNECTEDNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS:	The community lacks a unified identity, with municipalities focusing on their own interests and limited cooperation. The Parco Fiume Brenta territorial brand aims to foster a shared identity, but progress has been slow. There are

how connected/networked is the local community? Number of associations/local action groups, type, number of members they have.	few associations across the large 15-municipality area, mostly informal groups, some of them involving young people. This non-habit to cooperate didn't allow the territory to attract funding for enhancing the rich environment it has, and promote itself as a unique area
ACTIVITY: how active are community members and associations? Type, number AND frequency of activities, communication, events, meetings.	Fishermen's associations play a key role in monitoring the Brenta River, reporting issues like pollution, tree cutting, and water shortages. Additionally, associations focused on waste collection organize river cleanups, often promoting hiking events to gather waste. These efforts are frequently supported and co-organized by local authorities. The role of many associations or local groups is mainly to support the municipalities in organizing events or traditional festivals, most of the time focused on food, wine, art or music but not addressing environmental topics or challenges.
GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONMAKING: What is the relationship of the local community with key water management actors? What formal or informal (institutionalised or not) entities, networks or initiatives are there in place for citizens to be involved in decision-making about water?	The Consiglio di Bacino Brenta, through the local water utility, manages the water withdrawals, and since July 2023 also the biodiversity conservation aspects of the protected area. However, issues like tree cutting and water flow management fall outside their control, causing criticism from locals who expect the Park to address these concerns: in fact, the initiative of which the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta is part is named "Parco Fiume Brenta" (literally: Brenta River Park), and being not a real local/ regional/ national 'Park', this creates misunderstanding among the community and the other water management authorities. To recap: sometimes the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta is accused by the community of management actions or choices that were not made by it. On the other hand, other water managers (Irrigation Board, Regional Civil Engineering Department) look with suspect the new management functions because they now have someone in charge of monitoring on biodiversity conservation in the area, something that was expected to be somehow applied transversally by all the public bodies but that was actually not in place.
COMMUNICATION: What are the current channels of communication with the local community within the existing water governance structure? E.g. social media, local newspapers, mailbox …	Parco Fiume Brenta initiative consists in a website (https://www.parcofiumebrenta.it/en/) a Fb page (https://www.facebook.com/parcofiumebrenta) with an online community of more than 6,4k followers and a periodic newsletter with open and free registration system. Being the PS#2 – Middle Brenta focused on the integrated water system (IWS, drinking water) another communication channel is the water tariff system, which communicate to over half a million users how much they are paying for the service and what they are paying. Within InnWater, we are working with the local water utility (Etra) to develop a parallel information system to improve users' awareness on the costs related to the water service, in particular the environmental and resources ones (ERC costs).
LOCAL SPOKESPERSON/OPINION LEADER: Are there key individuals that can speak for larger groups of the local community?	Municipality mayors, Irrigation Board president (in December 2024 a new president will be elected by the population). Others (with reduced influence capacity): Fishermen association presidents, big festival organisation leaders.

PILOT SITE 3 - FIGUERES (SPAIN)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT	
PROBLEM: what is citizen engagement for?	Citizen awareness about water scarcity
EXPERIENCE: What activities are you already conducting with/for local communities in relation to water? How do they relate/respond to the problem?	Practical Information provision through municipal official channels on water saving measures. No further actions have been taken so far concerning awareness on water scarcity.
RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM: Is constituting a RBWF an objective? What are the expected outcomes of this RBWF? How do they relate to citizen engagement?	Yes, there is vision to constitute a Community of Users. There is technical interest, but political commitment is also necessary.
TIMELINE: What is the timeline for citizen engagement	Short-term due to emergency situation of water scarcity
RESOURCES: Do you have capacity to support citizen engagement activities?	No political commitments have been taken to ensure resources for citizen engagement in water management.
STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMEMENT ASSESSMENT	
DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of the basin affected area? Population, age, gender, ethnic diversity, religion, income, economic activity, vulnerable groups.	
CONNECTEDNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS: how connected/networked is the local community? Number of associations/local action groups, type, number of members they have.	With regard to water management in the river basin, there is no organized structure to channel the discussion and demands of the various interest groups. There are several interest groups (water supply companies, environmental entities, the regional government, agricultural associations, associations for farm irrigation, entities of the tourist sector) but each of them defends its interests individually, without any connection with the others.
ACTIVITY: how active are community members and associations? Type, number AND frequency of	The local entities related to water management are very little active in relation to involving citizenship and working together with other organizations. They are limited to the activities of each organization.

activities, communication, events, meetings.	
GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONMAKING: What is the relationship of the local community with key water management actors? What formal or informal (institutionalised or not) entities, networks or initiatives are there in place for citizens to be involved in decision-making about water?	There are no established networks or structures for citizen participation in water management decision-making. The only time that citizens can participate is in the participatory processes organized during the drafting of river basin management plans promoted by the government of Catalonia
COMMUNICATION: What are the current channels of communication with the local community within the existing water governance structure? E.g. social media, local newspapers, mailbox …	The current channels of communication with the public on water issues are the usual ones of the regional and local administration. Basically communication campaigns through television, radio, social networks, general and local newspapers. They are less common but occasionally traveling exhibitions, conferences or public debates can be organized.
LOCAL SPOKESPERSON/OPINION LEADER: Are there key individuals that can speak for larger groups of the local community?	At this moment there are no people with knowledge and leadership in the water issue that can be a reference for the citizens, the political bodies and the rest of the interest groups.

PILOT SITE 4 - WESTCOUNTRY (UNITED KINGDOM)

PROBLEM: what is citizen engagement for?	Building awareness of the state of river health both in terms of water quality and water quantity
EXPERIENCE: What activities are you already conducting with/for local communities in relation to water? How do they relate/respond to the problem?	Westcountry Rivers Trust are already delivering a Citizen Science Investigations scheme with 1000+ volunteers taking around 10,000 samples a year. This is building not only data but understanding about the nuances with water **STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT** pollution and its sources
RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM: Is constituting a RBWF an objective? What are the expected outcomes of this RBWF? How do they relate to citizen engagement?	There used to be a River Basin Water Forum as part of the Water Framework Directive. This River Basin Liaison Panel was disbanded in 2014 but the formation of a grouping of Catchment Partnerships over the same area has reinstated this albeit not yet in name. River Basin Water Forum could be the title of this group if needed and the outcomes would be to allow for local conversations to scale to a regional level including a direct line from citizen voices to regional and national decision makers.

TIMELINE: What is the timeline for citizen engagement	We are already engaging citizens but would like to broaden the diversity of these volunteers as they are currently predominantly retirees.
RESOURCES: Do you have capacity to support citizen engagement activities?	We have funding to support citizen engagement and more specifically citizen science but demand far outstrips the capacity and budget we have.
STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMEMENT ASSESSMENT	
DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of the basin affected area? Population, age, gender, ethnic diversity, religion, income, economic activity, vulnerable groups.	The Demographics of the West Country are gender equal but there is a higher number of retirees so the population is skewed away from the young. The ethnic diversity is predominantly white with only 1-2% being non-white. There is considerable wealth in the region with high value tourism and second home areas but with pockets of significant deprivation.
CONNECTEDNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS: how connected/networked is the local community? Number of associations/local action groups, type, number of members they have.	There are lots of charities and civil society groups. We have seen an increase in the number of river interest groups in the last four years and this number is growing further. Several of them spawned out of the Citizen Science Investigations work.
ACTIVITY: how active are community members and associations? Type, number AND frequency of activities, communication, events, meetings.	Most river interest groups we work meet or have events monthly and are actively developing with some considering becoming charities or community interest companies.
GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONMAKING: What is the relationship of the local community with key water management actors? What formal or informal (institutionalised or not) entities, networks or initiatives are there in place for citizens to be involved in decision-making about water?	There is not formal governance structure between local communities and water management but there are Catchment Partnerships which form a grouping of interested parties both public, private and voluntary where water management issues can be discussed and coordinated.
COMMUNICATION: What are the current channels of communication with the local community within the existing water governance structure?	Catchment Partnerships work through meetings, events, websites, documents and social media to link community groups together.

E.g. social media, local newspapers, mailbox …	
LOCAL SPOKESPERSON/OPINION LEADER: Are there key individuals that can speak for larger groups of the local community?	Each river interest group usually has a specific individual who speaks on behalf of the group and represents them at Catchment Partnership meetings.

PILOT SITE 5 - TISZA (HUNGARY)

STEP 1. PILOT SITE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT	
PROBLEM: what is citizen engagement for?	Making people understand that citizens have to be the stewards of the landscape
EXPERIENCE: What activities are you already conducting with/for local communities in relation to water? How do they relate/respond to the problem?	The interviews conducted with various stakeholders, including farmers, mayors, and associations, revealed a key conclusion supported by recent scientific literature: the need for more water retention within landscapes, particularly during winter when water is abundant. This involves storing water in the soil, which requires dedicating land areas. However, most of the land is currently cultivated, often inefficiently, due to strong incentives from the European Union's Common Agricultural Support Scheme. The proposed solution is to allocate some of this land for water retention, which would enhance water availability in the summer, benefiting not just the areas used for retention but also neighboring lands. This approach could create a win-win situation for farmers, but it faces resistance because no farmer wants to sacrifice their land for this purpose. The strategy involves engaging farmers in discussions to increase their understanding of the benefits and to encourage cooperation. The goal is to reach agreements among farmers on whose land could be used for water retention, potentially setting up pilot agreements as a model. This approach has significant policy implications. Success in this area could lead to policy changes, including restructuring agricultural subsidies to provide incentives for land use that supports water retention. Economic benefits are possible, but they may require compensation mechanisms between farms or adjustments to current subsidy schemes. Overall, the aim is to foster collaboration among farmers to manage water resources more effectively, which could lead to more sustainable farming practices and better water management in the long term.
RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM: Is constituting a RBWF an objective? What are the expected outcomes of this RBWF? How do they relate to citizen engagement?	The short to mid-term priority is working primarily with farmers as their cooperation will then have an impact on the local society. There will be more nature, more biodiversity, and also more labour-intensive activities. This will offer labour opportunities for local people, and it connects to the vulnerability question. There have been advances in two previous cycles of water basin planning, focusing on improving participation and understanding, but these efforts faced challenges due to a lack of interest from both citizens and the government. The process of making policies effective is difficult, especially when they are not well-understood or supported. To address this, meetings with farmers are planned during their downtime in winter to discuss the importance of sustainable land and water use for the future. The goal is to engage farmers first,

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>as they are key stakeholders, before expanding discussions to the broader community. Success with farmers could lead to broader community and policy engagement, but it requires careful, methodical work to avoid mistakes and ensure cooperation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>TIMELINE: What is the timeline for citizen engagement</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>RESOURCES: Do you have capacity to support citizen engagement activities?</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">STEP 2. LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMEMENT ASSESSMENT</td></tr>
<tr><td>DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of the basin affected area? Population, age, gender, ethnic diversity, religion, income, economic activity, vulnerable groups.</td><td>The pilot area is within Jász Nagykun Szolnok county, which is part of the North Great Plains region. The statistical figures refer to these areas.

Income per person is 19% lower than the national average.

Population density is 63.3 persons/km2, the national average is 103 persons/km2

3.7% of the population lives in this county, and there is an above average share of rural population.

51.3% are women, which is about the national average as well.

<table>
<tr><th>Age group</th><th>Jász Nagykun</th><th>National</th></tr>
<tr><td>0-15</td><td>15.0%</td><td>14.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>15-64</td><td>63.4%</td><td>64.9%</td></tr>
<tr><td>64 and up</td><td>21.7%</td><td>20.7%</td></tr>
</table>

Life expectancy at birth for men 71.8, for women 78.6 in the county. National average: 73.4 and 79.6 respectively.

Most people are of Hungarian ethnicity, about 6-7% of the population is gypsy. They also appear as the most vulnerable group. There are also sporadic German and Romanian ethnicities in the region (they are not vulnerable).

Religion: roman catholic (about 25%), protestant (about 20%), Greek orthodox and evangelist are in minimal numbers, the rest does not claim any of the major religions.

The most important activities of the pilot region are agriculture (crop production, animal husbandry, agri-food processing, some tourism)</td></tr>
<tr><td>CONNECTEDNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS: how connected/networked is the local community? Number of associations/local action</td><td>KÖTIVIZIG has a solid water related network, actors of that might have been activated as active external partners in the preparation and implementation of the project. 21 NGOs and public institutions were involved into the process, their members' number is between 10 and 1000.</td></tr>
</table>

groups, type, number of members they have.	
ACTIVITY: how active are community members and associations? Type, number AND frequency of activities, communication, events, meetings.	The level of their activities are different, e.g. angling association was particulary active as well as farmers'association from Karcag. Personel and online meetings were also realized. In two main periods we have organized meetings together with REKK, in spring and autumn in 2023, and in 2024 as well.
GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONMAKING: What is the relationship of the local community with key water management actors? What formal or informal (institutionalised or not) entities, networks or initiatives are there in place for citizens to be involved in decision-making about water?	Tisza River Sub-basin Water Management Council (of Hungary) and Middle Tisza District Territorial Council of Water Management are consultative bodies; representing different public bodies and civil associations. These councils are involved into governance and decision making processes.
COMMUNICATION: What are the current channels of communication with the local community within the existing water governance structure? E.g. social media, local newspapers, mailbox …	KÖTIVIZIG is maintaining a website and a Facebook social media platform, continously updated. The directorate are realizing permanenet information and dissemination activities via the local press (local websites, newspapers, radio and TV channels).
LOCAL SPOKESPERSON/OPINION LEADER: Are there key individuals that can speak for larger groups of the local community?	Opinion leaders are normally managers and decision makers of different national and local public and private institutions, they are normally in active partnership with KÖTIVIZIG.

Annex 2. Semi-structured interview guide

PURPOSE OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews are a complementary tool designed to gather input from individuals or groups who have not been reachable through broader citizen engagement activities, such as webinars or workshops. In the context of Deliverable D3.2, these interviews can play a key role in ensuring that the perspectives of vulnerable or less accessible groups are captured, thereby enriching the data used to develop each Pilot Site's Citizen Engagement Roadmap.

This approach supports WP3's commitment to adaptability and inclusiveness, recognizing that the five Pilot Sites vary widely in terms of social, cultural, and political contexts. The interviews are conducted individually, allowing for deeper, more personalized conversations that may not be possible in larger or more formal settings. They are particularly useful for identifying barriers to participation, understanding specific local concerns, and tailoring engagement strategies accordingly.

Semi-structured interviews are instrumental in ensuring the relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness of citizen engagement activities, contributing directly to improved water governance and more representative KPI outcomes in the InnWater project.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

A semi-structured interview is a guided process that starts with some predetermined questions and evolves with new questions that arise from the discussion. An interview guide is used to ensure that the same topics are covered with each interviewee. The exact wording of the questions is not necessarily predetermined. The guide serves the interviewer to guide the topics to be addressed and the order in which they will be discussed, although the objective is to facilitate an informal and fluid conversation.

It is important to consider:

- A consent form, audio recording, and a reminder that the material will be used for research purposes.
- An estimated duration of 30–60 minutes.
- Creating an informal and relaxed setting or moment, with enough time for the interviewee to think and respond without pressure.
- Avoiding closed or biased questions. Encourage probing questions. Show interest and curiosity. Wait for answers without anticipating them or giving personal opinions. This is not a conversation but an interview. The interviewee should be the one speaking.
- The interview can be concluded by highlighting interesting points, lessons learned, and expressing thanks.

Interviewee data collection:

- FULL NAME
- INSTITUTION AND POSITION
- STAKEHOLDER GROUP

- LOCATION AND START TIME
- CONSENT FORM
- INTERVIEWER NOTES

STRUCTURE AND ESTIMATED TIME

No	Segment	Goals	Duration
1	Presentation and Introduction	- Greet and explain the purpose of the interview. - Ensure the participant feels comfortable. - Start recording.	5 min
2	Understanding the local context	- Participant background and experience. - Knowledge of local community.	10-15 min
3	Barriers and Enablers to Engagement	- Barriers, perceptions and priorities. - Opportunities and recommendations.	15-25 min
4	Wrap up	- Additional thoughts. - Other experts.	5 min

INTERVIEW SEGMENTS

1. Introduction (5 min)

- Thank the participant and explain the purpose of the interview (InnWater project, citizen engagement, underrepresented groups).
- Reassure about confidentiality and ask permission to record the session.
- Ask for general background:
    - Name, role, organization
    - Relation to water management or community engagement
    - Experience working with vulnerable or marginalized groups

2. Understanding the Local Context (10–15 min)

- From your experience, which groups in your community are less likely to participate in public or water governance processes?
- What are the main reasons these groups are not represented or involved?
- Are there geographical, cultural, or economic factors contributing to their underrepresentation?
- What communication methods are most effective in reaching them?
- Are there community leaders, groups, or associations that could act as bridges?

3. Barriers and Enablers to Engagement (15–25 min)

- What are the main barriers these groups face (e.g. language, trust, access, time, institutional factors)?
- Have there been any successful initiatives to involve them? What worked?
- How can engagement be made more accessible or appealing?
- What role do you think local institutions, municipalities, or water agencies should play?
- What support (training, funding, space) would help these groups participate more meaningfully?

Perceptions and Priorities

- How do you think these groups perceive water challenges like drought, pollution, or pricing?
- Do they see water management as a priority? Why or why not?
- Are there alternative priorities (e.g. housing, jobs, safety) that should be addressed in parallel?

Opportunities and Recommendations

- What practical steps could we take to include these groups in ongoing or future engagement efforts?
- Should we work through schools, religious spaces, community centres, or others?
- How can we ensure that participation leads to real influence?
- Would you or your organization be interested in collaborating in future initiatives?

4. Wrap-up (5 min)

- Any final thoughts or recommendations?
- Can you think of someone we should talk to/interview?
- Thank them for their time and insights. Ask for follow-up permission if needed.

Annex 3. Citizen engagement in-person survey guide: community voices on water and participation

PURPOSE OF THE IN-PERSON SURVEY GUIDE

This guide is designed to support the delivery of a short in-person survey aimed at gathering insights from citizens and community leaders about the barriers to participation in water-related decision-making, especially among underrepresented groups and minorities.

In-person surveys are valuable tools for engaging directly with people in their own environments, from community centres to local events, creating a more personal, approachable setting. Unlike online or written questionnaires, they allow for conversational flow, emotional nuance, and clearer interpretation of responses.

The specific objective of this survey is to uncover:

- Why many people do not engage in water governance issues.
- What invisible or systemic barriers prevent participation.
- How we might design more inclusive and effective engagement strategies in the future.

Interviewer general recommendations:

- Create a relaxed setting: Smile, be open, and avoid jargon.
- Use a conversational tone: Follow the guide but adapt your language to the person you're talking to.
- Avoid leading questions: Let participants express their views without pressure.
- Listen actively: Allow for pauses and give time to think.
- Respect boundaries: If someone doesn't want to answer, simply move on.
- Be neutral: Do not express approval or disapproval of any answer.
- Above all, this is about listening with empathy and curiosity to voices that often go unheard.

Before the conversation:

- The survey should not take longer than 10-15 minutes. Your goal is to create a warm, open space where people feel truly listened to. Constant notetaking can sometimes disrupt that flow.
- Familiarize yourself with the questions so you can speak naturally without reading them word-for-word.

- Mentally group questions into themes (e.g., personal views, obstacles, solutions) to help you track the conversation without rigid structure.

During the Conversation:

- Focus on eye contact and active listening. Nod, show empathy, and let pauses happen.
- Use keywords or symbols to quickly jot down core points (e.g., “trust ↓” for lack of trust, “school ☑” for preferred outreach).
- Let the conversation flow, and only write when the speaker finishes a thought, not mid-sentence.

After the Conversation

- Take 5 minutes immediately afterward to write a short summary from memory while it's still fresh. Focus on: main barriers mentioned, any emotional or passionate comments, surprising suggestions or quotes.
- Use your notes to rebuild the story of the interview, rather than try to transcribe it word-for-word.

IN-PERSON SURVEY SEGMENTS

A. Getting to know you (2 min)

1. Can you tell me something about your involvement (or your group's) in local community matters?

2. When you hear the topic of “water” in your area, what comes to mind first?

B. Listening to everyday realities (4 min)

3. Some people say they care deeply about water issues but don’t show up to meetings or consultations. Why do you think that is?

4. Are there times or places where people from your neighborhood *do* get involved or speak up? What’s different about those situations?

5. In your opinion, who is usually missing when water decisions are made in your area? Why might that be?

C. Understanding unseen obstacles (5 min)

6. Imagine someone from your community wanted to speak out about a water-related problem. What might stop them?

7. How easy or hard is it for someone to understand how water issues (like droughts or floods, or quality) actually affect their daily life?

8. Have you ever seen a meeting, campaign, or activity that made *everyone* feel welcome? What made it work?

D. Bridging the Gap (4 min)

9. If we wanted to involve more people from your community, where should we go (a specific place, event, or group)?

10. What's the best way to share information (a flyer, WhatsApp, radio, face-to-face talks)?

11. What would help people feel their voice *matters* when it comes to water-related decisions?

E. Final Thought (Optional)

12. If you had a message for those planning water projects in your area, what would you want them to hear?

Annex 4. Community online survey: water and participation

COMMUNITY SURVEY: WATER AND PARTICIPATION

Welcome to the Community Water Survey. Water is essential for our daily lives: from drinking and cooking, to farming, tourism, and protecting nature. But rivers and water systems face growing challenges: droughts, floods, pollution, and rising costs.

This short survey (about 5 minutes) is part of the InnWater Project, which works with communities across Europe to make water management more fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

Your answers will help us understand:

- *How people in your community experience water issues,*
- *What worries you most,*
- *What makes it easier or harder to get involved,*
- *And how participation in water decisions can be improved.*

There are no right or wrong answers, we simply want to hear your voice. Responses are anonymous and will only be used for research and community planning.

Thank you for your time and contribution!

Section 1 – About You

1. What is your age group?
- Under 18
- 18–29
- 30–44
- 45–59
- 60+
2. What is your gender?
- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary / prefer not to say
3. What is your main occupation?
- Student
- Employed (public sector)
- Employed (private sector)
- Self-employed / farmer
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other
4. How long have you lived in your community?
- Less than 5 years
- 5–10 years
- More than 10 years
- All my life

Section 2 – Community Involvement

5. How often do you take part in local community activities (e.g., associations, events and local festivities, volunteering)?
- Regularly (at least once a month)
- Occasionally (a few times a year)
- Rarely
- Never

6. Have you ever participated in a meeting or activity about water issues (e.g., floods, droughts, quality, pricing)?
- Yes, several times
- Yes, once
- No, but I would like to
- No, not interested

Section 3 – Water Concerns

7. When you hear about "water issues" in your area, what worries you the most?
- Water scarcity or drought
- Flooding
- Water quality (drinking water, pollution)
- Price of water services
- Environmental impacts on rivers and ecosystems
- I don't worry much about water issues

8. Which groups do you think are most affected by water problems in your community?
- Farmers and agriculture
- Families with children
- Elderly people
- Low-income households
- Everyone equally
- Industry and productive sectors
- Not sure

9. How strongly do you feel water issues affect your daily life?
- A lot
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all

Section 4 – Barriers to Participation

10. If you don't usually take part in water-related events, why not?
- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- I don't feel my voice matters
- I don't know when/where meetings happen
- Too technical or hard to understand
- Other

11. Who do you think is usually missing when water decisions are made in your area?

- Young people
- Women
- Migrants or minority groups
- Farmers
- Ordinary citizens in general
- Nobody is missing

Section 5 – Improving Engagement

12. What would encourage you to participate more in water-related decisions?
- Clearer information in simple language
- Meetings at convenient times/places
- Online participation options
- Seeing results from past participation
- Financial or other incentives (e.g., vouchers)
- Nothing would encourage me

13. What is the best way to share information about water issues in your community?
- Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Local radio / TV
- Flyers and posters
- Community meetings
- School or youth activities
- Other

14. If there was a new local “water forum” for citizens, how likely would you be to attend?
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Unlikely
- Definitely not

Section 6 – Final

15. Which of these best describes your overall attitude toward water governance?
- I want to actively participate in decision-making.
- I am interested but prefer to stay informed.
- I only care when there is a direct problem (e.g., drought, flood).
- I am not interested in water governance.

Annex 5. Citizen engagement roadmaps update for each Pilot Site

1. LA RÉUNION

Position on the Ladder of Citizen Participation

Initial ambition:

Move beyond information and consultation towards meaningful participation and co-construction, particularly with underrepresented groups.

Current status: Achieved and partially exceeded.

Citizen engagement evolved progressively:

- Early stages focused on **information and consultation** (webinars, surveys, public events).
- Later stages reached **co-construction**, with young citizens integrated directly into Working Group meetings (Meetings 9 and 10).
- Young participants co-developed **10 concrete policy proposals**, some tested through the InnWater CGE model.

Remaining gap:

Citizen influence is still largely **project-bound** and not yet embedded in permanent decision-making bodies.

Engagement Approaches and Tools

Planned tools and approaches:

- Awareness-raising and education
- Neighbourhood-level actions
- Collaboration with youth and civil society organisations
- Mixed citizen–stakeholder dialogues
- Feedback and accountability mechanisms

Implemented actions and achievements:

- **Neighbourhood-level engagement** via *Maisons de l'Emploi* and socio-cultural centres
- **Targeted youth engagement**, including socially disadvantaged young people (18–29)
- **Capacity-building before participation** (full-day training on water and coral reef issues)
- **Mixed formats**: Working Groups, webinars, surveys, Summer School, Serious Games
- **Informal communication tools** (e.g. WhatsApp groups) to sustain engagement

Barriers encountered:

- Heavy reliance on a small number of associations (capacity and scalability risks)
- High facilitation and resource needs for vulnerable groups
- Uneven engagement across territories (stronger in the South so far)

Indicators and Evidence of Progress

Roadmap intent:

Use both qualitative and quantitative indicators to track engagement, inclusivity, and impact.

Evidence collected:

- **36** webinar participants identified as citizens linked to La Réunion
- **51** survey responses reported overall
- **≈40 young citizens** and university students involved in two dedicated engagement workshops
- **10 co-developed policy proposals**
- Survey evidence of:
    - Low prior participation
    - High willingness to engage
    - Demand for clear language, visible outcomes, and local accessibility

Key Barriers (as Identified in the Roadmap and Confirmed in Practice)

- Low baseline awareness of water governance issues
- Language and cultural barriers (e.g. Creole vs. formal French)
- Socio-economic constraints (unemployment, interrupted education)
- Attrition and discontinuity within the Working Group
- Limited institutional uptake beyond the project framework

These barriers were **anticipated in the roadmap** and partially mitigated through facilitation, training, and local anchoring, but they remain structural challenges.

Lessons Learned

1. **Interest is not the problem—access is.**
   When engagement is local, prepared, and meaningful, participation follows.
2. **Capacity-building is a prerequisite for inclusion.**
   Vulnerable citizens require time, training, and trust-building before co-construction is possible.
3. **Youth engagement is strongest when linked to real influence.**
   The use of modelling tools to test youth proposals significantly increased legitimacy and motivation.
4. **Informal tools strengthen continuity.**
   Messaging apps and social media are critical complements to formal engagement spaces.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

To fully implement the Citizen Engagement Roadmap:

- **Institutionalise engagement** through permanent citizen forums or assemblies
- **Develop "Ambassadors de l'eau"**, building on trained youth and retirees
- **Broaden inclusion** to women, single-parent households, and elderly populations
- **Strengthen feedback loops** to show how citizen input shapes policy
- **Formalise indicators** to monitor continuity, representativeness, and policy impact

Overall status:

Roadmap largely on track, with strong progress on inclusion and co-construction.

Next phase critical to shift from successful pilots to durable governance mechanisms.

2. BRENTA (ITALY)

Position on the Ladder of Citizen Participation

Initial ambition (Roadmap):

Move from limited information-sharing towards structured consultation, trust-building, and, in the longer term, co-construction of water and biodiversity governance through a River Basin Water Forum.

Current status: Consultation level achieved; selective steps towards co-construction.

Citizen engagement in Brenta has progressed from fragmented information activities to **regular consultation and dialogue** through webinars and in-person workshops. These activities enabled stakeholders and civil society actors to provide feedback, discuss governance gaps, and contribute to defining priorities for water and biodiversity management. Limited co-construction elements were achieved through participatory planning workshops and the formulation of shared mandates delivered to the newly established Steering Committee.

Remaining gap:

Citizen engagement remains **largely institutionally guided and mediated through organisations**, with no permanent citizen-led or open participatory body yet in place.

Engagement Approaches and Tools

Planned tools and approaches (Roadmap):

- Awareness-raising on governance changes and water issues
- Consultation through workshops and stakeholder dialogues
- Inclusion of underrepresented groups via intermediaries
- Innovative communication and engagement formats
- Progressive institutionalisation of participation

Implemented actions and achievements:

Online webinars with municipalities, utilities, and civil society.
In-person participatory workshops on governance, water, biodiversity and ERCs.
Innovative formats (e.g. *Atlas of the Shores* artistic workshop).
Qualitative interviews with underrepresented actors.
Improved communication tools via the water utility (ETRA).
Establishment of a Steering Committee for integrated water and biodiversity management.

Barriers encountered:

- Limited human and financial resources for direct citizen mobilisation
- Engagement largely dependent on invited participation
- Difficulty ensuring continuity of participation over time
- Persistent fragmentation of water governance affecting clarity and expectations

Indicators and Evidence of Progress

Roadmap intent:

Assess engagement through participation, inclusivity, trust, and governance impact.

Evidence collected:

- **14** webinar participants identified as citizens linked to Brenta
- Multiple in-person workshops involving municipalities, utilities, associations and private actors
- **~110 participants** in the interdisciplinary *Atlas of the Shores* workshop
- Engagement of **4–5 underrepresented actors**, defined as outside the User Advisory Committee
- Formal creation of a **Steering Committee** for Natura 2000 site governance
- Qualitative evidence of increased trust and transparency among stakeholders

Key Barriers (as Identified in the Roadmap and Confirmed in Practice)

- Low public awareness of governance changes and institutional roles
- Fragmentation of water governance across multiple authorities
- Socio-cultural barriers (ageing population, youth disengagement, linguistic preferences)
- Resource constraints limiting citizen-focused initiatives
- Perception of some "participatory" events as consultative rather than empowering

These barriers were **explicitly anticipated in the Citizen Engagement Roadmap** and remain only partially mitigated.

Lessons Learned

1. **Institutional clarity is a prerequisite for engagement.**
   In fragmented governance contexts, clarifying mandates and responsibilities is essential to build trust.
2. **Trust-building precedes deeper participation.**
   Regular consultation and transparency create legitimacy, even within institutionally guided processes.
3. **Engagement benefits from non-technical and narrative-based approaches.**
   Artistic and interdisciplinary formats help bridge expert–citizen divides.
4. **Intermediary organisations are critical.**
   Cooperatives and associations lower participation thresholds and enable inclusion of underrepresented voices.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

To fully implement the Citizen Engagement Roadmap, priority actions include:

- Transitioning from project-based engagement to **permanent participatory structures** (e.g. River Basin Water Forum)
- Strengthening **territorial identity and storytelling** around Parco Fiume Brenta
- Broadening inclusion of **young people, women, families in difficulty, and foreign residents**
- Leveraging upcoming initiatives (e.g. MAP-Brenta) for citizen science and volunteering
- Securing additional resources to scale engagement beyond institutional stakeholders

Overall status:

Roadmap largely on track, with solid progress on consultation, transparency, and governance consolidation.
Next phase critical to move towards durable, inclusive, and citizen-driven participation.

3. FIGUERES (SPAIN)

Position on the Ladder of Citizen Participation

Initial ambition (Roadmap):

Move from a situation dominated by information provision and sporadic consultation towards structured consultation, deliberation, and, in the longer term, co-creation through a River Basin Water Forum or a Community of Water Users.

Current status: Consultation level achieved; early elements of deliberation emerging.

Citizen engagement in Figueres has progressed significantly from a very low baseline. The organisation of seven InnWater seminars established a regular space for dialogue among territorial actors and small local communities, moving beyond one-off information-sharing towards **structured and repeated consultation**. While full co-creation mechanisms are not yet in place, the seminars enabled collective reflection on drought, water scarcity, and future management options, representing initial steps towards deliberation.

Remaining gap:

Citizen engagement is still largely **project-based** and mediated through organised actors or surveys. Permanent citizen-led or co-creative structures have not yet been institutionalised.

Engagement Approaches and Tools

Planned tools and approaches (Roadmap):

- Information and awareness-raising on water scarcity
- Consultation through seminars and workshops
- Outreach to underrepresented groups
- Public communication campaigns
- Preparation for future participatory structures

Implemented actions and achievements:

7 InnWater seminars involving territorial actors and small municipalities.

Inclusion of mayors and councillors from **micro-municipalities (<1,000 inhabitants).**

Large-scale **face-to-face citizen survey** targeting young people, elderly citizens and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Street-level engagement in markets, schools, senior centres and public spaces.

Progressive articulation of a basin-wide community around water issues.

Barriers encountered:

- Limited financial, human, and political resources
- Engagement constrained by emergency-driven drought context
- Absence of formal participatory institutions
- Continued fragmentation of governance and leadership

Indicators and Evidence of Progress

Roadmap intent:

Measure progress through participation, inclusivity, continuity, and readiness for shared governance.

Evidence collected:

- **15** webinar participants identified as citizens linked to La Muga
- Participation of **22 municipalities**, including small and remote ones
- **66 unique individuals** identified as seminar participants
- **~50 citizen questionnaires** collected face-to-face
- Strong representation of **elderly citizens, young people, and long-term residents**
- Evidence of increased awareness and responsible water-saving behaviours

Key Barriers (as Identified in the Roadmap and Confirmed in Practice)

- Lack of institutionalised citizen participation structures
- Limited leadership capable of representing the basin collectively
- Resource constraints and short engagement timelines
- Uneven access to detailed, locally relevant information
- Citizen participation still indirect and episodic

These barriers were **clearly anticipated in the Citizen Engagement Roadmap** and remain only partially addressed.

Lessons Learned

1. **Citizen engagement must start with articulation of local actors.**
   In fragmented territories, building a shared space for dialogue is a prerequisite for deeper participation.
2. **Citizens are highly aware and engaged at household level.**
   Responsible behaviours during drought show strong latent engagement potential.
3. **Face-to-face methods are essential for inclusion.**
   Street surveys proved effective in reaching elderly citizens, young people, and disadvantaged groups.
4. **Small municipalities are key intermediaries.**
   Micro-municipalities play a crucial role in voicing local community concerns.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

To fully implement the Citizen Engagement Roadmap, priority actions include:

- Transitioning from seminars to **permanent participatory structures** (River Basin Water Forum or Water Users Community)
- Strengthening territorial leadership recognised by citizens and institutions
- Improving tailored communication on water governance and technical measures
- Creating participatory formats allowing **ongoing citizen interaction**, beyond surveys
- Ensuring citizen input informs decisions on major infrastructure and basin-scale projects

Overall status:

Roadmap largely on track, with strong progress from information to consultation.

Next phase critical to move towards deliberation and co-creation through durable governance structures.

4. WEST COUNTRY (UK)

Position on the Ladder of Citizen Participation

Initial ambition (Roadmap):

Strengthen bottom-up citizen engagement by building on existing Catchment Partnerships, improving connectivity across governance levels, and progressively moving from information and awareness-raising towards consultation and influence within regional water planning.

Current status: Between information and consultation, with strong diagnostic capacity achieved.

Citizen engagement in the West Country has consolidated a broad **awareness and engagement base** through citizen science, grass-roots partnerships, and community-based initiatives. While direct citizen influence on decision-making remains limited, the project has significantly strengthened **consultative capacity** by improving communication across partnerships and capturing citizen perspectives on barriers to participation.

Remaining gap:

Citizen engagement is not yet **institutionalised within formal decision-making structures**, and participation remains uneven across demographic groups.

Engagement Approaches and Tools

Planned tools and approaches (Roadmap):

- Build on Catchment Partnerships as community engagement platforms
- Raise awareness of water quality and governance
- Identify and address barriers to participation
- Strengthen connectivity between bottom-up and top-down governance
- Prepare for future regional planning structures

Implemented actions and achievements:

Engagement through **9 Catchment Partnerships** and regional coordination.

5 webinars/workshops plus in-person events.

Citizen Science Evenings recognising volunteer contributions.

Community Barriers Assessment with 40 citizens.

Regional **network analysis** mapping 411 individuals and key connectors.

Creation of a **West Country Catchment Partnership Forum** to continue beyond the project

Barriers encountered:

- Limited capacity and funding to scale citizen engagement
- Overreliance on volunteers and retirees
- Engagement formats poorly suited to working-age citizens and carers
- Lack of formal mechanisms linking citizen voices to decisions

Indicators and Evidence of Progress

Roadmap intent:

Assess progress through awareness, inclusivity, connectivity, and readiness for influence.

Evidence collected:

- **1,000+ citizen science volunteers** engaged across the region
- **40 citizens** consulted directly on barriers to engagement
- High awareness of water pressures among citizens
- Identification of **time poverty** as the main driver of underrepresentation
- Significant increase in network connectivity since 2016 (from 6 to **63 key connectors**)

Key Barriers (as Identified in the Roadmap and Confirmed in Practice)

- Underrepresentation driven by **time, capacity, and confidence constraints**
- Limited demographic diversity in active participation
- Absence of a formal regional citizen participation body
- Weak feedback loops showing how citizen input influences outcomes
- Resource constraints affecting continuity and scale

These barriers were **explicitly anticipated in the Citizen Engagement Roadmap** and are now strongly evidenced.

Lessons Learned

1. **Awareness without pathways leads to frustration.**
   Citizens care deeply but need clear routes to act and be heard.
2. **Underrepresentation is structural, not motivational.**
   Time poverty and life circumstances systematically exclude many voices.
3. **Networks matter as much as forums.**
   Strengthening connectors and communication is critical in multi-partnership contexts.
4. **Citizen science is a powerful but incomplete engagement tool.**
   Data collection must connect to governance to sustain trust.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

To fully implement the Citizen Engagement Roadmap, the next phase should focus on:

- Designing **low-barrier, flexible engagement formats** for working-age citizens
- Broadening inclusion beyond retirees and existing volunteers
- Strengthening feedback loops to demonstrate impact of citizen input
- Securing sustainable funding for engagement and coordination
- Re-establishing a **formal citizen participation mechanism** linked to emerging Regional Water Planning Authorities
- Applying governance and network tools at **regional scale** to address the "missing middle"

Overall status:

Roadmap partially achieved, with strong progress on awareness, diagnostics, and network consolidation.

Critical next step is to convert awareness and activity into **inclusive and influential participation** within formal water governance.

5. TISZA PILOT SITE (HUNGARY)

Position on the Ladder of Citizen Participation

Initial ambition (Roadmap):

To build citizen engagement around local communities most affected by water scarcity—particularly farmers—by raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and progressively moving from information towards consultation and co-construction of water retention and governance solutions.

Current status: Between information and early consultation, with strong diagnostic and trust-building outcomes achieved.

Citizen engagement in the Tisza pilot site has successfully moved beyond simple information-sharing to sustained dialogue with local communities. While co-decision or co-creation has not yet been reached, the project has generated meaningful consultation at individual and small-group level, particularly with farmers and other locally rooted actors.

Remaining gap:

Engagement has not yet been institutionalised into stable participatory structures capable of influencing decision-making.

Engagement Approaches and Tools

Planned tools and approaches (Roadmap):

- Focus on farmers as key local communities
- Combine workshops, interviews, and surveys
- Use trust-based, small-scale engagement formats
- Diagnose governance and incentive barriers
- Prepare ground for future collective action

Implemented actions and achievements:

Multiple **farmer-focused workshops** in Karcag (2024).

Strategic shift to **one-by-one interviews** during 2024–2025.

Engagement of **local NGOs, anglers, municipal actors, and nature professionals.**

Online survey reaching diverse citizen profiles.

Application of **Water Governance Assessment (WGA)** tool.

Use of **InnWater analytical and micro-simulation tools** with public authorities.

Barriers encountered:

- High expectations for financial compensation among farmers
- Misaligned CAP and water policy incentives
- Weak collective traditions and low institutional trust
- Limited local autonomy in water governance

Indicators and Evidence of Progress

Roadmap intent:

Measure progress through awareness, inclusivity, and readiness for collective action.

Evidence collected:

- **33** webinar participants identified as citizens linked to Tisza
- **~29 interviews**, with ~25% involving citizens speaking in a personal capacity
- Survey responses confirming **high concern about drought and water scarcity**
- Increased openness to water retention when framed as **risk management**
- Strong alignment between qualitative interviews and survey insights

Key Barriers (Confirmed by Practice)

- Economic risk and compensation uncertainty for land-based measures
- Lack of meso-level coordination structures
- Limited engagement of women, Roma communities, and smaller farmers
- Low expectations of impact from participation
- Centralised decision-making limiting local influence

These barriers were anticipated in the Roadmap and are now strongly evidenced.

Lessons Learned

1. **Engagement must reflect livelihood realities.**
   Abstract participation fails where risks are immediate and personal.
2. **Trust precedes collective action.**
   Individual dialogue is essential in low-trust contexts.
3. **Governance failures outweigh technical constraints.**
   Water scarcity is driven primarily by institutional and incentive misalignment.
4. **Voluntary participation alone is insufficient.**
   Supportive policy frameworks and compensation mechanisms are necessary.

Road Ahead – Priority Actions

To advance along the Citizen Engagement Roadmap, the next phase should prioritise:

- Continued **individual and small-group engagement** with farmers
- Targeted inclusion of **underrepresented groups** (women, Roma, subsistence farmers)
- Creation of **formal local participatory spaces** (e.g. local water forums)
- Alignment of **economic incentives** with water retention objectives
- Embedding citizen input into **policy and planning processes**

Overall status:

Roadmap partially achieved, with strong progress on awareness, diagnostics, and trust-building.

Critical next step is institutionalising participation and aligning incentives to enable durable, collective action.

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