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INN WATER

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

Deliverable 5.4:

Pilot Sites Implementation

Final Report

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D2.1	Enhanced Water Governance Assessment Tool	To be used in pilot site communities
D3.2	Citizen Engagement Methodology - Guidelines	To be followed in pilot site communities
D3.3	Methodology for Creation of River Basin Water Forum	To be trialled in pilot site communities
D4.1	Water Governance Diagnostic Tool	To be trialled in pilot site communities
D4.2	Modelling cross-sector interactions	Tested in one or two communities
D4.3	Social-Economic model water demand management	Trialled initially in La Reunion
D5.3	Preliminary Pilot Site Interim Progress Report	Interim KPI data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The InnWater project aims to test and implement innovative water governance strategies across five diverse pilot sites. These sites, selected for their varied spatial and topographical characteristics, serve as living laboratories for developing and evaluating new approaches to water management. These were carried out on five Pilot Sites including:

- **La Reunion:** A mountainous island with a height range (3,031m) and an area of 2,500km².
- **Middle Brenta:** A region characterized by a height range (2,115m) within a 1,700km² area.
- **Figueres:** Encompassing 1,150km² with a height range of 1,208m.
- **Westcountry:** A large coastal zone spanning 21,000km² with a height range (621m).
- **Tisza:** A landlocked lowland area covering 5,500km² with a minimal height range (27m).

The project emphasises a collaborative approach, bringing together a consortium of partners with expertise in thematic and geographic areas. The Pilot Site Committee plays a crucial role in coordinating activities across the sites, ensuring standardization and facilitating knowledge sharing. This collaborative framework is essential for the project's success, as it allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and the development of context-specific solutions.

Pilot sites have worked with 368 unique individuals, 14% were from NGO's 34% from private organisations and 52% from public sectors. Of all 368 participants, 36% were women and 64% men. These percentages vary with the UK being the most even in terms of gender split and with the highest public to community split. Of all representatives 21 were from under-represented groups but Catchment Partnerships in the UK represent a wider array. Individuals represented 199 individual organisations (38 in La Reunion; 77 in La Brenta; 42 in Figueres; 11 in West Country and 31 in Tisza). The lessons learned from Pilot Site Communities are:

1. **Stakeholder engagement is challenging and requires continuous effort:** There are difficulties in involving and retaining certain stakeholders throughout the project, leading to attrition. This highlights the need for ongoing strategies to maintain engagement.
2. **Interactive tools enhance stakeholder understanding:** Using tools like the CGE model with live simulations improves stakeholder engagement and strengthens their understanding of complex issues like the WEFE nexus.
3. **Balancing initial exploration with robust analysis is crucial:** Finding the right balance between initial work and in-depth analysis is essential for ensuring the robustness of results while maintaining progress.
4. **Digital tools have potential but require user support:** Digital tools can enhance skills, but addressing usability issues and providing user support (like through the InnWater platform) is necessary for effective adoption.
5. **Policy impact and tool dissemination need clear communication:** Communicating the impact of project work on public policy and ensuring the dissemination of digital tools to local decision-makers requires clear strategies, such as policy briefs.
6. **Institutional buy-in and communication are key for local implementation:** In the Middle Brenta pilot site, lessons emphasize the importance of starting with institutional buy-in, keeping non-institutional stakeholders informed, and continuously evaluating and improving engagement strategies through communication refinement.

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ACRONYMS

EC	European Commission
GA	General Assembly
PS	Pilot sites
SC	Steering Committee
WP	Work Package



1 PILOT SITE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The InnWater project is a broad consortium of partners covering both thematic and geographic areas of expertise. The Pilot Site Committee pulls together the partners with geographic expertise of the five pilot sites in order to standardize and harmonize activities across the area and allow for replication into other areas. It builds on several initiatives, such as the Catchment Based Approach and Local Water Forums, where community members and stakeholders are brought together to discuss and manage water related issues at a local community scale. This set of guidelines is designed as a working document for all partners to ensure all activities with stakeholders are planned and delivered effectively and efficiently.

1.1 Pilot Site Overview

In order for the InnWater project to test concepts surrounding innovative water governance five Pilot Sites were selected covering a range of spatial areas and topography including:



La Reunion (2,500km² with a height range of 3,031m); **Middle Brenta** (1,700km² with a height range of 2,115m); **Figueres** (1,150km² with a height range of 1,208m). **Westcountry** (21,000km² with a height range of 621m); and **Tisza** (5,500km² with a height range of 27m). These contrasting areas covering large coastal zones and islands with varying ranges in altitude and climate to land locked lowland areas. This allows the InnWater consortium a variety of different solutions and scenarios.

Figure 1: Pilot Site overarching map

1.2 Pilot Site Webinars Overview

In order for the InnWater project to test tools and concepts surrounding innovative water governance, webinars/workshops were set up in the five Pilot Sites over the length of the projects. These webinars covered a range of topics and the details of each are within webinar evidence reports on the Sharepoint server. They were called webinars due to the project application being written during Covid-19 but are a mixture of online webinars and in person workshops. The topics of all 30 as well as the 3 transversal webinars are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Webinar timetable for both 30 local webinars and 3 Transversal European level webinars. These are the key webinars/workshops, but many are a collection of sub-meetings events, recorded on the Sharepoint site folders.

Area	Date	2023	2023/24	2024	2024/25	2025	2025/26
La Reunion	>	1.1 08/06/23 Preliminary	1.2 16/02/24 Review stakeholders	1.3 11/06/24 WP2 Governance	1.4 - 27/06/25 WP4 CGE	1.5 - 26/09/25 WP2 Youth voice	1.6 - 30/01/26 Conclusion and future
Middle Brenta		2.1 19/09/23 Inception	2.2 20/06/24 Local Ambitions	2.3 17/09/24 Better Communication	2.4 28/03/2025 WP2 Governance	2.5 19/06/2025 Needs from WP3/ WP4 chat tool	2.6 16/12/25 Needs from WP3/ WP4 chat tool
Figueres		3.1 17/11/23 Inception	3.2 14/06/24 Water Management	3.3 12/12/24 Politicians	3.4 14/02/2025 Politicians Creation of a Water Users Community	3.5 - 12/06/2025 Farmers Water users (& another seminar for public)	3.6 - 08/10/25 & 25/11/25 WP2 Governance Conclusion and future
Westcountry		4.1 25/09/23 Inception/CSI	4.2 23/04/24 Automatic data analysis	4.3 25/10/24 WP2 Governance	4.4 28/02/25 Automated 3rd party data	4.5 - Summer 25 Several community summer events	4.6 - 12/12/26 River Basin Water Forum - WP4
Tisza		5.1 15/11/23 Inception	5.2 13/02/24 Live meeting with farmers	5.3 21/11/24 Agri Review information	5.4 18/12/24 Farmers Follow up	5.5 - 29/10/25 WP2 Governance	5.6 - 27/11/25 Conclusion and future
Transversal			T1 23/11/23 Introduction		T2 02/12/24 Progress		T3 20/01/2026 Present Platform

1.3 Pilot Site Physical Water Accounts

Alongside the webinars each Pilot Site worked to create a Physical Water Account (PWA) where data were obtained for water flows at each Pilot site level. Data was collected via: direct basin-level data, approximated regions, or administrative datasets. For the river basins Middle Brenta and Middle Tisza, the river basin authority provided data at basin scale. For the Westcountry and Seine-Aval (replication site), approximative or representative regions were defined. For Corsica (replication site) and La Réunion, PWA data were compiled at the administrative NUTS2 level. For the pilot site Figueres, collecting PWA data would have been too costly, and therefore no data collection was carried out. Brenta successfully collected data for groundwater PWA at the very end of the project and is collecting for surface waters. Still, the timing was too short to use them for the PWA report. The comparison of the five available PWAs shows substantial variation in total water availability, the balance between groundwater and surface water, and sectoral water use. Across the sites, irrigation and piped water production account for the largest shares of water use, while industrial demand varies according to local economic structures.

The PWA data thus provide key insights into the basic patterns of raw water extraction and usage. The five PWAs are presented in the paper “*Physical Water Accounts for WEFE nexus CGE models*,”¹ which also describes the context PWA and water-focused CGE models.

1.4 Pilot Site barriers to inclusion of underrepresented groups

Alongside the quality review of Pilot Site webinars and Pilot Site Communities presented in Section 2, each pilot site conducted a bespoke assessment of barriers to the inclusion of underrepresented groups. This assessment builds directly on the citizen engagement analysis developed in *D3.3 InnWater Citizen Engagement Methodology – A practical guidance tool and analysis framework for creating RBWF #V2* and focuses specifically on identifying structural, social, and institutional factors that limit participation by citizens who are typically distant from formal water governance processes. Rather than treating underrepresentation as a uniform condition, the analysis recognises that barriers are highly context-specific and shaped by local socio-economic conditions, governance cultures, and existing engagement practices.

Across all pilot sites, a first common barrier relates to distance from formal governance arenas. Underrepresented groups—including young people, elderly residents, small municipalities, subsistence farmers, precarious workers, and socially marginalised communities—were often unfamiliar with water governance structures or perceived them as highly technical, institutional, or inaccessible. This distance was reinforced by limited feedback mechanisms, which reduced the visibility of how citizen inputs were used and weakened incentives for sustained participation. In several pilot sites, citizens expressed scepticism about the tangible influence of engagement activities, particularly where participation remained disconnected from decision-making or policy processes.

A second recurring barrier concerns time, capacity, and confidence constraints. Many underrepresented citizens faced practical obstacles such as irregular working hours, care responsibilities, mobility limitations, or lack of digital access, which restricted their ability to engage through standard formats such as online webinars or formal meetings. These constraints were particularly evident in rural and peripheral contexts, as well as among elderly populations and small-scale farmers. Beyond material constraints, limited confidence and perceived lack of expertise also discouraged participation, especially in settings dominated by technical or professional actors.

Third, the assessments highlighted institutional and organisational barriers. In some pilot sites, engagement was primarily channelled through existing stakeholder organisations, inadvertently excluding citizens who were not affiliated with recognised associations or representative bodies. This reinforced participation biases in favour of organised interests and reduced opportunities for more diverse citizen voices to emerge.

¹ https://www.innwater.eu/sites/default/files/delivrables/pape2025_PWA_20251204_for_publ.pdf

Institutional fragmentation and unclear allocation of responsibilities further complicated engagement, as citizens often lacked clear entry points or did not know which authority or forum was relevant for their concerns.

Finally, format and methodology choices played a critical role in shaping inclusion outcomes. The assessments consistently showed that purely digital, large-scale, or formal consultation formats were less effective in reaching underrepresented groups. In contrast, targeted and locally embedded approaches—such as face-to-face interviews, street surveys, neighbourhood workshops, and collaboration with trusted intermediaries—proved more successful in lowering participation thresholds and fostering trust. Where such approaches were adopted, engagement benefited from greater depth, improved mutual understanding, and more context-sensitive insights.

Overall, the pilot site assessments confirm the findings of D3.3 that barriers to inclusion are predominantly structural rather than motivational. Lack of participation rarely reflected disinterest; instead, it resulted from misalignment between engagement design and citizens' lived realities. These insights underline the importance of adaptive, differentiated engagement strategies and inform the recommendations in later sections of D5.4, particularly regarding the need to integrate inclusion considerations systematically into the design of future citizen engagement processes.

2 PILOT SITE 1 - LA REUNION (FRANCE)

2.1 Pilot Site Community

At the start of the project the La Reunion Pilot Site Community working group is made up of fourteen people representing 10 organisations and institutions involved in the WEF nexus, including the integrated management of freshwater resources.

On the water resources side, the head of the Water Policy Unit at DEAL Réunion (which is a decentralised government department working in conjunction with the French Ministry of the Environment), the project manager for the DOM Water Plan (which supports local authorities in the overseas territories in improving the drinking water and sanitation services provided to their users), two members of the local water agency (Office de l'Eau de la Réunion) working in the Support for Public Water Services department, two members of the Departmental Council which is responsible for managing irrigation water and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the Head of the Strategy and Performance Department of the Regional Health Agency (which is responsible for monitoring the sanitary quality of tap water), now in charge of the "Ecological Transition and One Health" Plan.

The working group also includes members of the business community, with the participation of the Chamber of Agriculture (2 people, including the head of the Irrigation unit), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Head of Foresight, Economic and Fiscal Affairs), the Regional Energy Agency (Head of the Territorial Strategy Department), and the local representative of an international research and cooperation organisation ("French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development") with specific expertise in food Sociology.

The Citizen section was mobilised with the participation of a deputy MP, who is also very committed to the implementation of the Right to Water, and of an association that is also active on this issue (and on social and environmental justice more generally). Finally, it should be noted that the Regional Council of Réunion is monitoring the project (at the invitation of the Regional Councillor responsible for Research and Energy) but is not actively participating (given that (i) several departments of the Regional Council are monitoring water issues and (ii) management of EAFRD will be transferred in the near future (2030) to Regional Council of Reunion Island)

This group was set up at the start of the project on a collaborative basis, with the support of the DEAL and the Office de l'Eau de La Réunion, with whom the members of the Réunion team had already worked in the past as part of previous research projects.

The information provided above relates solely to the working group that was set up and meets on an ongoing basis throughout the implementation of the project. In a broader sense, the community also includes other stakeholders and citizens who may have been affected by actions implemented as part of the project or related to the project. This includes in particular: (i) the participants (around fifty) in the EU Green Week Partner Event, organised in conjunction with the second InnWater Consortium AGM held in Réunion in June 2024, (ii) students from the University of Réunion (around 20) who took part in a Serious Game-type activity with members of the WG, organised as part of the InnWater Summer School in September 2025, (iii) all the inter-municipal authorities on Réunion Island that are currently responsible for managing the service, with a demonstration of the micro-simulation model developed as part of the InnWater

project during a technical day dedicated to the pricing of public drinking water and sanitation services; and (iv) scientists during preparatory meetings for the implementation of the Discrete Choice Experiment, conducted as part of the project in Reunion Island, which aims to gather information on households' willingness to pay for environmental improvements related to the protection of coral reefs.

The evolution of the working group during the project Firstly, it must be noted that the Working Group experienced a certain amount of attrition, with two members becoming much less active over time. The reasons for this should be investigated. At the same time, the WG has also seen a number of new members join, including (i) Prodig (an association created by public authorities) specialising in public policies for young people, (ii) La Réserve Naturelle Marine de La Réunion (Reunion Island's Natural Marine Reserve), and (iii) an additional department of DEAL Réunion (with the referent person for the land-sea continuum). These new members are directly linked to the implementation of the project with (i) the actions to induce Young Citizens Engagement actions were decided upon following the workshop led by the International Office for Water (June 2024), and (ii) the choice of the issue of coral reef protection, which is one of the two working themes selected by the members of the WG. Finally, it should be noted that the WG was able to welcome some ad hoc participants, in particular (i) two departments of the French Ministry of the Environment (the Office of Biodiversity and Resources and the General Commission for Sustainable Development) and (ii) around twenty young citizens (the two Young Citizens Engagement workshops were directly integrated into meetings 9 and 10 of the WG).

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Working Group:

Strengths

- The group includes most of the stakeholders involved in the local WEFE nexus.
- It now has a dedicated tool (which is considered necessary), the InnWater -- La Réunion General Equilibrium Model, which enables it to evaluate public policies relating to the WEFE nexus.
- It has a set of results (simulations, cost-benefit analyses) that now need to be presented (collectively) to the governing bodies (the Local Water and Biodiversity Committee in particular)
- It is up to date with academic methodologies and knowledge in the field of water economics that are useful for resource management
- The commitment of most of its members (who can be considered to have been heavily involved) is strong.

Weaknesses

- Some stakeholders involved in the local WEFE nexus are missing
- The participation of some WG members is not continuous and needs to be supported.
- The use of the CGE Model by the members of the InnWater La Réunion WG (and the institutions they represent) is not yet autonomous.

2.2 Future Sustainability of the Community

The future of the Working Group is assured in the medium term through participation in the PPR Outremer (Overseas Priority Research Programme), with a project that will consist of replicating, with adaptations, the Réunion component of the InnWater project on the issue of the agricultural sector and its future in Réunion.

The Overseas PPR is a multi-year French programme focusing on environmental issues specific to overseas territories. This programme is led by the Research Institute for Development, is oriented towards 'co-constructed local solutions' and aims to promote a culture of impact. Regarding Reunion Island in particular, the focus is on the issue of agricultural pollution, primarily in the context of climate change. In this context, the InnWater-Réunion team has proposed a project based on the working methodology, tools and feedback from the InnWater project.

The latter essentially consists of: (i) continuing the development of the InnWater-La Réunion CGE model with a more detailed modelling of the agricultural sector; (ii) creating and leading a working group of local stakeholders on various topics related to the agricultural sector in Réunion, applying the methodology developed as part of the InnWater project (which includes using the aforementioned CGE model to inform collective decision-making on the economic impacts of the public policies to be considered by the working group); (iii) implementing a number of Citizen Engagement actions (to be defined with the involved stakeholders) in connection with the WG's work to support its social acceptability.

The challenge for the team will then be to maintain the 'WEFE nexus' character of the WG and, where appropriate, to introduce the dimension of Health (in addition to food autonomy, the issue of food quality has particularly strong public health implications on Reunion Island). This latter point echoes another project for which the InnWater-La Réunion team has also been approached.

More generally, it is through this approach, which consists of integrating the use of economic tools developed as part of the InnWater project into new projects, where appropriate, that it is aimed to establish permanent working groups within a community of users. As these tools are intended for the evaluation of public policies, one is inclined to think that opportunities to do so will arise on a regular basis.

2.3 Webinar/Workshop Achievement and use of InnWater Tools

Background - The main objective of the Reunion Island project is to support the co-construction of public policies in the field of water resource management and the WEFE nexus by providing the members of the working group with tools, commonly used in the field of economics, enabling public policy assessments to be carried out for diagnostic and simulation purposes. The latter refer to (i) a computable general equilibrium model centred on the WEFE nexus, and (ii) a micro-simulation model for measuring the socio-economic performance of water pricing policies for domestic uses that are implemented in Reunion Island. The two tools can be combined to supplement cross-sector analyses by a focus on the domestic sector (and the group of Households initially assumed to be homogeneous in the CGE model).

Given the time required to produce these tools, the first part of the project consisted, on the one hand, in presenting to the members of the WG a CGE model developed as part of the French OMEGA project, financially supported by the French Ministry for Overseas, on which the InnWater-La Réunion CGE model capitalises (the OMEGA-La Réunion CGE model does not include the modelling of the WEFE nexus), in order to make them aware of the economic methodology underlying the production of the tool, on the other hand, in initiating a process of co-construction with the establishment of a diagnosis of the local governance of water resources, a collective reflection on the type of citizen engagement actions that could be undertaken for supporting the reflections of the WG and the selection of the issues on which the WG is intended to work (making use of the CGE model developed as part of the project). This work, which essentially constituted the first stage of the local project, was successfully completed for each of these items.

In a second stage, the WG then embarked on a joint effort focusing on the following two themes: intersectoral resource sharing (sessions 6, 7 and 10) and coral reef protection (sessions 7, 9 and 10). For scheduling reasons, it was also decided to involve young people in the WG's work on theme 2 only, with the support of the Prodij Association.

Use of InnWater tools - The working methodologies developed as part of the project were successfully implemented with the support of Consortium members involved in WP2 ('Water governance for sustainability and resilience') and WP3 (Quintuple helix trust & engagement). The InnWater La Réunion MEGC (T4.2) was used throughout the project to produce simulations and feed into the local WG's discussions. The Micro-Simulation Model (T4.3) was used directly by WG members as part of a serious game, in interaction with the InnWater Summer School, to build their skills on the issue of the proper calibration of progressive pricing (of the social incentive type) that are applied throughout the island. The digital tool for assessing governance (T4.1) was not used as such by the WG members, as it was not available at the time of the diagnosis (which was carried out in the traditional manner in June 2024, following the second General Assembly, with semi-structured interviews conducted by EUI).

Details - The WG's schedule consists of 11 meetings

June 2023 (Meeting 0): This initial meeting allowed the setting of the working group (and the related work calendar) with DEAL Réunion, Office de l'Eau de La Réunion and the research team from the University of Rouen Normandie (in charge of developing the CGE Model InnWater-La Réunion).

February 2024 (Meeting 1): This meeting included a detailed presentation of the InnWater project and its Réunion part (named as the InnWater-La Réunion project) as well as presentation and approval of the work schedule, enlargement of the WG (identification of missing stakeholders) and presentation of the Contingent Evaluation action. The latter aimed to feed the Environment block of the WEFE nexus (with the integration of information on households' willingness to pay for environmental improvements) around which the InnWater-La Réunion CGE Model will be built.

April 2024 - Local Challenges 1/3 (Meeting 2): Collective work on identifying the issues on which the WG intends to work, using (as far as possible) the InnWater - La Réunion CGE Model. This work was based on the answers to 2 questions sent to stakeholders by email:

Q1 From the point of view of your sector of activity, what are the main difficulties (maximum 3) linked to the management of water resources that you are currently facing/experiencing or that you anticipate for the future?

Q2 At the level of the system (which organises the local management of water resources), what are in your opinion the main obstacles (maximum 3) that need to be overcome in order to achieve better governance of water policies and/or the WEFE nexus?

From the above the group runs the construction of an information wall on question Q1, making use of the KJ method (with a speaking time of 8 minutes for each participant to present their answers), for depicting and identifying the major thematic issues. The responses to question Q2 were used during the following session to inform the diagnosis of local governance, as part of a dedicated session led by EUI.

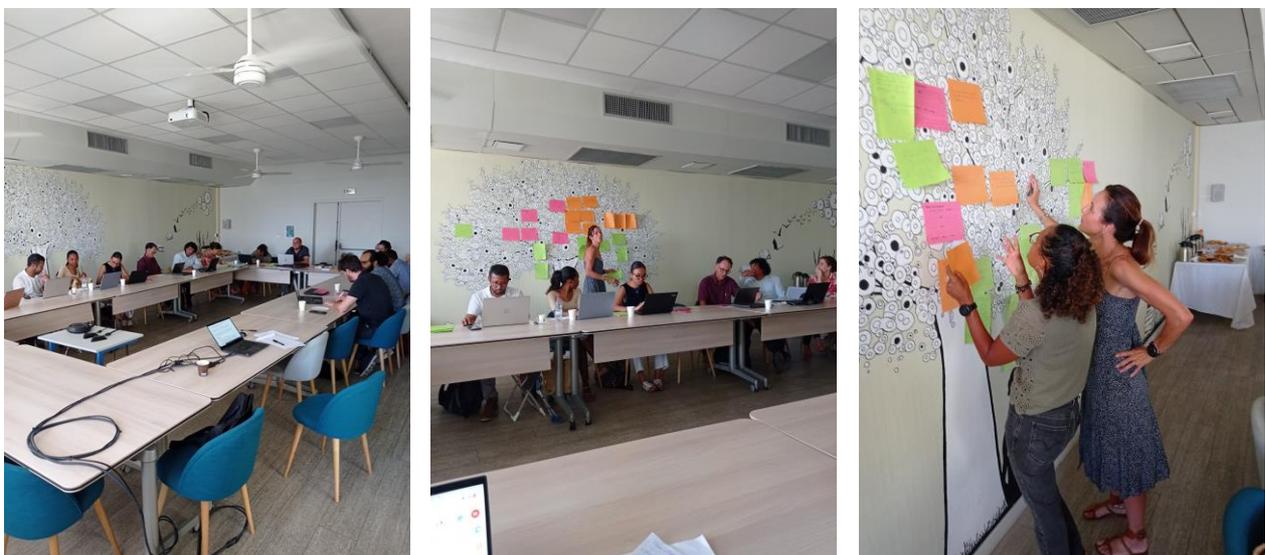


Figure 2: Photos of Stakeholder workshops looking at water governance from Sequence of the session

June 2024 - Local Challenges 2/3 (Meeting 3): A mixed session run by the InnWater partners including: (i) Evaluation of Governance, with a morning session led by Maria Salvetti (EUI) based on a questionnaire; (ii) Citizen Engagement Workshop, with a afternoon session led by Natacha Amorsi and Julie Magnier (International Office for Water) based on an interactive workshop and the Citizen Engagement Framework developed by EURECAT and SIWI.

September 2024 - Economic digital tools 1/3 (Meeting 4): This session was devoted as first to the presentation of the OMEGA-La Réunion CGE Model which is an economic digital tool that describes the functioning of the local economy at the intersectoral level. This tool, which has been developed as part of a project led by the French Ministry for Overseas, is used for evaluation of public policies through some simulation exercises (such as, for instance, the specific reduction of charges on low-wage earners). The aim here was: (i) to present what a CGE model is (based on the presentation of the OMEGA-La Réunion CGE model); (ii) to answer questions from members of the WG, notably on the way the InnWater-La Réunion CGE model will be derived from it; (iii) to run live simulations for demonstration purposes (at the request of stakeholders, the scenario was that of VAT aligned with that in Mainland France, at 20%, for all sectors). The second part of the meeting focused on continuing discussions regarding (i) the selection of issues on which the

WG intended to work (using the MEGC) and (ii) the content of the Citizen Engagement actions to be undertaken for supporting the work of the WG.

January 2025 - Economic digital tools 2/3 (Meeting 5): This working meeting was organised around two key moments. The first was the presentation of the InnWater-La Réunion CGE Model (by the University of Rouen), which models the interconnections between water, energy, food and ecosystems in Réunion. This tool, built using the social accounting matrix produced as part of the OMEGA project, breaks down energy production and water production (processed water, raw water, primary water). For demonstration purposes, the results of a simulation on the impacts of an increase in energy prices on the local economy (GDP, general price level, employment, agricultural sector income, etc.) and pollutant emissions were presented. The second part of the meeting in Réunion consisted of finalising the selection of working themes for the WG. The choice was made (unanimously) on: (i) the public policies to be implemented to protect coral reefs (which are directly impacted by pollution linked to domestic uses of drinking water); (ii) the intersectoral sharing of water resources (particularly during periods of drought with the impact of restrictions on use).

April 2025 - Simulation 1/3 (Meeting 6): This meeting was divided into three main parts: (i) the presentation of simulations, carried out using the InnWater-La Réunion CGE Model, relating to the impacts on the local economy of a reduction in available water resources, in connection with the effects of climate change, excluding accompanying measures; (ii) a discussion on the public policy measures that may be deployed and tested using the CGE Model, in light of these initial results; (iii) the presentation and testing by WG members of a questionnaire on households' willingness to pay for environmental improvements related to the protection of coral reefs.

June 2025 - Simulation 2/3 (Meeting 7): The meeting focused on two items. The first consisted of the presentation and discussion of simulations, produced by the InnWater-La Réunion CGE model, relating to the impacts on the local economy (and pollutant emissions) of different scenarios for intersectoral resource sharing, in a context of a 10% decline in available resources. The second item concerned the second issue selected by the WG, namely the protection of coral reefs. It consisted of the presentation of cost-benefit analyses of various investment projects in domestic wastewater management combining different technical options (connection to collective sanitation, replacement of non-compliant individual systems, Phyto purification, installation of micro-stations) for the western area of Reunion Island. These analyses used data from a large-scale survey (764 respondents, including 541 residents and 223 tourists) carried out (in accordance with best practice) by Applied Economics students at the University of Réunion as part of a promotion project.

September 2025 Economic digital tools 3/3 (Meeting 8): This working meeting focused on the issue of water pricing (in accordance with the initial work plan) and was organised in conjunction with the InnWater Summer School. It began with an online presentation of the recent working paper (June 2025) entitled "Le prix de l'eau : état des lieux et perspectives pour une gestion durable de la ressource" ("Water pricing: current situation and prospects for sustainable resource management") by its two authors, as part of their ongoing functions at the French Ministry of the Environment. This presentation, which focused on the price of domestic water and also the price of irrigation water, was followed by a discussion with the members of the WG on, in particular, the need for accompanying measures to ensure the social acceptability of reforms in water

pricing, the specific characteristics of Réunion Island, and recent regulatory developments in the area of pollution charges. The workshop then continued with computer room activities with: (i) a trial-run of the InnWater Pricing Tool, which assess the socio-economic performance of a dedicated drinking water and domestic wastewater pricing policy on various points related to the EU-WFD (including affordability, incentive effect and cost recovery); (ii) the organisation of a serious game involving 12 trios made up of a stakeholder, a student (from the M2 Applied Economics programme at the University of Reunion Island) and an academic. The exercise (which used the aforementioned micro-simulation model) asked participants to calibrate an Increasing Block Tariff in line with the objectives set by the French National Water Plan (announced by President Macron in March 2023). Finally, part of the meeting was also devoted to the presentation and validation by the WG members of the Young Citizen Engagement actions deployed as part of the project, with the support of the Prodig association.

November 2025 Local Challenges 3/3 (Meeting 9): This WG meeting was part of a Young Citizen Engagement action, with a half-day of joint planning on public policies to be implemented for the protection of coral reefs in Reunion Island. The session brought together WG members and a group of 10 young people registered with the "Mission Locale Sud" (local missions are public employment service structures; which offer a number of services specifically aimed at young people (under 25) experiencing difficulties in integrating into society (employment, training, housing, health, access to culture and leisure activities)). It resulted in a set of 10 concrete proposals (neighbourhood composting, data collection on individual sanitation systems (and awareness-raising), capping tourist numbers, green bonuses for businesses and households, development of zero-interest loans to encourage compliance with connection requirements, etc.), some of which will be tested using the MEGC InnWater-La Réunion. It should be noted that the group of young people had previously attended a full one-day session, led by Prodig and the University of Réunion Island, aimed at introducing them to water-related issues, providing them with basic knowledge about water pollution and its impact on Réunion's coral reefs, and raising collective awareness about the protection of coral reefs.

January 2026 Local Challenges 3/3 (Meeting 10): This WG meeting is part of a new Young Citizens Engagement action, but now with a young audience from the northern micro-region of Réunion Island (to address regional balance) and a slightly different host structure with a socio-cultural centre, the Académie des Camélias, which promotes citizen projects to develop initiatives in the Camélias district of the city of Saint-Denis. In doing so, it follows the recommendations of local experts gathered during interviews and included in the Road Map provided by WP3 for the Reunion Island study site.

Remark A project completion meeting is scheduled for the first half of 2026. The aim of this meeting is, of course, to take stock of the InnWater-La Réunion project, but also to ensure the continuity of actions (and the sustainability of tools) by linking them to new projects in which the CEMOI team is likely to be involved (starting with those mentioned in 2.2).

2.4 Lessons learned

The first relates to the difficulty of involving certain stakeholders both at the start of the project and throughout. As a result, the local WG has experienced a certain amount of attrition, for which no obvious solution has emerged so far. Furthermore, when setting the WG, it is to keep in mind (i) that the latter will inevitably experience some departures (related to career changes, departmental transfers etc.) and (ii) it matters to schedule, from the outset of the project, the entry of new members. It is here to maintain the participation of relevant institutions acting in the WEFÉ nexus, but also to strengthen the competence of the WG with the participation of new members in connection with the topics and actions that has been selected by the WG during the diagnosis phase.

The second point concerns the use of the CGE model to inform the WG members' discussions on the content of public policies to be implemented for effective management of the WEFÉ nexus. Despite its limitations, the use of the tool for assessment and simulation purposes helps to strengthen stakeholder engagement. According to the participants themselves, it fills a gap (the need for tools to carry out ex ante assessments of public policies) and, by providing a number of quantified elements, helps to objectify a framework within which it then becomes possible to plan ahead.

The last point concerns the impact of the current work of the InnWater - Réunion working group (on the content of public policies that are actually implemented in Réunion Island), an issue which was raised by some members of the WG themselves with the presentation of some simulations produced by the CGE model. To this end, the members of the WG proposed to draft policy briefs reporting on the group's work and highlighting the added value of the tools used in the InnWater-La Réunion project. These policy briefs could be included, from the project design stage, as project outputs. In the same vein, some members of the WG also proposed organising specific workshops within their institutions to disseminate certain project results and present the digital tools. An initiative along these lines (focusing more specifically on water prices) was launched, and it proves that the digital tools (and the related methodologies on which they are based) may be met with a certain degree of caution by some stakeholders not related to the WG.

3 PILOT SITE 2 - BRENTA (ITALY)

3.1 Pilot Site Community

The pilot site community was identified and defined within WP5 activity. Many stakeholders have been mapped during the implementation of the deliverable “D5.2 – Final pilot sites implementation guidelines”, other were added during the project; the map covers a range of subjects which differ in organisation type, role, size and geographic proximity to the Middle Brenta river (see Table 2).

Table 2: Table of Middle Brenta stakeholders by organisation name, role and state of engagement. Those who were involved during the project are shown in bold.

Level	Organisation Name	Type / Role	State of engagement
Regional level	Veneto Region – U.O. Struttura regionale Parchi e biodiversità	Regional government – biodiversity department	They participated in numerous meetings organised by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project and collaborated with the partners to improve the governance of the Natura 2000 site
	Veneto Acque	In-house company of the Veneto Region for the design and construction of the Structural Model of the Veneto Aqueducts (MoSAV)	LIFE Brenta 2030 partner
	Veneto Agricoltura	Regional agency for agriculture and forests	LIFE Brenta 2030 partner
	U.O. Genio Civile (Vicenza, Padova)	Civil Engineers: a regional office which operates on a provincial basis with hydraulic and water police functions	They authorised the conservation interventions promoted by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project
	U.O. Servizi Forestali	Regional office which operates on a provincial basis with forest conservation functions	They authorised the conservation interventions promoted by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project; they first requested and then accepted inputs from the LIFE partnership on how to better manage forest ecotonal habitats along the Brenta river
	Viveracqua	Regional consortium of the water utilities	Invited to the final conference of the LIFE Brenta 2030 project
Catchment level	Consiglio di Bacino Brenta (CBB)	Drinking water management authority	InnWater partner (pilote site leader); LIFE Brenta 2030 partner
	ETRA	Water and waste utility	LIFE Brenta 2030 coordinator; ETRA is the in-house company of the CBB
	Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale delle Alpi Orientale	River basin management authority	They authorised the conservation interventions promoted by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project
Local Level	Consorzio di Bonifica Brenta, Consorzio di Bonifica Acque Risorgive	Irrigation Boards	They were involved in some lobby meetings of the LIFE project; they authorised the conservation interventions promoted by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project
	Comuni di Bassano del Grappa, Nove, Cartigliano, Tezze sul Brenta, Pozzoleone, Cittadella, Carmignano di Brenta, Fontaniva,	Local municipalities	LIFE Brenta 2030 cofinancers; they were involved in the governance process of the project, where a shared vision was reached and a governance model for the Natura 2000 site defined

	Grantorto, Piazzola sul Brenta, Campo San Martino, San Giorgio in Bosco, Curtarolo, Limena, Vigodarzere		
	University of Padova	Research institution	LIFE Brenta 2030 partner
	Coldiretti	Farmer association	They gave external support in some action promoted within the LIFE project (farmers involvement)
	CIA	Farmer association	They participated in some meetings / workshops of the LIFE project
	Cooperativa sociale Jonathan	Socio-environmental cooperative	They supported the LIFE project by activating side projects
	Legambiente Acqua Bene Comune User Advisory Committee (CBB) CIRF CAI	Environmental associations	Mapped and engaged as a local stakeholder during the LIFE project
	La Sorgente	Fishermen association: they often work as a “river eye” monitoring the quantity and the quality of water, and the conservation state of the aquatic ecosystems	They were involved in designing a side project on fish restocking
	Bacino Acque Fiume Brenta APSEAS	Other fishermen association	None
	Jole Film	Communication agency	None
		Landowners	Involved those interested by the conservation interventions of the LIFE project
		Farmers	Involved those interested by the conservation interventions of the LIFE project and those operating inside the water safeguard areas
	Ramboll Bioprogramm Sinergeo	Private enterprises	Some local enterprises decided to cofinance the LIFE project
		Drinking water users	A monitoring questionnaire was addressed to that target groups during the LIFE experience to investigate the ERCs perception
		Recreational users	They were the target of many communication actions and events
Other subjects involved (not part of the community)	Acque del Chiampo Acque Veronesi Piave Servizi Veritas Alto TREVIGIANO Servizi	Water utilities of a nearby basins	None
	ADBPO	RBMA of the Po river basin	None
	OdG Veneto Corriere della Sera	Journalists	None

It is important to underline that InnWater didn't start from zero, instead it built on an existing governance and engagement action carried out within the LIFE Brenta 2030 experience. Moreover, the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta (drinking water Board, in charge of the planification of the service in the basin area) by its very nature provides for a User Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the environmental associations and local groups, with which it meets periodically to share news and collecting feedback.

Despite a real "community" for now only exists on the paper, InnWater was the right opportunity to engage with new stakeholders and to strength the interaction with others; this happened through online webinars and in-person workshops promoted within the project. The following Table 3 summarises strengths and weakness of the Middle Brenta pilot site community.

Table 3: Strengths and weakness of the pilot site community group at the end of the InnWater project.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation of technical and non-technical stakeholders, particularly during the in-person workshops, helped in creating a "communication bridge", filling knowledge gaps and improving trust and transparency • The test of new communication techniques such as theatre worked well and can be replied • The water utility now has a communication and awareness tool addressing the water users (citizens) • Under representative groups were involved across the project (eg. Jonathan Cooperativa Sociale) • The role of the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta has now been cleared, also in relation to the new functions of Natura 2000 management authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not properly a real "community", but a series of subjects who have been involved during the project: webinars and events promoted didn't see a periodic participation of the same stakeholders group • Despite invited, farmers associations didn't join the participatory meetings (all the other stakeholders listed in Table 2 participated at least in one of them)

Future Sustainability of the Community

At the beginning of the project, the local ambitions and challenges regarding the Middle Brenta pilot site in order to ensure the sustainability of the actions undertaken were defined as follows:

- **GOVERNANCE:** To improve the local governance system, by the implementation of an identified and shared model, and the creation of a Local Steering Committee within the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta, representing the 15 local municipalities, for the integrated management of water (water protection areas) and biodiversity (Natura 2000 site). This result was achieved on 22nd December 2025 with the Resolution of Assembly of the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta no. 13 titled "Appointment of the steering committee Natura 2000 site IT3260018"².
- **COMMUNICATION:** Together with the local water utility, to provide a better communication to the water users about the tariff and the Environmental and Resource

² <https://www.consigliobacinobrenta.it/zf/index.php/atti-amministrativi/delibere/dettaglio/atto/G1WpjNETBPT0-A/provvedimenti/1/categoria/113>

Costs (ERCs, already applied in the drinking water tariff to support the integrated management) in particular. This result was achieved during 2025 with the creation of an online platform dedicated to the water users, published on the website of the local water utility³.

- **REPLICATION:** To explore the possibilities to implement ERCs in other water services (e.g., irrigation). This result was achieved only in a marginal way, by involving the Irrigation Board (Conorzio di Bonifica Brenta) in the discussion of the PS community and facing innovative topics including the ERC costs. On this specific objective, more has been done at national scale within the transferability and replication actions of InnWater, where the Po River Basin Authority was involved and committed to work on circular economy and environmental taxation of the water services.

Of course, the ambition described above were meant to also support the future sustainability of the PS community. Coming close to the project end some considerations can be done:

- The pilot site community of the Middle Brenta area was a very useful exercise for the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta, who increased its awareness on the importance of engaging with stakeholders (also the under-representative ones like environmental associations etc); at the same time, local stakeholders, particularly the non-technical ones (e.g., civil society organisations), felt more included and considered by the decision-makers, or at least this was the impression the project partners have at the end of the InnWater experience.
- Despite the pilot site community didn't present during the project lifetime the characteristics of a River Basin Forum (as mentioned above, a consolidated group of stakeholders was lacking, but the engagement events involved different stakeholder groups depending on the topics covered) a Steering Committee was formed at institutional level deputed to the integrated management of water and biodiversity, so it will be the space where to open the doors to the territory, welcoming again the stakeholders who took part in the project events.

3.2 Webinar/Workshop Achievement and use of InnWater Tools

As mentioned, given the project had multiple local ambitions for the Middle Brenta pilot site, during the project we experienced some complications in moving from theory to practice: in particular, involving all the stakeholders at the same time was difficult considering the different topics covered. Despite several meetings with the regional stakeholders, not included in the project activity, and the relevance of those entities for the water governance, in relation to the specific challenges of InnWater we preferred to primary engage with the local ones (welcoming recommendations of the WP3 activity for our pilot site).

³ <https://etra.etifor.net/>

As of February 2026, all the 6 webinars have been conducted. A summary of the three webinars is provided by the following Table 4.

Table 4: Table of Middle Brenta webinars conducted within WP5 (as of February 2026).

Title/topic and date of the webinar	Participants	Contents
Presentation of the project to the local municipalities (online meeting) - 19/09/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consiglio di Bacino Brenta Etifor 9 local municipalities (out of 15) interested by the Natura 2000 site of the Middle Brenta river Cooperativa Jonathan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General update on the “Parco Fiume Brenta” initiative. Governance recent results and update. New projects: InnWater among others. Collection of feedback and environmental issues from the municipalities.
Presentation of the project ambitions and discussion with the water utility on how to improve the ERC communication (online meeting) - 20/06/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Etifor ETRA (local drinking water utility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> InnWater presentation. Agreement on the collaboration Etra – InnWater to develop a digital tool to improve communication to the drinking water users. Definition of a workplan.
Preliminary meeting for the creation of a local Steering Committee (online meeting) - 17/09/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consiglio di Bacino Brenta Etifor 12 local municipalities (out of 15) interested by the Natura 2000 site of the Middle Brenta river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation of a Steering Committee within Consiglio di Bacino Brenta for the integrated management functions (water and biodiversity): recap and next steps. Presentation of the Committee regulation draft (to be voted in the next Assembly) Collection of feedback (very positive in general). Invitation to a webinar delivered within the LIFE Brenta 2030 project focusing on results of the action on the enhancement of local governance system, presenting the new model defined, shared and implemented.
Brenta Basin Water Service: Perspectives and Reflections with Stakeholders (in-person workshop) - 28/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consiglio di Bacino Brenta Etifor REKK University of Padova ETRA (water utility) Public entities: 1 municipality, RBMA, Regional water agency) Privates: Ramboll, Bioprogramm 5 civil society organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the InnWater project, objectives of the workshop and results of the application of the water governance assessment tool for the Middle Brenta River Basin. Participatory activity: through various modalities participants were asked to reflect on the 16 principles of the tool by highlighting strengths, weakness (governance gaps), and possible solutions to fill those gaps.
Atlas of the Shores (2 days in-person artistic workshop) - 19-20/06/2025	Scientists, technicians, artists, and journalists (110 in total).	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>Frontal sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodological Session. The Purpose of the Atlas of the Shores. First Session: Our history with water – a centuries-long relationship. Second Session: How it works – from sky to sea. <p>Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theatrical simulation workshops led by artists with technicians and scientists. (in parallel) Specific technical workshop for journalists only. What is being done and who does it: defense works and emergency response. Analysis of some open questions, with an operational approach.

		<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Frontal sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Session: Crisis along the shores – floods and droughts. • Second Session: Managing water resources under anthropic pressure – water quantity and quality. <p>Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatrical simulation workshops led by artists with technicians and scientists. • (in parallel) Specific technical workshop for journalists only. What is being done and who does it: defense works and emergency response. Analysis of some open questions, with an operational approach. <p>Output/ outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and dissemination of an initial water dictionary with experts invited to the workshop. • Filming of the workshop days for the dissemination and promotion of the activities promoted by the Consiglio di Bacino Brenta. • Creation of a space for interdisciplinary dialogue that brings together technicians, scientists, and artists. • Development of workshops for journalists to communicate a language dedicated to water management. • Development of theatrical work methodologies adapted to water issues: river contracts, discussion of drought and flood phenomena, water resource management (quantity and quality), etc. • Strengthening relationships with local stakeholders.
<p>Participatory planning of water, biodiversity and recreational aspects (in-person workshop) - 16/12/2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consiglio di Bacino Brenta • Etifor • ETRA (water utility) • Public entities: 13 municipalities, Veneto Region, Irrigation Board • 6 civil society organisations • Privates: Bioprogramm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of InnWater project and objectives of the workshop. • Presentation of MAP-Brenta project results concerning biodiversity monitoring. • Creation of 3 thematic breakout rooms (water, biodiversity, recreational aspects) and participatory activity to highlight management priorities and possible solutions. • Output: creation of a participatory management mandate to be delivered to the new Steering Committee for the integrated management of water and biodiversity in the Middle Brenta area.

The second half of the project saw a different approach in delivering PS community webinars, from online meetings to in-person ones, and this aspect facilitated the engagement and the interaction with many stakeholders. In particular:

- The engagement with civil society stakeholders e.g. associations, NGOs, etc.
- The engagement with multiple stakeholders at the same time: last three meetings were less specific, resulting in a broader audience.
- Through the animation and involvement of the PS community, the activity regarding governance and communication was finalised and the confrontation with the Irrigation Board to explore the possibility of applying ERC in that water sector was made possible.

- During the in-person meetings we also had the opportunity to present and test some InnWater digital tools (e.g., the water governance assessment tool and the digital platform for the water tariff and ERC communication/ awareness).

3.3 Lessons learned

Lesson learned in the Middle Brenta PS are listed per bullet points:

- **Start from the institutional level:** the strategic adhesion of the local municipalities is essential to produce concrete improvements for the integrated governance of water and biodiversity.
- **Keep the non-institutional stakeholders informed on the process and involved:** through the Users Advisory Committee and the webinars promoted by the LIFE Brenta 2030 project addressing the general audience (including local associations and citizens); the involvement of non-institutional stakeholders increases transparency and trust.
- **Working at the rooting level:** technicians and non-technical stakeholders have different paradigms and languages: defining strategies and using innovative approaches and tools to facilitate the meeting and understanding between these two words could be very helpful in a shared governance process.

4 PILOT SITE 3 - FIGUERES (SPAIN)

4.1 Pilot Site Community

The Muga Basin Pilot Site Community began with the first InnWater seminar on 17 November 2023. Since then, it has been consolidated with the holding of 7 seminars. The main territorial actors involved in water management in the Muga Basin have participated, such as representatives of municipalities at both a political (mayors and councillors) and technical level (engineers, environmentalists, biologists), water supply companies, universities (University of Girona and University of Barcelona) and research centres, farmers and irrigator communities, local environmental organisations (NGOs), a consortium of municipalities at the headwaters of the basin, an expert in water and management of water user communities, the Alt Empordà Regional Council, the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park and the tourism sector. Members of the Pioneers of Our Time Foundation, a private foundation that carries out river stewardship and conservation projects on the Muga River, also participated.



Figure 3: Mayors, councillors and technicians participating in the fourth seminar. 14/02/2025

It is worth noting the participation of mayors and councilors from 22 municipalities in the river basin, some with a population of less than 1,000 inhabitants and the Associació Salines Bassegoda which brings together small municipalities in the upper part of the basin. Therefore, the project has allowed the participation of small municipalities that often do not have the opportunity to participate in projects of this type.

It is worth noting the participation of the agricultural sector with the attendance at the seminars of representatives of agricultural unions and the two communities of irrigators existing in the Muga basin which concentrates an irrigated area of 11,760 hectares. Their participation is essential since it is the sector with the greatest water consumption in the river basin (80% of the water from the Darnius-Boadella reservoir).

The attendance of members of local environmental organizations and of the private foundation Pioneers of Our Time and local experts can also be highlighted, this last one having allowed the environmental vector and the conservation and protection of the natural and landscape values of river ecosystems to be introduced into the debates.

It is also worth noting the participation, on the one hand, of representatives of two entities from the tourism sector, since the tourism sector of the Costa Brava Nord significantly increases water consumption in the summer season, and, on the other hand, of universities and water research centers that have contributed their knowledge and expertise in water management.

Experts in water management participated as well, especially an expert in the creation and management of Water User Communities, which is a figure that is being considered for creation in the Muga basin and that brings together all entities and individuals who have a right to water, as well as representatives of supply companies.

It should also be said that the Catalan Water Agency has been informed of the InnWater project and has shown great interest in promoting the creation of the Muga Water Users Community.

Finally, it should be mentioned that a citizen survey has been carried out to capture the views of citizens on a personal basis. The survey was aimed at citizens in general, but there was a special interest in capturing the opinions of young people and the elderly.

4.2 Future Sustainability of the Community

The main objective was to bring together all the actors organized in water management. It was the first time that this has been done and it has allowed sharing knowledge and visions on water management in a context of drought and water scarcity. Never before had the actors met to discuss the current and future situation. The current drought has been the catalyst for interest and the search for agreed visions and solutions. The meetings have highlighted the need to have a global vision of water throughout the basin and to have a common project. They have also shown that the territory must organize itself to defend its interests and act with one voice before the regional administration. They have also highlighted the lack of territorial leadership that can channel the needs of the river basin and defend them before other actors, especially before the Catalan Water Agency and the Generalitat de Catalunya.



Figure 4: Regenerated water from Figueres wastewater treatment plant returned to the Muga river for ecological flow.

All the actors who have participated in the InnWater seminars agree that it is essential to organize and structure themselves to defend a common vision of water with a goal that unites them all, which is to guarantee the supply of water to all users. They also agree that one of the main obstacles is the lack of leadership. In this sense, it has been insisted that either an entity or a person of consensus and authority is needed to assume this leadership.

In relation to the continuity of the community, InnWater has allowed the creation of a space for meeting and debate with the main actors involved in water management that has operated during the three years of the project through 7 seminars. It has therefore allowed the actors to get to know each other and contrast visions, obstacles and solutions for better water management. Thus, now the different actors know each other, which did not happen before InnWater. The embryo has been laid that can generate new dynamics and alliances between the actors, both at a global level and at the level of affinities between actors. For example, the seminars have highlighted the coincidences and synergies between farmers and irrigators' communities with environmental organizations. Many coincidences have also been noted between the mayors and councilors of the municipalities of the basin that have to face similar water supply and management problems that can lead to strategies of collaboration between municipalities, joint management or lobbying pressure towards higher administrations. Finally, the participation of universities and water research centers has allowed them to better understand the problems and singularities of the river basin and to come into contact with local actors, which could translate into future collaborations to apply research and innovations in the area of the Muga river basin.

The working group created through InnWater could continue in situations where its stakeholders need to activate it, for example, in serious episodes of drought and water shortages, water pollution, to propose global water supply solutions or to debate and position themselves on projects and proposals presented by higher administrations. It should be noted that two major solutions are currently being proposed to guarantee the supply of water to the river basin. On the one hand, the construction of a large desalination plant to supply drinking water to the municipalities and, on the other hand, the interconnection of the Muga basin with the Fluvià basin and the Ter basin. This second project proposes a large bidirectional pipeline that could supply water from one basin to another depending on the availability of water at any given time in each basin. These are two large-scale projects with high investment with direct consequences on the territory, the environment, water availability and energy consumption, among others. Territorial actors will have to compare these projects with other proposals such as saving and reusing water or promoting economic and territorial development in accordance with water availability.

However, the great result of the InnWater project in the Muga basin will be the creation of the Muga Water Users Community. This figure is regulated by Catalan hydraulic regulations and manages all the water rights of a territory. The Community brings together all those entities and individuals who have water rights and allows them to decide how the water is managed. All the agents who have participated in InnWater, especially mayors, farmers and irrigators' communities, environmental organizations and supply companies, have shown their willingness to create the Water Users Community. Its territorial scope and which municipalities would form part of it are currently being studied, with the aim of bringing together more than 85% of the water rights in the river basin. Once the municipalities that form part of it have been defined, the statutes that will regulate its operation, its government and its financing will need to be drafted. One of the challenges of the Community will be to incorporate environmental organizations in order to guarantee that aspects related to the natural environment, biodiversity, landscape and the protection of river ecosystems are an essential vector in the Community's decision-making.

The constitution of the Water Users Community of the Muga Basin will be the great result of the InnWater project and its main success, and will highlight how a European program can activate the agents of the territory and encourage the creation of governance structures.

4.3 Webinar/Workshop Achievement and use of InnWater Tools

Webinar/Workshop Achievement

In Figueres in the InnWater project seven seminars have been held. The first seminar held on 17/11/2023 was attended by 20 people. The participants were of a technical profile and represented various sectors involved in water management (municipal technicians, university researchers, supply companies, NGOs, natural park technicians, irrigators' communities, regional council technicians). The objective of the session was to make a diagnosis of the current and future water situation in the Muga basin. Emphasis was placed on identifying opportunities and barriers for better water governance. The following final conclusion was reached: what governance aims to do is to reach a consensus on interests. To make it clear that the problem is everyone's. We need to think about plural interests to legitimize good water management.



Figure 5: Participants of the first seminar (17/11/2023)

The second seminar was held on 14/06/2024 with the participation of 14 people. It was aimed at the same type of participants as the first seminar. The aim of the session was to present the figure of Water User Communities and discuss the feasibility of creating one in the Muga basin. The majority view was favourable to their creation although some obstacles to overcome were put on the table such as the lack of leadership of the territory to create it, the lack of trust between the different actors and the need for large investments to optimise the use of water (such as the modernisation of the irrigation system).

The basic objective must be to guarantee water for all uses. Next, there was a debate on how to involve citizens in water governance. Aspects mentioned here include the lack of knowledge of citizens about water management, the lack of trust in institutions due to the lack of coherence between messages and saving measures, and the lack of environmental sensitivity of citizens.



Figure 6: Participants of the second seminar (04/06/2024)

The third seminar took place on 12/12/2024 with the participation of 12 Mayors and Councillors of municipalities in the Muga basin. A call was made to 52 municipalities and 12 municipalities responded. The first part of the seminar was dedicated to reviewing the situation of water supply in each of the municipalities to learn about and share each problem. Each municipality presented the current form of supply, current and future problems. The second part was dedicated to finding solutions to the different problems and to discussing how water could be managed in a better way taking into account the interests and needs of the different actors. Finally, the possibility of creating a Water Users Community in the Muga basin was raised. The proposal that emerged from this seminar was to hold a new meeting to learn about and discuss the feasibility of creating one.



Figure 7: Participants of the third seminar (12/12/2024)

The fourth seminar took place on 14/02/2025 with the participation of 17 Mayors and Councillors of municipalities in the Muga basin. The objective of this seminar was to discuss the feasibility of creating a Water User Community in the Muga basin. The first part was a training seminar to present the operation, organization, governance and financing of the Water User Communities. To do this, Mr. Francesc Camps, secretary of a Water User Community, presented his experience. Then, the attendees were able to ask questions and concerns to the speaker. The second part was a debate on the interest and feasibility of creating the Water User Community. There was a consensus on its creation and what the steps to follow are. It was agreed to move forward with its constitution and make a proposal for the territorial scope of the Community.

The proposal was presented at the next session of the Council of Mayors on March 17, 2025 to achieve maximum consensus among the municipalities. The steps to follow to establish the Water Users Community are:

- The first step is a public call to bring together all the stakeholders involved. The need to obtain the list of water concession holders is raised to know who can officially participate.
- A working committee will be created to draft the community's statutes.
- Creation of a minimum operational structure at the beginning (contracting specialized services). Professional advice is needed, especially in hydrogeology and water regulations.
- Once drafted, an assembly will be organized to validate them and send them to the Catalan Water Agency (ACA).



Figure 8: Participants of the fourth seminar (14/02/2025)

The fifth seminar took place on 12/06/2025 with the participation of 13 people, representatives of the agricultural sector, irrigators' communities, environmental organizations, representatives of municipalities and the regional office of the Department of Agriculture of the Generalitat of Catalonia. This session was conceived as a monograph to debate the situation of the agricultural sector in the region and its water management. The representatives of the Generalitat of Catalonia presented in two presentations the characteristics of the agricultural sector of Muga and the current water management, placing special emphasis on the irrigation system. This session highlighted that water is not the main concern of the agricultural sector of Muga, but that the main problems of the sector are the aging of farmers, the lack of generational change and the difficulties in finding labor, as well as the loss of crops and the abandonment of land. Regarding water management, emphasis was placed on the need for joint governance that brings together all the agents involved and on long-term planning that focuses on irrigation efficiency, the reuse of purified water, the control of urban growth, adaptation to climate change and coordination in infrastructures and investments. Greater technical and legal support was called for, as well as a hydrogeological study to detail the situation of the aquifers. Attendees showed their support for the creation of a Muga Water Users Community as an instrument of water governance.



Figure 9: Participants of the fifth seminar (12/05/2025)

The sixth seminar took place on 08/10/2025 with the participation of 14 people. This seminar was organized jointly with the Hungarian partners of the Tisza River Valley, specifically with the entities REKK (Regional Energy Policy Research Center), Kotivizig and the Institute for Economic and Environmental Policy (IEEP). The seminar was an exchange of experiences and knowledge in water management between the agricultural sector of the Tisza River (Hungary) and the agricultural sector of the Muga River. These are two European regions that are suffering from drought episodes and must adapt their agricultural sectors to this new context. The seminar allowed us to learn about the case of the Tisza River and how farmers have faced the drought. The Muga farmers were able to contrast both situations and assess whether some of the solutions adopted in the Tisza River could be adopted in the Muga River. It was found that the climatic situations were very different, although climate change is the main aspect to be faced in both territories. It was highlighted that the existence of a much more pronounced evapotranspiration in the case of the Muga makes it difficult to store water in ponds and small ponds as they do in the Tisza River.



Figure 10: Participants of the sixth seminar (08/10/2025)

The seventh and final seminar took place on 25/11/2025 with the participation of 12 people. It was organized jointly with Etifor, a partner entity of the pilot territory of the Brenta River Basin (Italy). The session had two main objectives. Firstly, to highlight the natural, landscape, biodiversity and ecological connection values of the Muga River.

Secondly, to learn about the experience of conserving the river environment, the forms of management and financing of projects based on the case of the Brenta River. The session began with the presentation of a paper on the natural values, environmental impacts and pressures and proposals for improving the current management of the Muga River by Mr. Quim Pou, biologist and technical director of Sorelló, Estudis del Medi Aquàtic. The representatives of Etifor then presented their experience in managing river environment conservation projects in the Brenta River. Finally, a participatory dynamic was held among the attendees to study the applicability to the Muga River of the projects carried out on the Brenta River.



Figure 11: Participants of the seventh seminar (25/11/2025)

Use of InnWater tools - Water governance assessment tool

The water governance assessment tool developed within the framework of this project has been applied in Figueres and the Muga basin. This tool, through a questionnaire with questions related to the water and territorial context, policy, institutions, regulation and financing of water management in a given territory, allows for monitoring and assessment of the current situation of water governance in this territory. In order to complete the questionnaire, it is necessary to have detailed information on the characteristics of water management in each territory, which is why prior work is required to compile this information. The tool ends up producing a governance diagram for each territory that offers a very understandable and visual overview that allows you to understand the current situation and determine those aspects that stand out (strong points) and those that need to be acted on (weak points) to improve governance.

The diagram from the application of the water governance assessment tool in the Muga basin is shown in figure 12.



Figure 12: Muga basin Governance Assessment tool result

Alongside the spider plot in Figure 12, the Artificial Intelligence tool gave the following advice:

Hello! I am the InnWater AI Assistant, an artificial intelligence system created to help you navigate the InnWater project's digital tools and governance resources. I provide insights and guidance based solely on public, validated InnWater project documents.

Please remember that I am an AI, not a human expert. My role is to assist your understanding and learning, but final decisions and action plans should be made by you and your group, based on your critical discussions and collective judgment. This assessment is both qualitative and quantitative: we encourage you to reflect together on strengths, weaknesses, consensus, and conflicts emerging from your evaluation, and to use these insights to build your action plan. You can verify the sources behind my recommendations by accessing the project documents linked in the platform. This assessment is as much a qualitative as a quantitative process, so we suggest you refer back to your group discussions, focusing on the strengths, weaknesses, consensus, and conflicts elicited by this assessment, to create an action plan.

Based on the results of the governance diagnosis, here's what I found:

- *There is a total of **9 governance gaps identified**, indicating significant areas that require urgent attention and improvement.*
- ***4 principles** show a **moderate level** of governance performance, suggesting that while some progress has been made, there is still room for enhancement.*
- ***3 principles** show a **strong level** of governance performance, indicating effective management and robust practices in those areas.*

The following text will help you understand where interventions and improvements are needed to ensure effective water governance. If you need further explanation or assistance, feel free to ask!

Critical Governance Gaps

1 - Appropriate scales within basin systems

Your score reflects a significant gap in providing comprehensive information about River Basin Organizations (RBOs) in your country. To improve, you should ensure thorough mapping of all RBOs based on established criteria, detailing their functions, jurisdiction, and stakeholder involvement. Additionally, it's crucial to present clear information on their financing mechanisms, including sources of funding and budget allocations. This would demonstrate a better understanding of the governance structure and financial sustainability of RBOs. However, your efforts in attempting to address these complex aspects indicate a willingness to engage with the topic, which is a positive starting point for further development.

2 - Financing

Your responses indicated a lack of comprehensive information regarding the financing of River Basin Organizations, which is crucial for understanding their sustainability and effectiveness. Specifically, providing detailed insights into their funding sources and financial management practices could significantly enhance your score. On a positive note, you did well in identifying the presence of some economic instruments and addressing social tariffs for certain vulnerable categories. However, there's a clear need for improvement in areas such as innovative financing incentives and targeted financial measures for vulnerable groups, which require urgent attention. Overall, focusing on these missing elements will strengthen your governance assessment in the financing category.

3 - Innovation

Your low score in the Innovation category primarily stems from the absence of incentives for innovative financing in the water sector, suggesting a critical need for the introduction of mechanisms like tax credits or public-private partnerships to foster investment. However, you performed well in the digitalization of monitoring and evaluation processes, reflecting a commendable effort to modernize water policy assessments. To improve, focus on developing and implementing innovative financing strategies that can support water management initiatives. Additionally, consider exploring collaboration opportunities that could enhance funding and investment in water projects. Strengthening these areas will significantly boost your overall governance evaluation in innovation.

4 - Stakeholders Engagement

Your score of 1.0 reflects critical gaps in stakeholder engagement, particularly in systematically involving citizens and NGOs in water governance. While you identified some channels for legal claims, which is a positive aspect, the lack of proactive citizen engagement methods indicates a need for more inclusive decision-making processes. The absence of mechanisms for ensuring female participation is concerning and highlights the need for targeted initiatives to empower women in water-related discussions. Additionally, you did not utilize any specific mechanisms for engaging stakeholders in decision-making, which is crucial for effective governance. To improve, focus on creating structured engagement strategies that actively involve diverse stakeholders, especially marginalized groups.

5 - Trade-offs across users, rural and urban areas and generations

Your score of 1.0 in the Trade-offs across users category highlights significant gaps in mechanisms to support solidarity between urban and rural water users, indicating a lack of clear policies for equitable water allocation. Additionally, the absence of social tariffs or supporting measures for vulnerable groups suggests that the needs of marginalized populations are not adequately addressed. However, your engagement with the topic demonstrates a willingness to explore these issues. To improve, you should focus on establishing frameworks that promote collaboration between urban and rural users and develop tailored support measures for vulnerable communities. Strengthening these areas will enhance fairness and inclusivity in water governance.

6 - Engagement of vulnerable groups

You performed well in identifying channels for customers to legally claim their rights and ensuring some participation of women in water management, reflecting a positive engagement with those aspects. However, there are significant gaps in providing financial support or specific tariffs for vulnerable groups, which is critical for addressing inequalities in water access. Your efforts to incorporate citizen engagement are commendable, yet there is room for improvement in actively involving citizens and NGOs in meaningful governance processes. Additionally, the lack of mechanisms ensuring female participation in water-related engagement indicates a need for targeted strategies to empower women further. Strengthening these areas will enhance your overall governance assessment regarding vulnerable group engagement.

7 - Circular Economy

You received a strong score for having regulations promoting green infrastructure and ensuring environmental flows, which reflects effective governance in these areas. However, there is a need for more robust initiatives at national or sub-national levels that explicitly connect sustainable water use to circular economy practices, which could enhance your score. The significant impact of obstacles to coordination between administrative bodies indicates a critical gap that requires addressing, as effective collaboration is essential for successful implementation. Additionally, the absence of agreed-upon key performance indicators for monitoring and evaluating water policy related to circular economy practices suggests a lack of structured assessment mechanisms. Strengthening these areas will greatly improve your overall governance evaluation in the Circular Economy category.

8 - Integrated Systems & Local Empowerment

You demonstrated strong governance by providing comprehensive laws on water resource management and effective flood or drought response strategies, achieving the maximum score in these areas. However, significant gaps exist in mapping River Basin Organizations (RBOs) and detailing their financing mechanisms, which are critical for understanding and enhancing local governance. Furthermore, the lack of a robust mechanism for supporting solidarity between urban and rural water users indicates an urgent need for policies that ensure equitable water allocation. Strengthening these aspects will greatly enhance your overall assessment in Integrated Systems & Local Empowerment. Overall, your efforts in legislative and strategic frameworks are commendable, but addressing existing gaps is essential for improvement.

9 - Policy Coherence

You demonstrated a commendable understanding of initiatives promoting sustainable water use and their connection to circular economy practices, achieving a score of 2. However, your score of 1 in identifying responsible institutions for implementing EU directives suggests a need for more comprehensive mapping of these entities and their roles. Additionally, while your coordination strategies with gender policy initiatives showed good awareness, further development of specific mechanisms to enhance collaboration could strengthen your response. Overall, your engagement with sustainability and gender policies is positive, but addressing gaps in institutional clarity will significantly improve your governance assessment in Policy Coherence.

Moderate level of performance

1 - Clear Roles & Responsibilities

You scored well in identifying existing laws and strategies for flood or drought response, demonstrating a solid understanding of the regulatory framework. However, significant gaps were evident in mapping institutions responsible for water management and services, leading to a low score in that area. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive policies for water resource management and wastewater provision indicates a need for more structured development in this field. Your efforts to promote sustainable water use and its connection to circular economy practices were commendable, but further detail is needed in identifying institutions implementing EU directives. Overall, strengthening these areas will enhance your governance assessment.

2 - Climatic Environmental Resilience

You performed well in establishing a flood or drought response strategy and having regulations that promote green infrastructure and guarantee environmental flows, which indicates strong governance practices. However, the critical gap lies in providing information on the financing of River Basin Organizations, which is essential for understanding their operational sustainability. Additionally, identifying key water risks in your territory requires more thorough assessment to address vulnerabilities effectively. Your score on initiatives for sustainable water use and connections to the circular economy also suggests that while some efforts exist, further development is needed in policy implementation. Lastly, enhancing financial sources for ecosystem protection is crucial for improving your overall resilience strategy.

3 - Data & Information

Your score in the Data & Information category indicates that while you have mechanisms in place to assess the performance of water services effectively, significant gaps exist in the availability and harmonization of information systems for water services provision, integrated water resources management, and water risk management related to climate change. Specifically, these areas lack integration and standardization across responsible authorities, which hampers effective data utilization. On a positive note, you excelled in detailing the performance assessment mechanisms and have made commendable progress in the digitalization of monitoring and evaluation processes. Strengthening the availability and coordination of data across various sectors will enhance your performance in this category. Overall, focusing on these improvements will lead to a more robust governance framework in water management.

4 - Capacity

Your score of 1 in identifying capacity gaps indicates a lack of comprehensive assessment of the specific challenges hindering effective water management in your territory. It's important to provide a detailed analysis of these gaps, such as skill shortages or resource limitations. On the other hand, you excelled in addressing incentives for water careers and demonstrating a strong commitment to Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in recruitment and management practices, achieving the maximum score in that area. This reflects your awareness of the importance of building a diverse workforce in water governance. Overall, enhancing your assessment of capacity gaps will strengthen your governance evaluation.

Strong level of performance

1 - Integrity & Transparency

You achieved a commendable score in identifying the obstacles hindering transparency and accountability in water management, which reflects a strong understanding of the challenges in this area. However, your score of 2 indicates that there may be gaps in clearly outlining all available channels for customers to legally claim their rights, suggesting that some mechanisms might not have been fully explored or communicated. To improve, consider providing a more comprehensive list of claim channels, including any specific processes or institutions involved. Overall, your awareness of transparency obstacles demonstrates a solid foundation for enhancing governance practices in water management.

2 - Monitoring & Evaluation

You excelled in establishing robust regulations that promote green infrastructure and ensure environmental flows, reflecting a strong governance framework. However, the score of 2 in the digitalization of monitoring and evaluation suggests that while some progress has been made, there may be gaps in fully integrating technology into these processes. Enhancing data collection methods and adopting advanced digital tools could improve this aspect. Overall, your strong regulatory foundation is commendable, but focusing on further digital integration will bolster your monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

3 - Regulatory frameworks

Your score of 3.0 in the Regulatory Frameworks category demonstrates exemplary practices in creating and implementing robust regulations that effectively address water management issues, ensuring strong governance. This reflects a comprehensive understanding and execution of necessary frameworks that promote sustainability and resilience in water systems.

This assessment is as much a qualitative as a quantitative process, so we suggest you refer back to your group discussions, focusing on the strengths, weaknesses, consensus, and conflicts elicited by this assessment, to create an action plan.

Use of InnWater tools - Citizen participation methodology

Within the framework of this project, a citizen participation methodology adapted to the unique case of the Muga basin has been defined, applying the instruments, tools and reflections developed during its execution. The phases followed for the definition of the citizen participation model have been the following:

1. Definition of the state of the matter at the beginning of the project. A compilation and analysis of how water governance is organized in the Muga basin before the start of Innwater has been carried out. Thus, research has been carried out on the existence or not of spaces, institutionalized or not, for meeting and participation of the agents involved in water planning and management. It has been found that the only meeting space for some of the agents involved is the Muga Basin Commission.

This is a body coordinated by the Catalan Water Agency that brings together some agents from the territory. Its basic and only function is to report every six months on the water allocations (hm³) that will be allocated to the three main water consumers (Figueres City Council, the Costa Brava Consortium and the two irrigator communities). Thus, despite the serious drought situation that the Muga basin is suffering from and the future challenges of great importance regarding water management, it has been found that there is no space for communication, coordination and governance of the agents involved.

2. Identification of the main local agents involved in the planning, management and use of water in the Muga basin. This exercise has allowed the following key and representative agents to be identified:

- a. Catalan Water Agency (Generalitat de Catalunya. Autonomous Government)
- b. Municipalities in the river basin. Most of which are small municipalities with less than 1,000 inhabitants.
- c. Alt Empordà Regional Council (represents the municipalities of the region)
- d. Salines-Bassegoda Municipality Association (brings together the small municipalities at the head of the river basin)
- e. Water distribution companies in the municipalities (Costa Brava and Fisersa Consortium)
- f. Irrigation communities (there are two communities, the one on the left bank and the one on the right bank of the Muga with an irrigated area of 6,000 ha)
- g. Trade unions and farmers' organizations
- h. Entities representing the tourism sector and tourist accommodation (a very relevant economic sector linked to tourism on the northern Costa Brava)
- i. Universities and water research centers
- j. Environmental/conservationist entities
- k. Private foundations for nature conservation and land management
- l. Local experts in water management

3. Identification of underrepresented local agents. An exercise has been carried out to identify groups or entities that are not sufficiently represented in water governance. The following have been identified:

- a. Small municipalities in the river basin. A significant part of the river basin is made up of small municipalities, with less than 1,000 inhabitants. These municipalities, due to their population size and representativeness, are often excluded from water coordination and governance processes.
- b. Young people and the elderly. It has been identified that young people and the elderly are often not sufficiently served in water participation and governance processes.
- c. Citizens from neighbourhoods with social and economic difficulties. It has been identified that citizens from these neighbourhoods are often not served in water participation and governance processes.

4. Creation of the Local Community of the pilot site and holding 7 reflection and debate seminars (developed in the previous section).

5. Carrying out a citizen survey. A questionnaire has been designed, adapted to the hydraulic singularities of the Muga basin, with the aim of capturing the opinion of citizens. The survey has been designed to, on the one hand, obtain information on the guidelines for citizen participation in water governance (participation spaces, interest in participation, obstacles to participation) and, on the other hand, obtain information on water management (knowledge about the state of drought and hydraulic emergency, measures promoted by the public administration, guidelines for personal action). The survey has been aimed at citizens in general, but priority has been given to groups identified as underrepresented, especially young people, the elderly and citizens from neighbourhoods with social and economic difficulties.

4.4 Lessons learned

As a result of the process of participation, analysis and reflection on the situation of water management in the Muga basin and its governance (especially the 7 seminars), the following conclusions and learnings have been reached. They have been grouped into two large groups: hydraulic context and governance.

Hydraulic context

Water must be managed taking into account all aspects, users and agents involved. Water has no borders and we must act jointly and globally. So far, management has been carried out basically to guarantee supply and some sectors have been prioritized over others. Apart from supply, other aspects such as water quality, pollution and the preservation of the natural values of river spaces must also be addressed.

There has not been a shared diagnosis of all the agents involved regarding the problems and solutions in water management in the Muga basin.



Figure 13: Irrigation canal on the left side of the Muga river.

A good territorial area for water planning and management is one that is consistent with the availability and uses of water. In the case of the Muga, the river basin is the most appropriate territorial area for management.

To define water management in a territory, a strategy and a territorial and economic model are essential, and this territorial and economic model must be adjusted to water availability, and not the other way around as has been done and continues to be done today where economic growth prevails first and then attempts are made to adjust the water supply. It is necessary to guarantee the water supply but also to address a reduction in water consumption. Water consumption cannot grow indefinitely. It is necessary to consider the development of the territory taking into account the limitations of the water resource. The region cannot grow indefinitely.

Drought episodes will persist and worsen in a context of climate change. Water scarcity is not a short-term problem but a structural and future one and, therefore, it is necessary to seek alternatives for water supply and management. Since 1973, the water inflow to the Darnius-Boadella reservoir has been reduced by 48%. This has been due to the change in rainfall regime and also to the increase in forest mass at the headwaters which has increased water retention.

In the case of the Muga, it is necessary to think about global solutions that overcome the current dependence on water from the accumulated rain in the Darnius-Boadella reservoir. More planning is needed and we need to think about the next generations. It must be the territory, which is the one who knows the water problem best, who must guide water planning and management.

The need to face a new scenario (in this case water scarcity) makes it necessary to search for new ideas and forms of management (optimization, implementation, inspections, aid management, urgent measures), since the new scenario requires new management tools that have not been contemplated until now.

In relation to the water resources in the region, there has been talk of Blue Water (surface and underground), Green Water (water resources associated with natural systems, soils and vegetation) and Reclaimed Water (from treatment plants such as Figueres, Roses or Llançà). All of them should be included in a joint and transparent planning.

The following have been mentioned as possible structural solutions to guarantee water availability in the region: water saving (especially the modernization of agricultural irrigation and municipal distribution networks), the reuse of water from treatment plants, desalination and the transfer of water between river basins (Ter, Fluvià, Muga).

For a better understanding of the hydraulic system of the region and for better planning, it is necessary to have a good study of the groundwater since its volume, state and dynamics are unknown.

From the point of view of the municipalities (especially the smaller ones), emphasis has been placed on the lack of economic resources to modernize the water supply and distribution network and reduce water leaks. Municipalities often do not have sufficient economic capacity to face these investments. It has also been noted that in a context of drought and restrictions on the use of water, small municipalities do not have the capacity to inspect and sanction violators (lack of personnel and administrative processing capacity).

In tourist municipalities or with second residences with a significant floating population, abusive use of water and a lack of awareness regarding water saving have been detected. The tourist or second resident has less awareness than the resident regarding the need to use water efficiently.

Since the agricultural sector in the region is the one that consumes the most water (80% of the water in the Darnius-Boadella reservoir), and the agricultural sector is an essential sector for the region due to its function of food production and maintaining the uniqueness of the territory and

landscape, it is essential to modernize the sector to adapt it to the new situation of water availability. This modernization involves making irrigation systems more technical and efficient, adapting crops and adjusting agricultural production to the availability of water. It must be the availability of water that makes agricultural production adapt and not the other way around (we continue to grow crops that demand more water).

Although the agricultural sector in the region has been the most affected by drought and water restrictions, the sector suffers from more serious structural problems such as aging and lack of generational change, loss of crops and abandonment of land.

If the agricultural sector needs to adapt to the new situation of water scarcity, so must other users, especially those linked to tourism. Both conventional tourist accommodation (hotels, apartments, campsites) and second homes need to adapt to the new scenario. And here, it is essential to influence people's habits and awareness when using water.

From the point of view of the conservation and protection of river ecosystems, the Muga basin has historically been abandoned and unprotected. The responsible institutions have not acted sufficiently despite the pressures and impacts (maintenance of ecological flow, ecological quality of the water, proliferation of invasive species). For example, the Darnius-Boadella Reservoir Master Plan has not yet been approved, which, among other things, will have to regulate uses and ensure the prevention of the proliferation of invasive species.

The management of forest masses in the headwaters is essential. Its increase has reduced runoff, increased retention and reduced water contributions to the Darnius-Boadella reservoir. It will be necessary to consider a possible reduction of forest mass in the headwaters to increase runoff within the framework of a global forest management program that also takes into account other aspects such as reducing the risk of fire, the use of forest resources and biodiversity.

Governance

It has been found that in the Muga basin there are no articulated governance structures that bring together the actors involved in water planning and management. The only institutionalized structure is the Muga Basin Drainage Commission coordinated by the Catalan Water Agency. However, this Commission is only a space where the Catalan Water Agency informs the main agents of the six-monthly water allocations that will be given to the main consumers, which are the Figueres City Council, the Costa Brava Consortium and the two irrigator communities. As has been demonstrated in the project seminars, this Commission does not function as a space for open and joint reflection and debate with the participation of the main actors involved since it only informs about future water allocations.

Until now, each actor has defended its particular interests and there has been no global and shared vision, nor sufficient collaboration between sectors. Each sector has prioritized and defended its interests. The diversity of interests (agricultural sector, tourism sector, municipalities, environmental entities, etc.) makes it difficult to make consensual decisions.

When a problem appears that affects all actors, in our case water scarcity, this promotes collaboration, cooperation and the search for joint solutions. The existence of a common problem acts as a catalyst to seek global and joint solutions.

It is important that there is strong leadership recognized by all parties to carry out shared projects. There are often difficulties in finding this leadership. In the case of the Muga basin, the lack of this institutional leadership has been highlighted, which has translated into inaction and lack of coordination between the actors involved when addressing drought episodes.

In water management, technical leadership is necessary because it goes beyond the short-term political vision, since water must be managed with a long-term vision. The aim of water governance is to reach a consensus on interests. To make it clear that the problem is everyone's and that it is necessary to think about plural interests to legitimize good water management. In this sense, the global interest is to guarantee the availability of water for domestic use and to conserve the natural values associated with water (river ecosystems, biodiversity, water quality).

To promote governance and better water management in the Muga basin, the creation of the Muga Water Users Community is proposed. The Water Users Community is a figure included in Catalan water regulations. It is a public law corporation, created by water users, approved and attached to the water administration. It brings together all users of a water right registered in the area's water register. The purpose of the Communities is the collective administration of the water use rights that have been granted or recognized to them. Their objectives are to defend the interests of users and collaborate with the hydraulic administration. They are regulated by their statutes and regulations, and the regulations promoted by the hydraulic administration that regulates them (laws and regulations).

Within the governing bodies of the Muga Users Community, it is necessary to include non-concessionaire agents (those who do not have a recognized water right but who are essential for better water governance). These must have clear representation to take their point of view into consideration. This is the case of conservation organizations in the region, small municipalities, research centres and experts in water management, organizations representing citizens or certain economic sectors (tourism, industry).

The main result of the InnWater project in the Muga basin has been to bring together the main agents involved in water management, conclude that greater communication and coordination between agents is needed and that to promote better water management and better governance, the creation of the Muga Basin Water Users Community is being supported.

5 PILOT SITE 4 - WESTCOUNTRY (UK)

5.1 Pilot Site Community

The West Country Pilot Site community is unlike the other pilot sites in that it consists of representatives of existing bottom-up, community based, grass roots Catchment Partnerships as well as linking to the top-down government based partnerships like the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Across the West Country region there are various water governance groups operating including: 9 catchment partnerships; 5 local nature partnerships; 6 counties, 2 flood committees, 2 water & sewage companies and 1 water resource group covering 1 river basin district.

The Pilot Site Community is made up of the 9 Catchment Partnership hosts (predominantly NGO's) and their Environment Agency Catchment coordinator as well as several area and regional representatives. There is a broad acknowledgement that there is no one scale or level that can manage all partnerships and interests so it is between to increase level of communication within and between partnerships and highlight joint initiatives that will unite interests. This include broad water governance and water quality monitoring which have been the focus of the West Country Pilot.



Figure 14: West Country region divided into 10 Management Catchments covered by 9 Catchment Partnerships

The ambitions of the West Country Pilot Site community fell into two discrete areas.

Governance within the Water Network - The first ambition was in the assessment of the linkages, joint interests and overlaps between the different water sector groups. These have been historically siloed into flooding, drought, water quality and biodiversity. Work has been done in the past to understand this network including how many individuals have operated across multiple partnerships and silos in order to understand the lines of communications and strength of voice.

In past years (2016 analysis of network) the linkages were limited to just a few individuals and partnerships had little connection to community groups, but with the growth of Catchment Partnerships, through the Catchment Based Approach⁴ this has been changing and with the opening of siloed partnerships there are more connections than ever. Nevertheless, these connections have not been made overt and work is needed to understand the effective governance of these individual partnerships and understand how a collective assessment of functional governance could be achieved.

To undertake this mapping all the partnerships were asked to submit names and organisations for all of their members/attendees so they could be mapped using freely available kumu.io software (Figure 15). From the results there were 411 people who sit on the different partnerships with 51 people on two groups, 9 people on three groups, 2 people on four groups and 1 person on six groups, making **63 connectors**. This shows a much higher connectivity than 2016 assessments which were showed 4 people that connected 2 groups, 1 person that connected 3 groups, and 1 person that connected 5 groups (**6 connectors**).

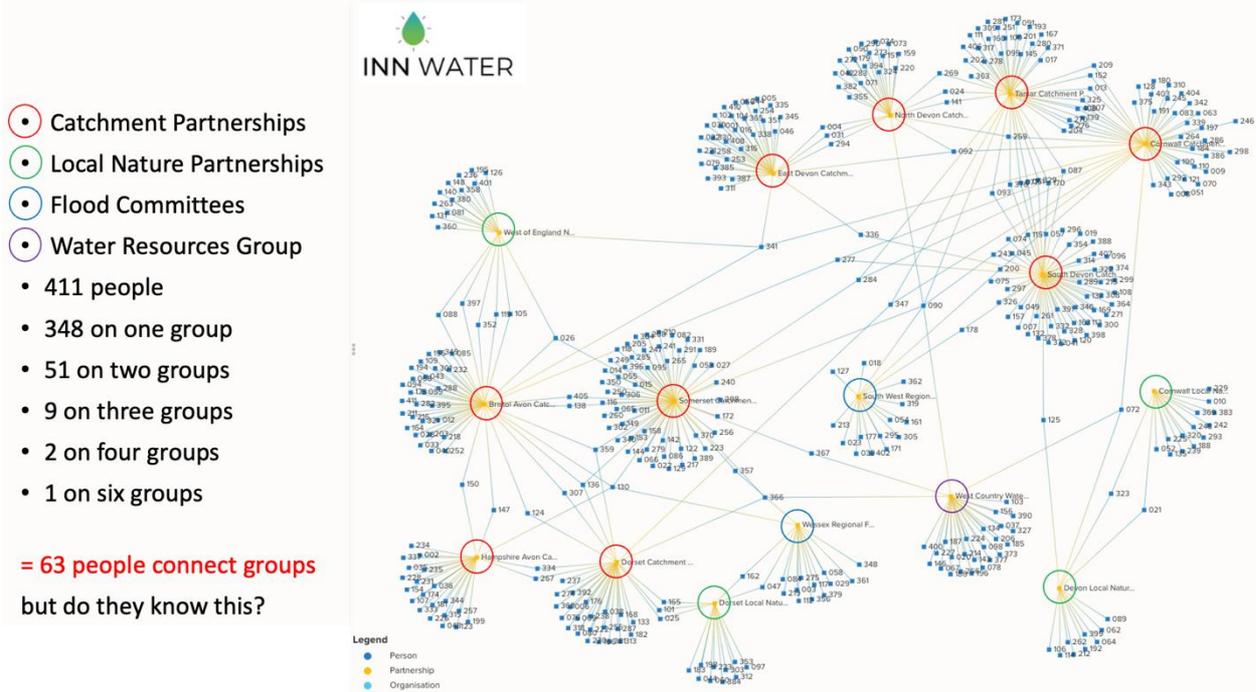


Figure 15: The Regional Network Analysis under the InnWater Project showed the level of connectedness between groups - <https://kumu.io/laurencecouldrick/regional-network-analysis#main-view>

⁴ <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/>

This work is still being reviewed by partnerships and committees to understand organisational representation (there are 139 organisations represented in the above analysis). With the announcement of new Regional Water Planning Authorities in the UK through a Water White Paper⁵ (20/11/2026), this assessment is being used to highlight the need for bottom-up AND top-down articulation, through the articulation of the ‘missing-middle’.

Regional Water Quality assessment – Alongside the above the 9 Catchment Partnerships also were joined with a common interest in data collation and analytics as data in the UK is collected by both public (Environment Agency), Private (Water Company) and Community (NGO volunteers). The growth in Citizen Science (see figure 16) has shown that volunteers are interested in monitoring river health but this needs to be articulated alongside other data at various different special scales. However, this has not been articulated with public data so combined assessment and analysis can occur.

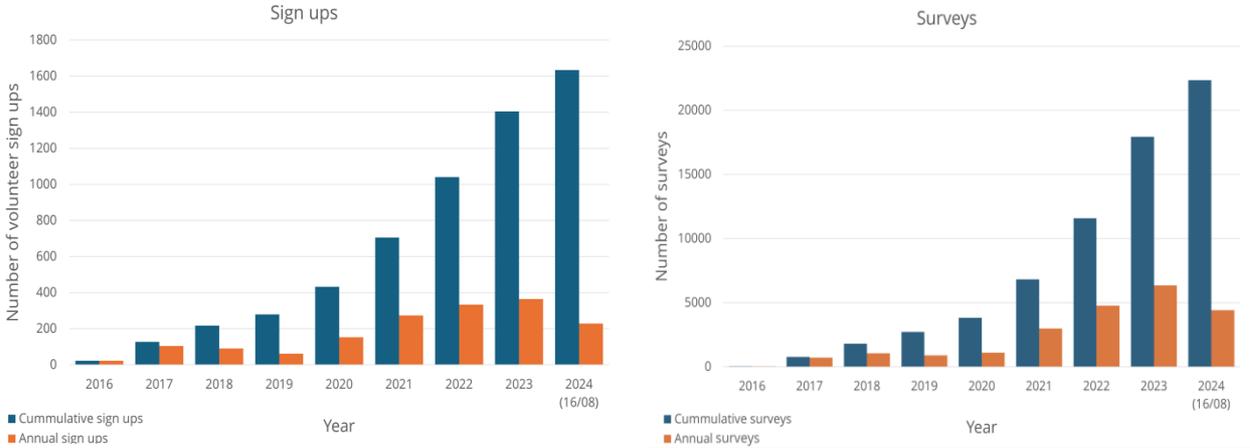


Figure 16: Growth in WRT Sign-ups and surveys of Citizen Science Investigations (as of 16/08/2024)

This work led to the creation and assessment of two main river data mechanisms. The first was a low cost created through the InnWater project using R-Shiney where both Citizen Science and Environment Agency data could be reviewed at different scales on one screen. Data was fed in through an Application Programme Interface (API). The second was a high-cost platform called RiverHub⁶ developed by Bristol Avon Rivers Trust with funding through Wessex Water. This platform was designed to take both Citizen Science, Environment Agency and Water Company data into one map based tool that could be interrogated by groups at a local level. See figure 17 for a comparison of the two tools. Whilst the InnWater tool was of use in direct comparison between two data sources it was not comprehensive enough to allow for proper data interrogation. The RiverHub tool was more appropriate but requires significant investment but through the project and the West Country Pilot Site Community all Catchment Partnerships are interested in expanding the use of the tool at a regional level with funding from Wessex Water in the first instance and South West Water in the future.

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696f52c9011505255b2d41f1/Defra_Water_White_Paper_2026.pdf
⁶ <https://riverhub.co.uk/>

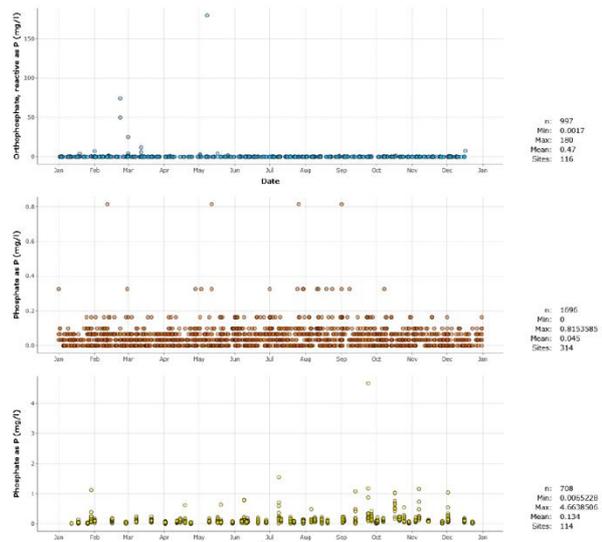
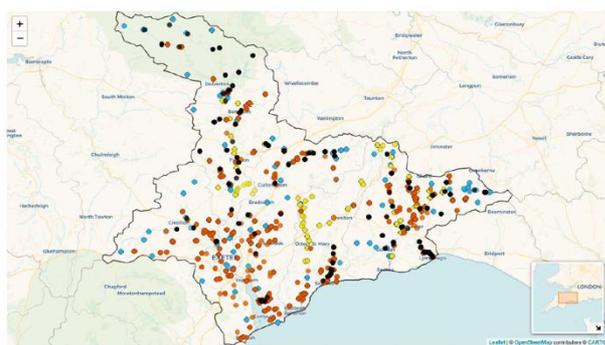
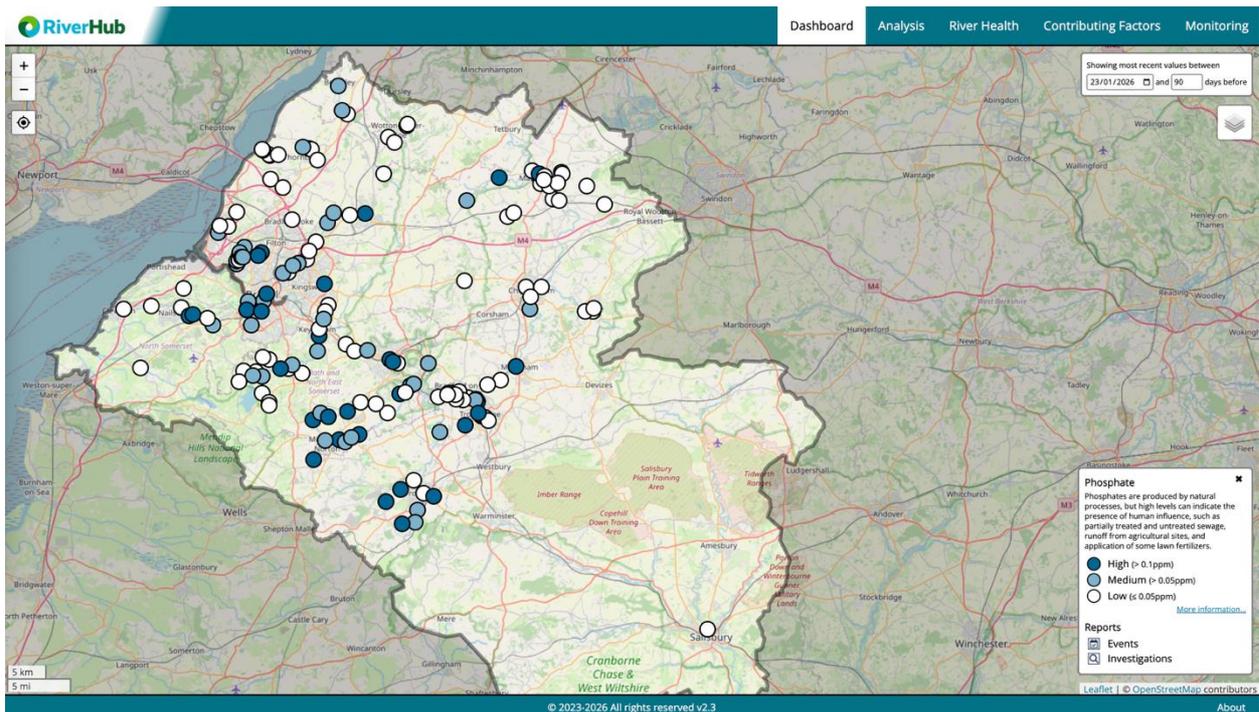


Figure 17: Screen shots from the RiverHub tool (above) and the InnWater R-Shiney app (below) to collate and compare data

5.2 Future Sustainability of the Community

At the final InnWater meeting of the West Country Pilot Site Community the group unanimously agreed to continue the group as the **West Country Catchment Partnership** Forum with the intention to expand reach into the entire Regional Network Analysis map. This level of regional coordination will allow the group to be part of any new Regional Water Planning Network.

Instead of a fifth webinar with the group WRT attended three summer 2025 community events to try and understand the barriers to engagement in water management. WRT delivered questionnaires with 40 members of the public targeting the underrepresented groups. Of the 40 respondents, 22 were female and 18 male. The responses suggested a high level of awareness of water related pressures relating to climate change, loss of biodiversity, use of pesticides, lack of funding and river pollution. Most respondents engaged with their river through walking, wildlife watching, boating, running and cycling. The main barriers to engagement where too busy with work or family as well as bad weather.

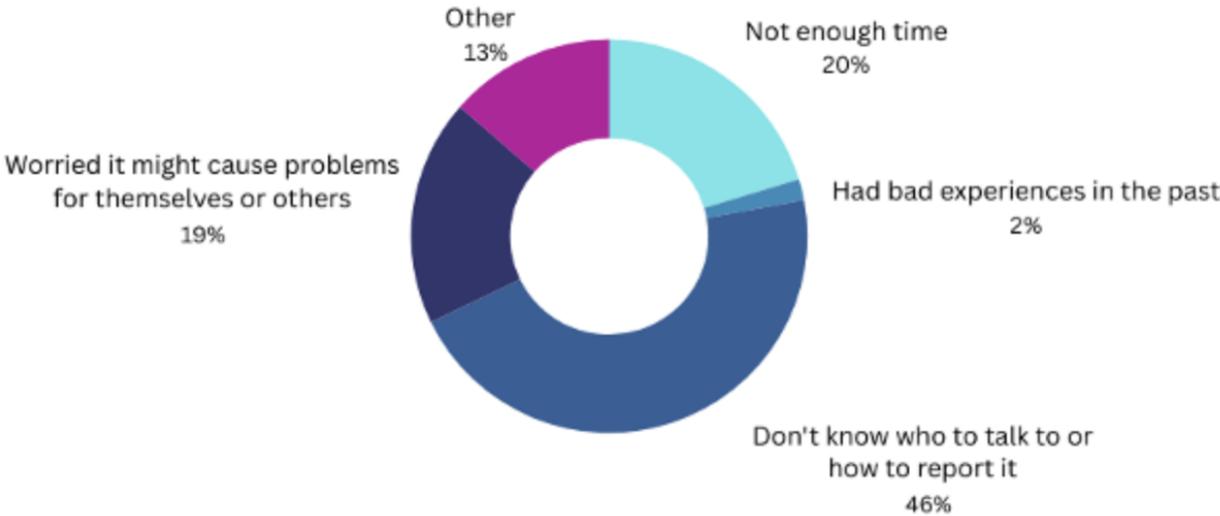


Figure 19: Respondents answers to 'What might make it hard for someone in your communities to speak up about a problem with your local waterway?'

Respondents were worried that raising issues about the water environment might cause them problems and they didn't know where to report problems (see Figure 19). Further barriers to volunteering were centred on not having the time or capacity and uncertainty about how to get involved and what's available.

The final webinar was held on the 12/12/2025 and provided a final review of the two data platforms as well as presenting the final Water Governance Assessment tool and how it had been discussed with other catchment partnerships directly by WP4 tool leaders.

5.4 Lessons learned

Over the last 3 years the main lessons learned from the West Country Pilot Site Community are:

- There is no one size or scale for water governance as if you try and accommodate all sectors at all scales the partnership will be too large to be productive and you are unlikely to get attendance as partners tend to want to discuss issues at their scale and interest. The Regional Network Analysis has been an invaluable tool to understand network connectivity, and it will be used in a variety of ways.

- Looking at the network interactions and degrees of closeness between partners, individuals and organisations is critical to ensure good communication but individuals must know they act as the glue between groups. This will have specific bearing to the creation of any Regional Water Planning Authorities.
- Governance in the UK is particularly interested in bottom-up engagement with a good level of under-represented groups involved but Catchment Partnerships have limited power and agency to act. This has been shown in the Governance Assessment Tool.
- Work is needed to improve the governance of the region but tools like the online governance assessment are useful in assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The Governance Assessment Tool needs to be applied at a Network level in the UK to give a better understanding of water governance as its current usage has triggered more a conversation about good governance rather than specifically on water.
- There are tools to collate and analyse water quality data from across partnerships but this is challenging and are only as good as the level of updates they receive. Work on low cost methods are needed if there is an absence of significant funding but higher cost models with more powerful analytics should be an ambition. The RiverHub tool is being taken forward initially by Wessex Water into the eastern half of the region with the intention to expand it into the western half with South West Water's support.
- The West Country Catchment Partnership Forum is now a new entity formed due to the InnWater project and has agreed to continue indefinitely to ensure regional linkages consistency and communication.

6 PILOT SITE 5 - TISZA (HUNGARY)

6.1 Pilot Site Community

The pilot site community primarily comprises farmers and their representative organizations, including the local branch of the national agricultural chamber of commerce. Farmers were identified as key stakeholders because early project assessments highlighted agricultural water balance as the most critical factor in regional water management. As the largest water users, farmers play a vital role in both water consumption and storage. When managed effectively, soil has immense - yet currently underutilized - potential to retain water between seasons, improving crop yields while enhancing climate resilience through summer evapotranspiration and groundwater recharge.

Another reason for prioritizing farmers is the region's favourable conditions for improving soil water storage. During the off-season, a sufficient volume of water is available for distribution through an extensive canal network that serves much of the area's agricultural land. However, this resource remains largely untapped due to the absence of a proper institutional framework, organizational mechanisms, and economic incentives. This is where the InnWater innovation was initially expected to play a transformative role.

Project activities initially focused on the farming community of Karcag, where local farmers cultivate their own land. The community includes a diverse range of farm sizes, from smallholdings of just a few hectares to large-scale operations spanning thousands of hectares. Some farmers also specialize in rice cultivation, a particularly water-intensive practice. However, discussions with farmer groups gradually stalled, as a growing number of farmers expressed expectations for substantial financial compensation in exchange for implementing water retention measures on their land. In particular, some farmers argued that participation would only be acceptable if payments significantly exceeded existing support levels, in some cases amounting to at least twice current CAP subsidies. Given the role of influential farmers as opinion leaders within local farming communities, these expectations increasingly shaped group-level discussions.

In response, the project adapted its engagement strategy. While maintaining continued interaction with farmers, engagement shifted from group-based discussions to one-by-one exchanges. This change allowed for more in-depth and nuanced conversations and led to a substantially improved understanding of how individual farmers cope with drought conditions, their views on water retention, the role of irrigation for high-value crops, and the use of practices such as conservation tillage. These exchanges also provided deeper insight into farmers' perspectives on governance-related issues, including organizational arrangements, institutional responsibilities, and economic constraints.

The farmer interviews took place against the backdrop of the severe drought experienced in Hungary in 2025, which resulted in prolonged soil moisture deficits and significant yield losses in several regions, including the Middle Tisza area. This meteorological context made drought impacts tangible and immediate for farmers and increasingly framed discussions around water management. While expectations regarding financial compensation remained high, the drought contributed to a gradual increase in openness toward water retention measures as a risk-

management tool. Conducting interviews under these conditions also reinforced the relevance of the project's messages, as discussions on water retention, soil moisture conservation, and adaptive practices were directly linked to farmers' lived experiences of water scarcity.

At the same time, the project broadened its focus to other stakeholder groups through targeted InnWater pilot site workshops. This shift expanded the pilot site community reached by the project and strengthened engagement with municipalities, NGOs, anglers, and nature protection professionals. Involving these groups contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives on water governance in the Middle Tisza region and highlighted differing priorities, expectations, and interpretations of water retention and multi-level water management.

6.2 Future Sustainability of the Community

Despite sustained engagement efforts, the InnWater project did not result in the establishment of a stable, self-sustaining stakeholder community at the Middle Tisza pilot site. This outcome reflects deeper structural and contextual factors rather than shortcomings in project design or implementation. The experience of the Middle Tisza pilot needs to be understood against the broader background of relatively low levels of civic activity and collective self-organization in Hungary, particularly in rural areas and in policy fields dominated by centralized decision-making.

A key limiting factor was the absence of strong incentives for long-term collective engagement. In the agricultural sector, discussions around water retention quickly became intertwined with expectations of substantial financial compensation. As these expectations increasingly shaped group-level dynamics, they constrained the emergence of a shared problem-framing that could support collective action beyond subsidy-based participation. At the same time, centralized governance arrangements and limited local decision-making autonomy reduced the perceived relevance of sustained stakeholder cooperation, as many actors viewed key water management decisions as being taken outside the local or regional level.

More broadly, the Middle Tisza pilot operated in a context characterized by moderate institutional trust, limited traditions of participatory governance, and a strong reliance on individual or informal coping strategies rather than collective action. These factors affected not only farmers, but also other stakeholder groups, and limited the likelihood that temporary project-based interactions would evolve into a durable community structure once project support ended.

At the same time, the project did achieve important informal outcomes. Through workshops and one-by-one interviews, InnWater substantially raised awareness of critical water management issues, including off-season water distribution, soil-based water retention, summer evaporation losses, and the long-term implications of drought and climate variability. Many stakeholders actively engaged in discussions and were willing to articulate their views, concerns, and priorities. These exchanges contributed to a broader and more nuanced understanding of water governance challenges in the Middle Tisza area.

Although these interactions did not translate into formalized structures or sustained collective action, they nevertheless had an informal impact by stimulating reflection, knowledge exchange, and problem awareness among diverse actors. Under the prevailing institutional and societal

conditions, this form of impact is considered meaningful. It strengthened individual understanding, clarified stakeholder positions, and helped surface governance-related tensions that are central to any future attempts at participatory water management in the Middle Tisza region.

6.3 Webinar/Workshop Achievement and use of InnWater Tools

Since the submission of D5.3, stakeholder engagement activities at the Middle Tisza pilot site have expanded further, both in terms of the number of events and the diversity of audiences reached. Building on the initial webinar and early farmer-focused workshops, the project progressively introduced more targeted formats and made increasing use of InnWater analytical and decision-support tools. Together, these activities contributed to awareness raising, knowledge exchange, and testing the practical relevance of InnWater outputs under real-world governance and regulatory conditions.

The first engagement activity was an online webinar held on 15 November 2023, aimed primarily at national and regional water management institutions, academia, nature protection authorities, and private consultants. The webinar introduced the InnWater project and the planned Hungarian pilot, and provided a platform for expert discussion on governance challenges in the Middle Tisza region. Discussions highlighted the growing urgency of drought management, drawing on recent extreme events, and emphasized the need to better allocate and retain available water resources. Participants discussed technical options (e.g. canal management, drinking water abstraction, dredging), ecological considerations (riparian storage, wetlands), and the role of modelling and cost-benefit analysis in supporting water allocation decisions. The webinar established early recognition of InnWater as a relevant framework for integrated, multi-stakeholder water governance, while also underlining the importance of institutional and economic preconditions for implementation.

This was followed by a live workshop on 13 February 2024 in Karcag, organised at the local office of the National Agricultural Chamber and focusing on farmers and water managers. The workshop created space for in-depth discussion of agricultural water management challenges, drawing heavily on farmers' experience from the 2022 drought. Participants discussed irrigation limits, soil moisture depletion, salinization risks, and the long-term sustainability of current land-use practices. The event confirmed farmers' strong interest in water-related issues and their willingness to engage with the project, while also revealing the economic and institutional constraints shaping their decisions. At this stage, InnWater tools were mainly used in an explanatory way, supporting problem framing rather than operational decision-making.

Two further farmer-focused workshops were organised in Karcag in November and December 2024, reflecting an effort to build on earlier discussions and respond to expressed interest in practical solutions. The workshop on 21 November 2024 brought together farmers, agricultural representatives, the county council, and the water authority to discuss the region's deteriorating water budget and adaptive options. Analytical results related to evaporation trends, soil moisture, and interseasonal water storage were presented, and participants discussed the potential for off-season water provision and field-level retention. The InnWater analytical framework was used to

support a shared diagnosis of the problem, and participants contributed local knowledge by identifying parcels potentially suitable for water retention.

The follow-up workshop on 18 December 2024 aimed to move one step closer to implementation by discussing targeted inundation of agricultural land and the economic trade-offs involved. At this event, simplified economic reasoning and illustrative examples were used to demonstrate how benefits and costs of water retention could be distributed unevenly across parcels, highlighting the need for compensation mechanisms and cooperative arrangements. While the workshop did not result in concrete agreements, it clarified the key barriers to collective action and reinforced the relevance of InnWater's governance-focused approach, particularly its emphasis on incentives, risk-sharing, and institutional design.

Beyond farmer-oriented activities, the project increasingly engaged with governance and policy-oriented audiences. A dedicated workshop on 29 October 2025 was organised in cooperation with the Tisza Sub River Basin Management Council, focusing on the application of the InnWater Water Governance Assessment (WGA) tool to the Middle Tisza pilot area. The workshop demonstrated how the WGA can be used as a structured diagnostic tool to identify governance bottlenecks, such as the absence of a meso-level coordination layer, weak stakeholder cooperation, and misaligned incentives under existing agricultural and water policies. Participants broadly endorsed the diagnosis and engaged in substantive discussion on how the assessment results could inform policy recommendations and future planning processes.

The most explicit hands-on use of an InnWater tool took place during a full-day workshop at the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority (MEKH), focusing on the InnWater micro-simulation model for water pricing. During this event, experts from the Water and Solid Waste Tariff Setting Department worked directly with the model, first through methodological presentations and then through practical exercises and a serious game format. The session enabled participants to test the tool under Hungarian regulatory conditions and to discuss its applicability for evaluating tariff structures and progressive pricing. Feedback indicated strong interest in the model and its analytical capabilities, and the workshop demonstrated that InnWater tools can be meaningfully transferred to regulatory practice when sufficient time and institutional engagement are available.

Finally, a sixth Middle Tisza workshop was held on 27 November 2025 in Szolnok, focusing on integrated water management, drought and heatwave mitigation, and the role of blue-green infrastructure, particularly in urban and peri-urban contexts. The workshop combined presentation of Middle Tisza pilot results with international examples and local practitioner perspectives. While not tool-focused in a narrow sense, the event made extensive use of InnWater analytical insights, particularly the reframing of evaporation and evapotranspiration as key regulating ecosystem services. The discussion confirmed the relevance of the project's findings and highlighted the importance of continued dialogue between researchers, stakeholders, and public authorities.

6.4 Lessons learned

At the outset of the project, expert consultations and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders were used to identify key priorities in regional water governance. Based on these insights, the Middle Tisza pilot focused on land use and, in particular, on enhancing water retention on agricultural land. Subsequent engagement confirmed that this focus was well aligned with the region's most pressing adaptation challenges, but also revealed structural constraints that limit the pace and depth of change.

A central lesson is that physical water scarcity is not the primary bottleneck in the Middle Tisza region. Existing water conveyance infrastructure has sufficient technical capacity to deliver water to large agricultural areas outside the irrigation season. However, this potential remains largely unused. The reasons are predominantly organizational, institutional, and economic. Off-season water distribution is not embedded in current practices, incentives are weak or misaligned, and neither farmers nor institutions have experience with such arrangements. As a result, adopting new modes of operation requires time, trust-building, and changes in governance routines, rather than additional infrastructure investment.

In contrast, experience from periods of acute scarcity shows that organizational innovations can deliver substantial benefits. During the high-demand season, improved coordination through water use scheduling significantly increased the effectiveness of scarce water resources. In 2025, scheduling generated economic value on the order of 2-4 billion HUF, at costs that were only a fraction of the benefits achieved. This illustrates that governance and organizational tools can produce large welfare gains even within existing physical and regulatory constraints.

Another key lesson concerns incentives and collective action. While farmers generally recognize that improving water retention is essential in an increasingly arid climate, they remain hesitant to allocate parts of their land for this purpose, whether for temporary inundation, wetlands, wet grazing areas, or set-aside land under CAP conditionality. This hesitation reflects several interlinked factors: distorted incentives under the current CAP framework, a lack of cooperative traditions among farmers, high perceived risks, and the expectation that measures delivering public benefits should be accompanied by appropriate compensation. These findings are consistent with the Water Governance Assessment (WGA), which identified weak meso-level coordination, low willingness and capacity for collective action, and misaligned policy incentives as core bottlenecks.

The project also showed that enhancing water retention on agricultural land cannot rely on voluntary action alone. Appropriate land-use-related incentives are necessary, but not sufficient. Organizational solutions are equally important, including mechanisms for allocating limited water resources in a transparent and predictable way, potentially supported by digital tools such as IT-based allocation or scheduling systems. These need to be embedded in a supportive legal and institutional framework that reduces uncertainty, clarifies responsibilities, and lowers transaction costs for cooperation. Without such reforms, technical feasibility and individual awareness are unlikely to translate into sustained collective action.

From a process perspective, the engagement strategy itself yielded important lessons. Workshops proved effective for raising awareness, exchanging views, and building a shared understanding of regional water management challenges. They also provided valuable feedback

on interim research results from the joint work of KÖTIVIZIG and REKK. However, experience from later stages of the pilot confirmed that workshops are less suited for addressing farm-level decision-making and for supporting concrete implementation steps. In-depth discussions on risks, costs, and benefits require more targeted formats, such as one-on-one interviews or small focus groups, where individual constraints and decision logics can be explored in detail.

Overall, the Middle Tisza pilot demonstrated that the main barriers to landscape-scale water retention are not technical, but institutional and organizational. While the project did not result in immediate, formalized changes in land or water use, it generated a clearer diagnosis of governance failures, clarified stakeholder positions, and highlighted where future policy and institutional efforts would need to concentrate. Under the prevailing conditions, these lessons constitute a meaningful outcome and provide a realistic basis for future adaptation initiatives in the region.

7 TRANSVERSAL WEBINARS

7.1 Promotion through Transversal webinars

Three “transversal” European webinars are run at a project level, in English. Targeting Pilot Sites Communities, they highlight common transversal topics and issues. At the project level, they provide opportunities for stakeholders to get a clear view of the project results while offering the possibility of engaging with them. At the Pilot Sites level, those webinars bring together stakeholders to exchange on their experiences and good practices and share knowledge. The last webinar had a special focus on dissemination.

T1 Transversal webinar n°1: (23 November 2023) - The first transversal webinar, with external partners from all Pilot Sites Communities, has been held on 23 November 2023. This webinar aimed at discussing between Pilot Sites stakeholders on water governance challenges and expectations, as well as introducing the water governance assessment task.

T2 Transversal webinar n°2: 2024/2025 (3 December 2024) - The second transversal webinar was held on 3rd December 2024. It showed progress on the project implementation, focusing on 3 results: the InnWater citizen engagement methodology, the water governance assessment tool, and the replicability assessment of the different tools and solutions of the project.

T3 Transversal webinar n°3: 2026 (20 January 2026) - The last transversal webinar was organized during the last months of the project, early 2026. It provided a comprehensive overview of what InnWater has delivered and how its tools can support water governance, citizen engagement, and economic decision-making at local, regional, and EU levels. It was primarily addressed to Pilot Site communities, but also welcomed some key external stakeholders, including experts, practitioners, and policymakers interested in innovative and integrated water management approaches, thus opening the discussions on their potential use and sustainability beyond the end of the project.

7.2 Webinar/Workshop & Training Achievement

T1 Transversal webinar n°1: (23 November 2023)

This first transversal webinar gathered 24 participants online.

Part 1 brought Pilot Site Communities together for the first time to discuss shared water governance challenges, despite different local contexts. The discussions highlighted common issues, ongoing local initiatives, and potential interactions with other projects, helping ensure the project remains relevant and useful.

Part 2 presented InnWater’s Water Governance Assessment, prompting questions, interest, and feedback from local stakeholders on methodology and practical considerations (language, data availability, stakeholder engagement).

Overall, these exchanges provide valuable input for tailoring pilot site approaches, improving tools, and guiding project communication and dissemination.

T2 Transversal webinar n°2: 2024/2025 (3 December 2024)

The second transversal webinar gathered 17 participants online.

Three main project tools were presented, each followed by feedback from pilot sites testing and a Q&A session.

The **InnWater Citizen Engagement methodology** introduced guidelines for developing Citizen Engagement Roadmaps, prompting discussion on the distinction between stakeholder and citizen engagement, as well as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), including vulnerable and underrepresented groups. These aspects are central to the project and inform key performance indicators.

The **Water Governance Assessment tool** was presented in its first online version, with plans for an update. Discussions focused on its use in Pilot Sites and practical needs such as local language availability.

The **Replicability assessment** was introduced at an early stage, highlighting the importance of close collaboration with replication experts and sustained engagement throughout the process.

The conclusion emphasized the need to move beyond isolated approaches to more open and inclusive water governance processes, a key challenge for the project.

T3 Transversal webinar n°3: (20 January 2026)

The third transversal webinar gathered 24 participants online.

This final webinar was the opportunity to go through the panel of InnWater main results, illustrated by their co-creation and use in the different Pilot Sites.

1. Water Governance Assessment Tool

The project expanded on 2015 OECD principles by adding themes like circular economy, environmental resilience, and the engagement of vulnerable groups. A 33-question practical tool was developed to generate a "spider graph" identifying governance strengths and gaps in specific study areas.

The tool proved more valuable as a catalyst for structured discussion than as a mere scoring system. In the UK pilot, practitioners used network analysis to identify "glue" individuals who bridge silos between different water and nature partnerships. It was noted that while the tool is flexible, it must be adapted carefully when moving from national to local institutional contexts.

2. Citizen Engagement methodology

This framework emphasizes the distinction between "stakeholders" (organized groups with expertise) and "citizens" (ordinary individuals and marginalized groups). It uses a ladder of engagement ranging from simple information sharing to full co-creation to build trust and institutional legitimacy.

Engagement strategies must be tailored to local maturity; for example, Hungary focused on building trust, while the UK was ready for co-creation. To avoid participant frustration, practitioners must define clear goals for engagement from the start. In Spain, the extreme drought served as a catalyst to overcome sector individualism, leading to the proposed creation of a new "water users community".

3. Economic and financial decision support tools

The project utilized two types of economic models: a macroeconomic (CGE) model to simulate impacts across the entire economy via the WEFE nexus, and a microeconomic simulation to assess household water affordability.

Macro-simulations quantified how water scarcity shocks hardest hit the agricultural sector, though all sectors remain interlinked. Micro-simulations in Reunion Island revealed that politically popular "free basic water" policies for the first few cubic meters were actually financially unsustainable for the operator, demonstrating the need for data-driven pricing.

4. Local achievements and landscape management (Hungary)

The Tisza pilot in Hungary focused on addressing "drying landscapes" caused by climate change. Rather than building new assets, the pilot emphasized new governance rules for using existing canal systems to supply water to the landscape and soil.

Implementing a "scheduled water use" system for farmers successfully smoothed peak demand, saving water and protecting local tourism. However, the pilot identified a major legal barrier: the lack of a formal legal definition for "ecological water supply," which makes it difficult to earmark government funds for public-good water projects.

7.3 Lessons learned

Amongst the main lessons learned from the project is the need to move from traditional, top-down water management to a bottom-up approach focused on equity, transparency and multisectoral collaboration. The governance assessment tool has proven to be less of an end in itself and more of a catalyst for structured dialogue, helping trigger dialogue between different levels and sectors, possibly identifying key stakeholders for easier interactions. When it comes to citizen engagement, it is crucial to tailor strategies to local cultural and political maturity and to set clear objectives from the outset to avoid participant frustration.

On the economic front, simulations have shown that 'popular' pricing policies, such as free initial cubic metres, can prove financially unsustainable for operators. Several stakeholders have shown interest for using or adapting the water Pricing Assessment tool, highlighting the importance of sustainable pricing policies. Modern water governance requires experts to move beyond technical solutions to manage complex social networks, ensuring equity, transparency, and multi-sector collaboration.

8 KPI SUMMARY

Whilst the above is a qualitative summary of the 5 pilot sites and the transversal webinar, quantitative data was taken on the number of attendees and evidence of each event held on the SharePoint server. This data is summarised below and linked to the Key Performance Indicators:

8.1 Review of collective webinars (Pilot Site and Transversal)

Quantitative data from the pilot site webinars shows that of the 368 unique individuals attending all events over the project lifetime 14% were from NGO's, 34% from private organisations and 52% from public sectors (see Table 4). This was an increase of 84% from the 200 stakeholders listed in D5.3. Of all 368 participants, 36% were women and 64% men (see Table 4). These percentages vary considerably with the UK being the most even in terms of gender split and with the highest public to community split. The 368 participants were from 199 different organisations and 21 were from under-represented groups, but Catchment Partnerships in the UK represent a wider array which is detailed qualitatively above. An additional 317 individuals attended other events, 194 were male (61%) and 123 female (39%).

Table 5: Tables showing split of Organisation type (left) and Gender (right) for unique individuals attending webinars

Summary	Individuals	%
1 - La Reunion	79	
NGO	22	28%
Private	8	10%
Public	49	62%
2 - Brenta	120	
NGO	6	5%
Private	57	48%
Public	57	48%
3 - Figueres	65	
NGO	3	5%
Private	19	29%
Public	43	66%
4 - West Country	37	
NGO	17	46%
Private	3	8%
Public	17	46%
5 -Tisza	67	
NGO	4	6%
Private	35	52%
Public	28	42%
Grand Total	368	
Total NGO	52	14%
Total Private	122	33%
Total Public	194	53%

Summary	Individuals	%
1 - La Reunion	79	
F	32	41%
M	47	59%
2 - Brenta	120	
F	48	40%
M	72	60%
3 - Figueres	65	
F	19	29%
M	46	71%
4 - West Country	37	
F	18	49%
M	19	51%
5 -Tisza	67	
F	13	19%
M	54	81%
Grand Total	368	
Total Female	130	35%
Total Male	238	65%

Alongside the split of unique individuals, the Pilot Sites have worked with 199 individual organisations (38 in La Reunion; 76 in La Brenta; 42 in Figueres; 11 in West Country and 31 in Tisza). Table 5 lists the organisations the number of unique representatives in each per type. As mentioned, 21 organisations were described as from under-represented communities (as defined by PS leads) an increase of 9 from 12 in D5.3 (75% increase). The West Country Pilot Site was representatives from the constituent 9 partnerships who together with the linked partnerships represent 411 individuals from 139 organisations. These are not captured here as they did not attend webinars directly but rather heard about the project indirectly through use of the Governance tool.

Table 6: Tables showing Total number of organisations with unique attendees by type.

Organisations per Pilot Site	NGO	Private	Public	Total
1 - La Reunion	22	8	49	79
ACCRO	2			2
ACOA Conseil		3		3
Armée de terre			1	1
Association Les petits debrouillards	5			5
BTSA GEMEAU			2	2
BTSA GPN			1	1
Ccee		1		1
CCEE & SREPEN		1		1
CCI Reunion			1	1
CEMOI - Université de La Réunion			7	7
CESER			2	2
CINOR (Direction Eau Potable)			1	1
CISE Réunion			1	1
Credit Agricole La Réunion-Mayotte		1		1
DEAL de La Réunion			1	1
Département de La Réunion			1	1
Département de Langues - Université de La Réunion			4	4
Département Géographie - Université de La Réunion			1	1
Faculté de Droit et d'Economie - UR			2	2
Lycée agricole de Saint-Paul			3	3
Lycée agricole Émile boyer			1	1
Lycée agricole Émile Boyer de La Giroday			3	3
Office de l'Eau Réunion			4	4
Région Réunion			1	1
SEOR	1			1
UD-FO		1		1
Université de La Réunion			1	1
Mission Locale Sud	9			9
Prodij	4			4
Energies Réunion		1		1
CEMOI – Université de La Réunion			3	3
Assemblée Nationale			1	1
CEMOI – Université de La Réunion			1	1
Chambre d'Agriculture			2	2
DEAL Réunion			2	2
ARS La Réunion			1	1
Conseil Départemental			1	1
Association Sillages	1			1

Organisations per Pilot Site	NGO	Private	Public	Total
2 - Brenta	6	57	57	120
Acqua Bene Comune		2		2
Acque del Chiampo		2		2
Acque Veronesi		1		1
AIGA		1		1
Alto Trevigiano Servizi		1		1
APSEAS		2		2
Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale Alpi Orientali			3	3
Bacino Acque Fiume Brenta	1			1
Bioprogramm		2		2
Bioprogramm (ecology consulting company working in the area)		1		1
CAI		1		1
Carlo e Giorgio		1		1
CIRF	1			1
CMCC			1	1
CNR			1	1
Comitato consultivo degli utenti CBB			2	2
Consiglio di Bacino Brenta			4	4
Consorzio di Bonifica Acque Risorgive			1	1
Consorzio di Bonifica Brenta (Irrigation Board)			2	2
Cooperativa Jonathan	1			1
Corriere della Sera		1		1
Economicircolare.Com		1		1
Etifor		4		4
Etra		5		5
FEEM / NABA		1		1
Fond. Teatro Faragliona		2		2
Fratelli Dalla Via		2		2
Genio Civile VI - Regione Veneto			1	1
Giornalista		5		5
Green Planner		1		1
Il Gazzettino		1		1
Il Tirreno		1		1
Investigate Europe			1	1
Jole Film		3		3
La Piccionaia		2		2
La Sorgente smps	1			1
Legambiente Alta Padovana (env. association)		1		1
Marie Claire - Hearst		1		1
Medio Chiampo		1		1
Municipality of Cittadella			1	1
Municipality of Fontaniva			2	2
Municipality of Bassano del Grappa			2	2
Municipality of Campo San Martino			1	1
Municipality of Carmignano di Brenta			1	1
Municipality of Cartigliano			1	1
Municipality of Cassola			1	1
Municipality of Colceresa			1	1
Municipality of Curtarolo			1	1
Municipality of Fontaniva			1	1

Organisations per Pilot Site	NGO	Private	Public	Total
Municipality of Grantorto			1	1
Municipality of Limena			2	2
Municipality of Nove			1	1
Municipality of Piazzola Sul Brenta			3	3
Municipality of Pozzoleone			2	2
Municipality of Rosà			1	1
Municipality of San Giorgio in Bosco			1	1
Municipality of Tezze sul Brenta			3	3
Municipality of Tombolo			1	1
Municipality of Vigodarzere			2	2
OdG Veneto		1		1
Piave Servizi		1		1
Piazzolambiente (env. association)		1		1
POEM		1		1
Private individual		1		1
Ramboll		2		2
Regione Veneto			3	3
UNIBS			1	1
UNIPD			3	3
UNITO			1	1
UNIVE			1	1
Veneto Acque			2	2
Veneto Agricoltura			1	1
Veritas		1		1
Viacqua		1		1
Viveracqua		2		2
Individual	2			2
3 - Figueres	3	19	43	65
Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Parc			1	1
Associació d'hostaleria de l'Alt Empordà		1		1
Borrassà Town Council			1	1
Cabanelles Town Council			1	1
Cadaqués Town Council			1	1
Capmany Town Council			1	1
Castelló d'Empúries Town Council			1	1
Castelló d'Empúries Town Council			2	2
Consell Comarcal Alt Empordà. Head of Environment			1	1
Consorti Salines Bassegoda. Association of Municipalities			2	2
Empordà Tourism		1		1
Etifor		1		1
Farmer		1		1
Figueres Town Council			1	1
Fisrsa. Local Water Supply Company			2	2
Fortià Town Council			1	1
Generalitat de Catalunya. Department of Agriculture			3	3
Geographer. University of Girona			1	1
IAEDEN. Conservationist association	2			2
ICRA. Institut Català de Recerca de l'Aigua			2	2
Irrigation community		8		8
IRTA. Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology			1	1

Organisations per Pilot Site	NGO	Private	Public	Total
KOTOVIZIG		2		2
La Jonquera Town Council			1	1
Laval Universite (Quebec. Canada)			1	1
Lladó Town Council			1	1
Llança Town Council			3	3
Maçanet de Cabrenys Town Council			1	1
Mollet de Peralada Town Council			1	1
Palau Saverdera Town Council			1	1
Pau Town Council			1	1
Pioners of Our Time Foundation	1			1
Pont de Molins Town Council			2	2
REEK		2		2
Roses Town Council			1	1
Unió de Pagesos. Farmer Union		2		2
University of Barcelona			2	2
University of Girona			3	3
USEP- IEEP. Chechia			1	1
Vila-sacra Town Council			1	1
Vilajuiga Town Council			1	1
Water Users Community		1		1
4 - West Country	17	3	17	37
Bristol Avon Rivers Trust	3			3
Cornwall Wildlife Trust	1			1
Devon Wildlife Trust	3			3
Environment Agency			17	17
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	1			1
Dorset Catchment		1		1
Rivers Trust	1			1
South West Water		1		1
Wessex Chalk Stream Rivers Trust	1			1
Wessex Water		1		1
Westcountry Rivers Trust	7			7
5 -Tisza	4	35	28	67
Agricultural Chamber of Commerce, Jász Nagykun Szolnok County president			1	1
Alföldvíz			1	1
deputy head of the Karcag branch office KÖTIVIZIG			1	1
FAMIFE Consulting Ltd.		1		1
Farmer		30		30
FETIVIZIG			1	1
General Directorate of Water Management (OVF)			2	2
Hajdú Erdészeti			1	1
head of the Karcag branch office KÖTIVIZIG			1	1
Hortobágy National Park Directorate (HNPI)			1	1
Hubai és Társa Kft.		1		1
Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences			1	1
JNSZ Country Public Health Department			1	1
JNSZ county Anglers Association	1			1
JNSZVKHTVF			1	1
JNSZVMKH KTFO			1	1
Karcag branch office KÖTIVIZIG			1	1

Organisations per Pilot Site	NGO	Private	Public	Total
KÖTIVIZIG			5	5
KÖTIVIZIG/OVF			1	1
Kunság Iroda			1	1
Ministry of Agriculture (AM)			1	1
MMK			1	1
Nagykunsági Mezőgazdasági Vízgazdálkodási Kft. (agricultural watermanagement)		2		2
National University of Public Service (NUPS / NKE)			1	1
OVF			1	1
president of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Council			1	1
Sprint-Farm Ltd.		1		1
Szolnoki Zöld Erő	2			2
TÖOSZ			1	1
TRV Zrt			1	1
WWF HU	1			1
Total	52	122	194	368

8.2 Key Performance Indicators

The above qualitative and quantitative report, alongside the associated webinar and activity evidence within the project Sharepoint site, documents the extent of KPI delivery over the course of the project. Table 6 highlights the state of KPI's at the interim progress report (D5.3) and the numbers associated with this report which are then accumulated to show the total compared to the original target. Over and under delivery as shown with a Red/Amber/Green status.

Table 7: Key Performance Indicators assessed through D5.3

Key Performance Indicators	D5.3	D5.4	Total	Left	Target	Indicator	Verification
KPI#5 - 5 Qualitative review from case studies on value of tools produced		5	5	0	5	Summary on use of tools from each PS in D5.4	see D5.4 for use of tools per Pilot Site and cross reference with Work Package deliverables were relevant
KPI#6 - 30 volunteer citizens in each demo-site RBWF	200	168	368	-218	150	Unique citizens attending PS webinars	D5.3 and D5.4 unique individuals
KPI#9 - 100 hitherto uninformed municipal, regional, and national governments that have been informed of the InnWater Social Engagement Approach	102	97	199	-99	100	Stakeholders attending PS webinars/meetings/events on the topic of Citizen Engagement	Evidence as organisations involved in webinars and workshops
KPI#10 - 20% increase in the number of local community stakeholders participating in the development and decision-making process for water.	200	168	368	+84%	20% ^	Stakeholders participating to PS activities events, objective at the scale of the project	D5.3 & D5.4 Pilot sites implementation final report to show uplift

Key Performance Indicators	D5.3	D5.4	Total	Left	Target	Indicator	Verification
KPI#11 - 50% increase in underrepresented groups (e.g. minority and vulnerable)	12	9	21	+75%	50% ^	Under-represented groups on webinars	D5.3 & D5.4 Pilot sites implementation show uplift based on Pilot Site lead assessment or under representation
KPI#13 - Physical water accounts dashboard for 5 sites, validated by the Pilot Sites Communities)		5	5	0	5	Review from PS	D5.4 Pilot sites implementation final report and linked Physical water account document.
KPI#16 - Creation of the Steering committee	1		1	0	1	Steering Committee	D1.2 Quality Assurance and Monitoring Plan
KPI#17 - Creation of Pilot site committee	1		1	0	1	Pilot Sites Committee	D5.2
KPI#18 - Creation of Pilot site communities	5		5	0	5	Pilot Sites Community	D5.2
KPI#19 - 2 webinars per year for each Pilot sites	18	12	30	0	30	PS Webinars over the project	D5.3 & D5.4 Pilot sites implementation final report (there were more reported but these are key webinars/workshops)
KPI#20 - 1 Pilot sites community webinar per year	2	1	3	0	3	Transversal webinars over the project	D5.3 & D5.4 Pilot sites implementation final report

8.3 Collective lessons learned

In summary the following six lessons can be inferred so far from the project:

- Stakeholder engagement is challenging and requires continuous effort:** There are difficulties in involving and retaining certain stakeholders throughout the project, leading to attrition. This highlights the need for ongoing strategies to maintain engagement.
- Interactive tools enhance stakeholder understanding:** Using tools like the CGE model with live simulations improves stakeholder engagement and strengthens their understanding of complex issues like the WEFE nexus.
- Balancing initial exploration with robust analysis is crucial:** Finding the right balance between initial work and in-depth analysis is essential for ensuring the robustness of results while maintaining progress.
- Digital tools have potential but require user support:** Digital tools can enhance skills, but addressing usability issues and providing user support (like through the InnWater platform) is necessary for effective adoption.
- Policy impact and tool dissemination need clear communication:** Communicating the impact of project work on public policy and ensuring the dissemination of digital tools to local decision-makers requires clear strategies, such as policy briefs.
- Institutional buy-in and communication are key for local implementation:** In the Middle Brenta pilot site, lessons emphasize the importance of starting with institutional buy-in, keeping non-institutional stakeholders informed, and continuously evaluating and improving engagement strategies through communication refinement.

8.4 River Basin Water Forums

The InnWater project aimed to establish sustainable River Basin Water Forums to ensure long-term sustainability in water governance. The outcomes across five pilot sites reveal that "forums" are highly adaptable, ranging from formalized legal entities to informal networks, reflecting diverse regional political and social landscapes.

In La Réunion, sustainability is integrated into the Overseas Priority Research Programme. This initiative uses advanced CGE economic modelling to address agricultural pollution and public health, embedding the InnWater methodology into long-term French research frameworks. Middle Brenta achieved institutional formalisation through a Local Steering Committee established in late 2025. This body integrates water and biodiversity management while utilizing digital platforms to improve transparency regarding environmental costs for users.

Figueres represents a significant milestone with the creation of the Muga Water Users Community. This legal entity will manage 85% of local water rights, providing the centralized leadership necessary to navigate droughts and infrastructure projects like desalination. Similarly, the West Country pilot successfully transitioned into a Catchment Partnership Forum, expanding its reach to align with broader regional planning networks.

Conversely, the Tisza pilot in Hungary faced structural hurdles. Centralized governance and low civic engagement prevented a formal community from forming. However, it achieved "meaningful impact" by raising awareness about climate variability and water retention, proving that even without formal structures, project-based interventions can foster essential knowledge exchange.

These pilots represent a shift from "top-down" centralised governance with limited to no Citizen Engagement (Societal Readiness Level 1 – Basic research), toward decentralised, "bottom-up" governance (Societal Readiness Level 7 – Operational Functioning of the Pilot). Success depends on bridging the gap between local needs and regional administrations including inclusion of under-represented groups. The project highlights a conscious effort toward inclusion with Middle Brenta and Figueres successfully integrating civil society and environmental associations into technical discussions. However, the Tisza experience serves as a reminder that in centralised systems, under-represented stakeholders like small-scale farmers may rely on informal coping strategies. For European water planning to be truly inclusive, future policies must provide clear incentives that make collective participation relevant to the stakeholders' daily livelihoods. This requires moving beyond temporary project interactions toward permanent governance structures that empower local voices in the face of climate scarcity.

Fundamental to the potential for River Basin Water Forums is understanding if society wants to work through a top-down, "Decide and Defend" approach, which risks building Trust, due to isolated and limited involvement, or a bottom-up "Engage and Enact" approach, which is more inclusive but risks delivering action, due a widening scope and ever changing community.

9 CONCLUSION

The InnWater project demonstrates that effective water governance is a multifaceted endeavour requiring a balance between standardised methodologies and deep local expertise. By utilising a diverse consortium, the project demonstrated that complex hydrological challenges cannot be solved through "one-size-fits-all" strategies. Instead, the success of the five pilot sites—spanning from the mountainous terrain of La Réunion to the landlocked lowlands of the Tisza—proves that solutions must be both technically sound and contextually relevant.

A primary conclusion is the indispensability of geographic expertise. The ability of Pilot Site Communities to coordinate activities based on localised understanding was crucial for implementation. In La Réunion, this took the form of CGE economic modelling, tailored to agricultural pollution, while in Figueres, it involved navigating specific Catalan hydraulic regulations to establish a Water Users Community. These examples reinforce that sustainable governance must be rooted in the specific environmental and legal realities of the territory.

The project's focus on standardisation and harmonisation further highlights the need for transferable frameworks. By developing replicable methodologies, InnWater facilitates the scaling of successful approaches to other regions. For instance, the transition of the West Country and Middle Brenta sites into formalised forums provides a roadmap for other European catchments to bridge the gap between local stakeholders and regional administrations. Such structures ensure that water rights and environmental Resource Costs (ERCs) are managed transparently and equitably.

Furthermore, InnWater emphasises the fundamental role of community engagement. By building upon existing initiatives and involving under-represented groups, the project ensures that solutions align with local priorities. The inclusive approach in Middle Brenta, which integrated civil society and environmental associations, demonstrates a shift toward intentional, participatory governance. However, the Tisza experience serves as a vital cautionary note: in highly centralised systems with lower institutional trust, stakeholders may default to informal coping mechanisms. This suggests that future water planning must provide clear financial or decision-making incentives to foster genuine collective action.

In conclusion, InnWater proves that resilient water management requires a holistic approach integrating collaboration, standardisation, and community empowerment. While diversity in geography and governance presents challenges, it also provides a robust testing ground for innovation. By embracing these principles, the project contributes to a future where water resources are managed through adaptable, equitable, and sustainable practices.



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