

# NEWSLETTER WATER

(JANUARY 2014)

## CONTEXT:

Water is life! It is a precondition for human, animal and plant life as well as an indispensable resource for the economy. Water also plays a fundamental role in the climate regulation cycle.

Protection of water resources, of fresh and salt water ecosystems and of the water we drink and bathe in is therefore one of the cornerstones of environmental protection in Europe. The stakes are high, the issues transcend national boundaries, and concerted action at the level of the European Union (EU) is necessary to ensure effective protection.

The European Commission (EC) has launched a **European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Water** with the aim to support and facilitate the development of innovative solutions to water related challenges and to create market opportunities by doing so.

The EIP on Water will bring together all relevant stakeholders to identify the priority areas for action, to identify barriers to innovation and to propose solutions to break down these barriers. The EIP on Water will take a problem oriented approach and will make use of the various existing European, national and regional initiatives.

One of the financial instruments from the European Commission will be **Horizon 2020**. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of just over €70 billion, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe.

## CALLS 2014: HORIZON 2020:

- **WATER-1-2014: Bridging the gap: from innovative water solutions to market replication**

Publication date: 11/12/2013

Deadlines: First stage: 08/04/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time  
Second stage: 16/09/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time

Expected funding: between EUR 2 and 4 million

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Specific challenge: One of the main factors hampering the market uptake of innovative solutions in the field of water is the lack of real scale demonstration of their long term viability. In addition, highly promising and sustainable eco-innovative water solutions often do not reach the market due to pre-commercialisation challenges and the residual risk linked to scaling-up. There is a need to take action to accelerate the commercialisation of eco-innovative water solutions with a view to stimulating sustainable economic growth, business and job creation in the water sector.

Scope: (2014) First application and market replication of near-market water solutions, addressing the thematic priorities identified in the EIP on Water. The EIP on Water has identified 8 priorities areas: 5 thematic priorities (water reuse and recycling; water and waste water treatment, including recovery of resources; water and energy integration; flood and drought risk management; and the role of ecosystem services in the provision of water related services) and 3 cross-cutting priorities (water governance; decision support systems and monitoring; and financing for innovation).

Proposals may also aim to help process industries become less water dependant while ensuring efficient management of other resources, and/or exploiting untapped potential of ICT by developing and deploying advanced ICT solutions for water resources management in agriculture and urban areas.

Expected impact: Contribution to the implementation of the EIP "Water". Support to the objectives of the Sustainable Process Industries Public-private Partnership (SPIRE PPP), in particular helping process industries and consumers to socially accept water as a highly valuable resource rather than a cheap consumable. Market penetration and demonstration, long-term application and sustained use of successful and sustainable innovative solutions by various end-users. Creation of new market opportunities both inside and outside Europe. Increase resource efficiency and environmental performance of the water sector, inter alia through synergies between public water authorities, water utilities, various economic actors and sectors, major companies and industries, SMEs and research organisations. Significant reduction in water use. More than 50% reduction of energy demand in water supply, treatment and transportation.

- **WATER-2-2014/2015: Integrated approaches to water and climate change**

Publication date: 11/12/2013

Deadline: First stage: 08/04/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time  
Second stage: 16/09/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time

Expected funding: between EUR 6 and 8 million (or more)

Specific challenge: The rising demands of a growing world population for food, water, materials and energy will put increasing pressures on land use, water resources and ecosystems. Increased energy

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use leads to increased demands for cooling water for thermal power plants. Climate mitigation options such as biomass production for energy might also lead to increased land and water demands.

Scope: (2014) **Water cycle under future climate:** Proposals should aim to:

- Maximise the reliability of projections of precipitation and couple them with water cycle variability at local/regional scales in Europe, over various timescales;
- Improve the short-to-medium term forecasting of related extreme events, integrating, where possible, information from available data sources;
- Assess the impacts of weather extremes as well as the wider impacts of climate change on the different components of the water cycle in terms of quantity and quality;
- Develop risk management strategies and adaptation options for extreme weather and other climate change-related threats at the appropriate scale(s), taking into consideration the role and involvement of the relevant stakeholders, and potentially putting emphasis on highly vulnerable water resources of strategic importance.

Expected impact: More efficient management of water resources in Europe due to better knowledge of the water cycle under the future climate. Contribution to management planning across the EU in support of the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources, the EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the relevant priority areas of the EIP "Water". Contribution in the longer-term to the development of reliable climate services in relation to the water cycle.

- **WATER-3-2014/2045: Stepping up EU research and innovation cooperation in the water area**

Publication date: 11/12/2013

Deadlines: 08/04/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time

Expected funding: ERA-NET Co-fund

Specific challenge: Water-related research and innovation is fragmented at EU level and dispersed at national level in several ministries, universities, agencies, regional governments and programmes. To be more effective and increase the added value of related investments, the efforts and strategic research agendas of the many funding networks and organisations existing in Europe need to be integrated to establish transnational and trans-disciplinary research and innovation actions.

Scope: (2014) Proposals should pool the necessary financial resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing a joint call for proposals resulting in grants to third parties with EU co-funding to support the priorities identified in the Strategic Research Agenda of the Water Joint Programming Initiative (JPI). Proposers should also consider implementing other joint activities including additional joint calls without EU co-funding. In 2014, this call should support research and innovation developing technological solutions and services to support the

implementation of EU water policy, in particular for water distribution and measurement, waste water treatment and reuse, desalination, floods and droughts etc.

Expected impact: Better use of scarce human and financial resources in the area of water R&I. Reduced fragmentation of water research and innovation efforts across Europe. Improved synergy, coordination and coherence between national and EU funding in the relevant research field through transnational collaboration. Improved implementation of research and innovation programmes in these fields through exchange of good practices. Contribution to the implementation of the JPI on Water.

- **WATER-4-2014/2015: Harnessing EU water research and innovation results for industry, agriculture, policy makers and citizens.**

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Publication date: 11/12/2013

Deadlines: 08/04/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time

Expected funding: EUR 1 million

Specific challenge: Effective use and market exploitation of water research results is often limited by the lack of adequate knowledge exchange practices and mechanisms. Water research and innovation faces several multidisciplinary challenges and involves a wide variety of policy sectors, decision makers, public and private users and stakeholders at various levels.

Scope: (2014) Proposals should aim to address only **one** of the following issues:

- Promote the dissemination and exploitation of EU funded activities, including relevant ICT-based tools and platforms and their integration for market leadership in many fragmented areas, develop appropriate policy briefs, and foster knowledge sharing and continuous benchmarking across the EU and Associated Countries to ensure wider application of innovative solutions and further demonstrate their potential to solve water-related challenges, including through river basin networks and River Basin Districts; or
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- Take stock of existing practical and scientific knowledge in the various sectors and identify research gaps with a view to avoiding overlaps between key regional, national, European and international activities, taking into account the implementation of the WFD; or
- Promote water-related innovation and business development, help cluster eco-innovative companies and develop innovative financial instruments; or
- Develop a coordinated approach to the integration of the water and waste sectors in the “Smart Cities and Communities” EIP, identifying research and innovation needs which could lead to future actions, promoting exchange of best practice between public authorities and stakeholders involved, and increasing preparedness and planning capacities of all the relevant actors.

Expected impact: Enhanced science- and evidence-based decision making in the field of water. Application of best management practices and new developments to address needs and opportunities in the water field. Enhanced interface between water and innovation policies. Rapid market uptake of research results in line with the priority areas of the EIP “Water”. Improved public engagement in research and improved public understanding of the dynamic nature of water systems and the role of innovation in the water sector. Integration of the water and waste sectors into the Smart Cities EIP.

- **WATER-5-2014/2015: Strengthening international R&I cooperation in the field of water**

Publication date: 11/12/2013

Deadlines: 08/04/2013 at 17.00h Brussels time

Expected funding: Coordination and support actions.

Specific challenge: Sustainable water supply and sanitation is fundamental to the food security, health, survival, societal well-being and economic growth in developing countries, especially in Africa. International cooperation can play an important role in mitigating negative effects. At the same time, the EU should aim to strengthen international cooperation also with emerging economies, especially China and India, through strategic partnerships in the field of water.

Scope: **(2014) Strategic cooperation partnership** for water research and innovation between Europe and the rest of the world, promoting the creation of networks of companies, entrepreneurs, not for profit organisations, policy makers, regulators and funding bodies to create business and social opportunities.

Expected impacts: Creation of market opportunities for European water innovations outside Europe, thus supporting the implementation of the EIP “Water” and its priority areas. Support to the implementation of the objectives set by the Strategic Forum for International Science and Technology Cooperation.

### OTHER POSSIBLE FUNDS:

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### - COSME:

Programme for the Competitiveness of the Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) will run from 2014-2020, with a planned budget of €2.3bn. It will facilitate SME access to finance, create supportive environment for business operate outside their home countries and improve their access to markets. COSME will help business and citizens in the following ways:

- 1) Entrepreneurs will benefit from easier access to markets in the EU and beyond,
- 2) Citizens who wish to become self-employed but currently face difficulties in setting up or developing their own business will receive tailored services and assistance, and
- 3) Member States' authorities will be better assisted in their efforts to elaborate and implement effective SME related policy reform.

The COSME programme such as Horizon 2020, applies directly to the European Commission level, where programmes are competitive and the best projects are chosen to fund.

### - COHESION POLICY:

Under the EU's 2014-2020 budget, Cohesion Policy will invest €325 billion in Europe's Member States, their regions and cities to deliver the EU-wide goals of growth and jobs, as well as tackling climate change, energy dependence and social exclusion.

Some key elements are:

1. Investing in all EU regions and the level of support and the national contribution (co-financing rate) to their levels of development:
  - Less Developed regions (GDP <75% of EU-27 average)
  - Transition regions (GDP 75% to 90% of EU-27 average)
  - More Developed regions (GDP >90% of EU-27 average)
2. Targeting resources at key growth sectors: Investments under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) will be concentrated on 4 key priorities: innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for SMEs and the low carbon economy, depending on the category of region (Less Developed: 50%, Transition: 60% and More Developed: 80%). Around €100 billion will be dedicated to these sectors, of which at least €23 billion will support the shift to a low-carbon economy (energy efficiency and renewable energies). On this, there are separate obligations to dedicate ERDF resources (Less Developed: 12%, Transition: 15% and More Developed: 20%).
3. Establishing a common strategy for more coordination and less overlap: A Common Strategic Framework provides the basis for better coordination between the European Structural and Investment Funds. This also links better to other EU instrument like Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility or the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

The funding received from Cohesion Policy, is being applied at national level.

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- **LIFE:**

The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation by co-financing pilot or demonstration projects with European added value.

The maximum EU co-financing rate for LIFE projects is 50% of the total eligible projects costs. LIFE is open to public or private bodies, actors or institutions registered in the European Union. Project proposals can either be submitted by a single beneficiary or by a partnership which includes a coordination beneficiary and one or several associated beneficiaries. They can be either national or transnational, but the actions must exclusively take place within the territory of the 28 Member States of the EU.

The budget for the whole period (2014-2020) is set at €3.4billion in current prices. For this new period, the programme creates two sub-programmes:

- **ENVIRONMENT:** covering 3 priority areas: 1) environment and resource efficiency; 2) nature and biodiversity; and 3) environmental governance and information.
- **CLIMATE ACTION:** covering the following areas: 1) climate change mitigation; 2) climate change adaptation; and 3) climate governance and information.

**NEXT/FUTURE EVENTS:**

**16/01/2014** – Info day on ERA-NET Co-fund under Horizon 2020. Brussels, Belgium.

**24/01/2014** – Joint WssTP-ERRIN Info day on public funding opportunities for water-related SMEs. Brussels, Belgium.

**05-07/03/2014** – South-East European Conference & Exhibition on Waste Management & Recycling Exhibition, Environment. Sofia, Bulgaria