



Water Joint Programming Initiative

Comments on the Draft Orientations Paper for the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5 Work Programme 2018-2020

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Water plays a central role in most of the current challenges identified in the areas of Challenge 5 “Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials”. Water is a cross-sectoral domain, as it remains central for several thematic areas, namely climate change, agriculture, food production and security, ecosystem sustainability and biodiversity, or urban area development. Water Research, Development & Innovation (RDI) development in the past 5 -10 years (being a focus area in Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014–2015 and a priority in most Member States) has led to a significant development of the Water economic sector in Europe. Despite these large efforts, many challenges remain, as acknowledged by the different key stakeholders (EIP Water, WssTP, UN, national policy-makers ...).

The Water Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) covers a wide range of water challenges, focusing on ecosystems, citizens, economic sectors (including the bio-economy) and closing the water cycle gap for a more efficient water resources management while bridging demands and supplies. This document has been produced by Research and Innovation Funding Programmes representing 88% of the European National Public investments in these topics. This wide representation of programmes and topics leads to priority setting in different thematic areas. While the Water JPI is very strongly & intrinsically linked to Societal Challenge 5, Research, Development & Innovation (RDI) needs covered under Societal Challenge 2 are also of key relevance to the Water JPI, as indicated in the name: “Food Security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and **inland water research** and the bioeconomy”. The Water JPI is aiming to tackle the ambitious grand challenge of “Achieving sustainable water systems for a sustainable economy in Europe and abroad”.

This short Position Paper builds on previous Water JPI Submissions and Position Papers prepared in the context of the preparation of the Horizon 2020 Work Programmes 2018-2020¹, as well as the Water JPI Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)².

In relation to the Draft Orientations Paper for the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5 Work Programme 2018-2020, the Water JPI:

- ⇒ Welcomes the introduction of the **Priority Area on Water** for our environment, economy and society.
- ⇒ Welcome the strong emphasis on international cooperation, which is well aligned with the aim of the Water JPI to reinforce international cooperation.
- ⇒ Advocates a **stronger focus on Water**, within the Key Priority Area and not as a “cross-cutting area” to other topics throughout the Work Programme and Societal Challenges. This is critical to ensure:

¹ http://www.waterjpi.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=529&Itemid=756

² <http://www.waterjpi.eu/images/documents/SRIA%202.0.pdf>

- Better coherence decreases the risk of fragmentation (across all the Societal Challenges) and maximises impacts of the RDI funding dedicated to water (building on the knowledge generated and critical mass).
 - Research on cumulative impacts from different sources can be considered (e.g. Industries, Agricultural (currently considered in a different Work Programme), etc.).
 - Areas from the Scoping Paper relating to: *True value of water* and *Nexus between water, energy and food* should be better represented with a primary focus on Water, within the Research and Innovation Work Programme.
- ⇒ Recommends that the **policy relevance** should be reinforced throughout the Work Programme, especially relating to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or EU water-related policy such as the Water Framework Directive. Following the review of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) of the Member States by DG ENV, it seems quite clear that much effort is still needed to achieve water quality objectives. More emphasis on RBMP-related RDI actions would be welcome. The Scoping Paper described the interest of the EC on water diplomacy, water governance issues ("*water diplomacy (...) and developing inclusive, multi-stakeholder business and governance models and decision support systems*" (Section 2.3). Other than the call on Europe-India cooperation, we do not find these aspects in the draft Orientations paper.
- ⇒ The strong emphasis on international cooperation is quite positive. If you all agree with that, maybe we should say at the beginning that the Water JPI views this as a strong point of the programme and that it is well aligned with the aim of the Water JPI to reinforce international cooperation.

In addition:

- ⇒ Water centrality should be stressed indeed to most of the call that address climate change actions for cities. For this area of concern, it would be important to highlight that the goal of the circular economy could be attained also by developing a water-smart economy that can effectively connect economic and environmental gains. This can be achieved by using advanced solutions for eco-innovation, future water infrastructure and new economic models based on the true value of water in order to increase rational use and re-use;
- ⇒ Water could be mentioned as the greatest common denominator of the cited nexuses; and
- ⇒ Water management is central to achieve the goal of Innovating and resilient cities.

Finally, the Water JPI would like to highlight the need for better coordination and integration of the various instruments such as PRIMA Article 185. The need for closer synergies between this initiative and the related JPIs (WATER, but also FACCE) should be reinforced based on the commonalities of their respective SRIAs. The Joint actions between WATER and FACCE JPIs have shown how important are these close collaborations on a shared vision.

Contact: Water JPI Secretariat (Waterjpisecretariat@agencerecherche.fr)