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Editorial



The close of the year is a good time to take stock of all the Water JPI activities which have taken place and to look forward to new developments. 2013 has been the first year of the FP7 Coordination and Support Action WatEUR, which continues to boost Water JPI implementation.

*In 2013 we have enlarged our partnership to include **Moldova and Estonia**. In addition our coordinator has been approached by a number of research groups and funding organisations from different countries. At Water JPI we believe that not only will the extent of our partnership work increase in 2014, it will also become more cohesive and operational.*

*In September our first important implementation activity culminated in the **launch of the Pilot Call** on "Emerging water contaminants - anthropogenic pollutants and pathogens". The call has raised a vast interest in the scientific and technological community at a pan-European level. Call Secretariat and coordination are provided by our Finnish partner AKA. The International external evaluation of the received proposals will start early in 2014.*

*The **extended mapping exercise** currently underway will enable a better and more consistent overview of water RDI in Water JPI partner countries. A **questionnaire** will soon be disseminated to a broad selection of water RDI stakeholders throughout Europe. The activity is coordinated by our Portuguese partner FCT. Details of this mapping exercise are explained by Sonia Silva in the interview below.*

*The **update and integration of a new version of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda** (expected for mid-2014) is ongoing. This activity is a key element for the implementation of the Water JPI. A consultation workshop to gather contributions from experts will be organized by our French partner IRSTEA at the beginning of April 2014. The Stakeholders Advisory Group and the Scientific and Technological Committee will attend the workshop and hold their annual meetings there.*

*A **survey targeting RDI cooperation with countries outside Europe** is ongoing under the coordination of our Dutch partner, NL Agency. The international cooperation strategy of the Water JPI will be developed in the coming months and prospects for cooperation with selected countries will be analysed.*

The new Horizon 2020 programme was launched on 11 December. This programme is intended to make a difference by:

- increasing the mobilisation of research and innovation resources
- developing the European Research Area
- providing solutions to the main societal challenges that Europe is facing.

The Water JPI partnership has participated in the discussions which are leading to the preparation of calls under the first biennial (2014-15) Work Programmes.

*The **next meetings of the Water JPI will be held in Lisbon between 4 & 6 February 2014**. These meetings will generate new activities for 2014 and will contribute to the implementation of the objectives of this Joint Programming Initiative.*

Among the many activities developed in 2013, the Joint Call for proposals is probably the most significant: it is our first coordinated activity, and demonstrates our capacities to make a difference in the European Water RDI landscape - watch out for more activities in 2014! We are getting ready.

INTERVIEW

with **SÓNIA MENDES DA SILVA**

*Senior science and technology manager at the Portuguese **Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia***

*Coordinator of the **Water JPI** mapping activities on European Water RDI programmes and projects*



Sónia Mendes da Silva

Your institution, FCT, is in charge of coordinating a mapping survey of the water research and innovation initiatives at national and regional level in Europe. Which are the main objectives of this mapping survey?

FCT, representing Portugal, is in fact the leader of this ambitious exercise, co-led by NEA from Norway. The aim of this mapping is to go further than previous exercises (namely those undertaken by European Commission and Water JPI in its first mapping in 2011) and collect relevant and detailed information on governmental strategies, funding schemes and performing in Water RDI in Europe. We want to identify strategic priorities for policies, funding and performing, to analyze the type of material and immaterial availabilities (specific data and infrastructures for instance), and overall procedures of S&T management in Water RDI. Through this challenging task we want to include both public and private sector and the temporal extension of the exercise spans from 2007 to 2013, as we wanted to catch the whole EU 7th Framework Programme. Our intent is to map the highest number of European countries possible.

How will the data collected be used?

All this information intends to provide critical mass on Water RDI management, policy making, funding and performing, because it is not likely that we are able to tackle common problems without a solid knowledge of our strengths, defaults, similarities, differences, needs and directions in this crucial domain. This is the main goal of our efforts. To feed our Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) with new knowledge, priorities and trends is also a very critical aim of this mapping and we feel very happy to also contribute for that essential dimension of our initiative.

Which tools will be used to perform this analysis on water research and innovation in Europe and related investments?

We will use four questionnaires, interviews and of course desk research. Regarding the questionnaires, we are addressing four groups: Thematic Priorities, Governmental Strategies, Funding Schemes and Performing. In addition, we are aiming to interview relevant actors and stakeholders in Water RDI in Europe at all the levels considered in the questionnaires.

Questionnaires will be addressed to governmental institutions, research centers, private and public research performers. Which results are expected from the answers you will receive?

The questionnaires target objective information and data, quantitative analysis, and are intended to have mainly direct questions. The analysis of the given answers will naturally be of utmost importance within the mapping exercise as a whole, because we consider the questionnaires the main tool for our endeavor. However, interviews will also bring invaluable information through more subjective perspectives and the richness that different profiles and experiences add to the exercise.

Why should a researcher be happy to contribute to this inventory?

A researcher knows, fortunately better than anyone, the importance of collecting information to provide critical thought and improve the work to be accomplished. In this particular case, a Water RDI actor, being a researcher, a technologist or an innovator, working at a Ministry, a funding agency or a research unit, is aware of the fragmented information on priorities, policies and practices, and the only way to overcome this fragmentation of information, which goes in parallel with a fragmentation and duplication of efforts, is to set up a solid base of knowledge in the most

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crucial areas that frame Water RDI activities. We understand that it is sometimes a bit time consuming, but it is essential to design rational and efficient Water priorities and policies and to establish wiser collaboration among so many different landscapes that configure our European continent. Not less important, to provide critical information that will mature knowledge and a Strategic Agenda is absolutely critical to contribute to an empowered European front in Water RDI. We are sincerely counting on our RDI communities to work with us in this major challenge!

THE EU FP7 PROJECT REFORM REstoring rivers FOR effective catchment Management

The four-year EU FP7 project [REFORM](#) is now approaching its halfway point, and most of the initial results can be consulted to support river basin managers in preparing the next River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) foreseen by the EU **Water Framework Directive** (2000/60/EC). This research project, which includes 25 most recognized institutions from 14 European Member States, aims to provide timely, state-of-the-art knowledge on hydromorphology, the interaction with ecology, the ecosystem services of stream, river, and floodplain ecosystems, and wider environmental aspects.

The implementation activities currently ongoing to fulfill the requirements of the **Floods Directive** (2007/60/EC), the **Birds Directive** (2009/147/EC) and the **Habitats Directive** (92/43/EEC) will also benefit from the project outputs since restoration measures may potentially play a significant role both in lowering flood risks and in achieving biodiversity protection objectives for specific habitats and species. Since from the beginning, it has been important for REFORM to foster and establish positive, two-way relationships with policy-makers, and practitioners and stakeholders involved in RBMPs, flood risk management plans and in reporting on conservation status. This is achieved by constantly communicating the REFORM research results and by involving them in evaluating and assessing the “fitness for purpose” of the project results and deliverables.

For instance, [the 1st REFORM Policy Brief](#) circulated among policy-makers in July 2013 illustrated *i)* the **review of hydromorphological assessment methods** that are used at both European and non-European level; *ii)* the **spatially hierarchical framework developed to assess hydromorphology** in streams, emphasizing the dependency of hydromorphological conditions on dynamic interactions between water, sediment, and plants; and *iii)* the **comparative analysis of the first RBMPs and Programmes of Measures**. Consultation is also boosted by informing the relevant Working Groups (WGs) of the WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) and by organizing *ad hoc* workshops and seminars at regional/case study, national and European levels. The technical and interactive [Stakeholder Workshop on River Restoration to Support Effective Catchment Management](#) held on 26-27 February 2013 in Brussels was one of these informational initiatives, providing indeed a platform for [consultation and exchange](#) between REFORM scientists, European technical experts working on river degradation and restoration, and members of the WG A “Ecological Status” of the WFD CIS.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



River Storå (Denmark)

HORIZON 2020 IS APPROVED AND CALLS ARE LAUNCHED

Horizon 2020 will boost funding for generating excellent science in order to strengthen the Union's world-class scientific excellence and make the Union research and innovation system more competitive. More information on [H2020](#)

RESULTS OF THE FIRST EIP WATER CONFERENCE

The presentations of the event held in the EU Parliament last 21 November are available [here](#).

NEW ACTION PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT

The Commission decision on the 7th EU Action Programme on Environment and Climate was signed into law by the Council and the European Parliament last 20th November. More information is available [here](#).

COUNTDOWN TO LAUNCH THE FIRST COPERNICUS SATELLITE

The Copernicus Earth observation programme is a complex set of systems which collects information from multiple sources. The first Copernicus mission, Sentinel-1, is likely to take place in April or May 2014. Click [here](#) for details.

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY COMPLEXITY AND THE COMMONS

In a challenging [book](#), the author analyses resource efficiency and efficiency gains from the perspective of common pool resources, applying this idea particularly to water resources and its use in irrigated agriculture.

OPPORTUNITIES

INVITATION TO TENDER

Unconventional Gas Exploration & Extraction (UGEE) is an emerging issue in Ireland and involves high volume hydraulic fracturing (fracking) of low permeability rock to permit the extraction of natural gas on a commercial scale. The EPA has invited tenders for a two-year research programme to further understanding of the potential impacts on the environment and human health from UGEE projects/operations. Deadline for queries (to be submitted via e-Tenders website only) is 9th January 2014 at 5pm; deadline for submission of tenders is 17th January 2014 at 12pm. Further information is available here: [EPA Press Release](#) and [Go to E-Tender](#).

OPEN CALL FOR EXPERTS WITHIN HORIZON 2020

A call is launched to establish a database of prospective independent experts to assist Commission services with tasks in connection with Horizon 2020. The call is addressed to individuals and research institutions, enterprises and social organisations. More information [here](#)

INNOVATION WITH STRUCTURAL FUNDS

A [video](#) explains the promotion of regional growth and innovation through the funds supporting the European cohesion policy.



UPCOMING EVENTS

INFO-DAY ON ERA-NET COFUND

DG Research and Innovation has organized a workshop to explain this new type of action under Horizon 2020 in Brussels on 16 January 2014. More information [here](#)

CIRCLE 2 CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Circle 2 is a European Network of 34 institutions from 23 countries committed to fund research and share knowledge on climate adaptation and promotion of long-term cooperation among national and regional climate change programmes. An international conference will be held in Lisbon from 10-12 March 2014. For details click [here](#)

IAHR EUROPE CONGRESS

The International Association for Hydro-environment Engineering will held its 3rd European conference in Porto from 14-16 April 2014. More information [here](#)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE EUROPEAN GEOSCIENCES UNION

The event [EGU 2014](#) will take place in Vienna from 27 April - 2 May 2014. The call for abstracts will close on 16 January 2014.



THE PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE [waterjpi](#) WEBPAGE

