



Water Joint Programming Initiative Submission Comments on the PRIMA SRIA

Date: 29/05/2017

Note: This contribution can be published as the Water JPI Submission.

Introduction

Launched in 2011, the remit of the Water JPI (20 members representing 88% of the public RDI expenditures in Europe, 4 observers, 7 countries beyond Europe associated) is to strengthen water RDI collaboration amongst Member States in order to address the challenge of “Achieving Sustainable Water Systems for a Sustainable Economy in Europe and Abroad”. To this end, the Water JPI seeks opportunities to pool and mobilise appropriate skills, knowledge and resources. The Water JPI covers a wide range of water challenges, including water quality, aquatic ecosystems restoration, adaptation strategies to climate change and the efficient use of water resources for agricultural uses.

As with PRIMA, the Water JPI has developed an agenda that is currently the strategic backbone of the initiative (from [version 0.5, May 2013](#) to [version 2.0, May 2016](#)). The Water JPI’s SRIA offers a detailed view of current RDI needs in the areas of ecosystem sustainability, safe water systems, water technologies, bio-economy and the closing of the water cycle gap. It’s the basis of all activities planned within the Water JPI (Joint Transnational Calls – 3 achieved with 44 funded projects and 2 upcoming, knowledge hubs, projects databases, access to infrastructures or mobility schemes, etc. – more information in the [key achievements document](#) and the [second implementation plan 2017 – 2019](#))

General comments on PRIMA and the Water JPI in the European RDI landscape

The Water JPI welcomes the efforts of the European Commission and Participating States in the launching of the PRIMA initiative as it will address some of the main urgent agri-environmental-related challenges in the Mediterranean region. There is no doubt that the supply of good quality water as required by citizens and the agri-economic sector is at the top of the policy agenda in the area. The announced financial contribution from both the European Commission and Participating States, adding up to more than 400 million euros, is a clear indication of the engagement made by both parties.

Many RDI efforts on water have been made in the past. The Water JPI wishes PRIMA to build upon these efforts and to take into account the activities that are to be developed in the future by other initiatives (ex: Water JPI, but also Horizon 2020 – under several Societal Challenges, COST, LIFE, EIT). Indeed the future landscape of water RDI will be characterised by the existence of multiple instruments focusing on water challenges which is quite fragmented so far, despite our efforts. **This will call for a sound complementarity across initiatives so that duplicated efforts are avoided.**



This complementarity will, for instance, be needed in the selection of RDI themes for upcoming calls for proposals. If this complementarity is not achieved there is a risk of competition across initiatives at the International, European and/ or national levels.

As started by the Water JPI, **synergistic actions along the whole RDI chain** (from academic research to applied, social and technological innovations) and in **cooperation with RDI end-users will be sought** in order to increase the overall impact of RDI actions.

The Water JPI is fully open to collaborate with PRIMA in the exchange of information on current and future activities, including progress on the alignment of national/ regional research programmes, SRIA updates, joint calls launch, knowledge hubs set-up, international cooperation, mobility and infrastructure sharing. Key lessons acquired through running projects, technology transfer activities and international collaboration schemes could be definitely of interest to PRIMA.

Specific comments on the SRIA of PRIMA

The three themes identified are relevant to the current context in the Mediterranean, and RDI priorities are clearly presented. The specification of types of actions and TRL for each priority allows having a better understanding of expected outcomes.

The Water JPI welcomes the integration of socio-economic research and stakeholder's involvement as a cross-cutting issue.

More specifically, and as indicated above, the Water JPI proposes PRIMA to focus future RDI actions on the following aspects:

- Improving knowledge of the long term impacts of climate change and climate change adaptation solutions in this specific semi-arid area through innovative monitoring approaches of water quality, soil quality and water quantity. Improving access to data and the assessment of uncertainties related to climate change mitigation, climate adaptation strategies and the monitoring of the global water cycle is required.
- Innovating in irrigation technologies and rain fed agriculture, such as water harvesting in the soil and aquifer recharge. Policy and governance issues should be considered as well as the development of skills amongst farmers for the implementation of new farming practices.
- Assessing the water – food nexus through innovative agro-hydro-economic modelling in order to be able to simulate the joint impact of different agricultural schemes, water demand, meteorological conditions and economic instruments.
- Demonstrating pilots for the reuse of reclaimed water and assessment of the benefits to public health and agro-ecosystems. Reclaimed water is an alternative source of water in areas affected by population growth, agricultural and forest production and climate change but social perceptions, costs, and technical and safety bottlenecks should be considered as well.



- Enhancing the availability and sustainable management of water supply and sanitation for all (SDG 6) in the Mediterranean area through a better understanding of pollution sources, processes and behaviour of related pollutants. Innovative approaches in the monitoring and assessment of pollutants are needed.

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