

## Conclusions on business models for addressing SDGs and reducing the *Death Valley* of projects to create a Water-Smart Society beyond Europe

# 56%

A 56% deficit in water supply relative to demand is foreseen by 2030. Water knows no border and impact directly our economy, society and environment. This projection by the World Resources Institute reinforces the importance not only to find water-smart solutions but also to reduce the time-to-market of projects. This fact makes collaboration imperative to address the SDGs through co-creative, comprehensive and real-life collaboration for people. We need to stimulate new business models between public and private partners.

This policy brief aims to summarise the outcomes of the [Water JPI – IC4Water](#) work package 3 (WP3 : Public-Private Partnership A common action plan with the economic sector : Identifying barriers and assessing best practices) by developing a common approach, identifying drivers and barriers and set up recommendation on “Business models” for addressing the SDGs. The recommendations are based on the conclusions of two workshops, one questionnaire and one webinar. The policy brief will be presented during the Cairo Water Week 2021<sup>[1]</sup>.

“ x5  
Companies’ Cost for water risks is 5 times higher than the cost of addressing them (CDP 2020) ”

### IC4water: a project to reinforce international cooperation in water.

With the specific focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) related to water challenges, the coordination and support action of the Water JPI - IC4WATER - aims to implement joint activities in a dedicated effort to reinforce international cooperation in the area of water challenges, and to further support the implementation and the strategy of the Water JPI. It has the objective to gather the full value chain of the water sector from research to the large water users to develop new governance and knowledge management approaches by:

- ◆ **Developing new approaches and tools for water management** aimed at setting up innovative alternatives suitable for decision-making.
- ◆ **Envisaging education and communication initiatives** to raise social awareness of consumption habits and water scarcity and to increase the levels of social acceptance and use of recycled water.

<sup>[1]</sup> Cairo Water Week, 24-28 October 2021 <https://www.cairowaterweek.org/>

# UN Sustainable Development Goals

Within the new post-2015 development agenda, the place of water-related issues has been further strengthened. Indeed, water is at stake not only in **Goal 6 to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”**, divided into seven specific targets, but in almost all of the **17 SDGs**.



Water is central to many of the UN SDGs.

This project has received the support of different European and International partners: PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area), BONUS (Joint Baltic sea research and development programme), Belmont Forum, Global Water Research Coalition (GWRC), UNESCO Water Sciences Division, FACCE JPI, JPI Climate, JPI Urban Europe, EurAqua, Joint Research Centre and Brazil, Egypt, Thailand, Tunisia, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Africa.

## Main recommendations for projects valorisation towards a Water-Smart Society

The conclusions of the aforementioned workshops and webinars are based on the general model of knowledge transfer within the innovation ecosystem (Holi et al, 2008) and knowledge chain of Water JPI. This policy brief is also based on the *Report on strategy and joint recommendations on models to facilitate take-up of innovative solutions for the water related SDGs*. These workshops, survey and webinar stressed three key drivers to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from project phase to business: water scarcity risk, the need for smaller innovative projects, and business proofed.

**Business proofed**

**Water scarcity risks**

**Smaller innovative projects**

1

2

3

It results, the following recommendations for public funding agencies with the aim of to better facilitate the valorisation of water research projects:

**Encourage the use of brokers**, between capital, industry, and research to better connect multiple parties involved. Money itself is not the main problem; water research is interesting for private parties too.

**Support a long-term engagement** to ensure proper outcomes and to prevent stop-and-go adverse effects and waste of resources.

**Facilitate Co-creation:** involve local partners and business during the whole project cycle. It is necessary and important to fill the gap between the cultural differences. Local partners and businesses must be involved through ‘influential participation’ from the very start.

# Water-oriented livinglabs

## Facilitate international knowledge transfer

WoLLs are real-life, water oriented and demo-type and platform-type environments with a cross-sector nexus approach, which have the involvement and commitment of multi-stakeholders (including water authorities) and a certain continuity (good chance to continue to their existence), and provide a “field lab” to develop, test, and validate a combination of solutions as defined in the Water Europe strategic innovation & research agenda, which include technologies, their integration as well as combination with new business models and innovative policies based on the value of water.

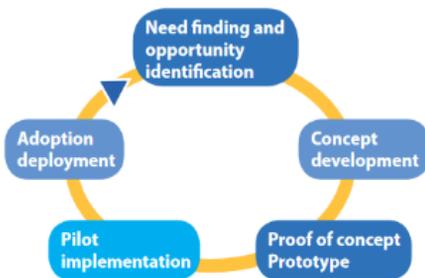
Within the framework of international dialogue, this tool can facilitate transfer of knowledge and scientific collaboration, offering market opportunities. Beyond Water Europe, several European associations have strengthened living labs for cross-border cooperation.

The conclusion of the workshops and webinar particularly stress this opportunity as “an excellent example of doing research, testing innovation on the spot, pave the way to market outreach of innovative solutions and scale up”

with a systemic approach deriving from the nature of the overarching model of Living Labs [...] in real-world and/or realistic environments that require close collaboration with the private sector”. It reinforce the possibility to:

- establish the bridge between researchers and business
- Co-work with experienced partners /end-users on critical phases
- Dissemination of best practices and facilitate the translation of projects outputs.
- Mentoring can be useful especially to developing regions or countries
- Facilitate the involvement of private sector and a better apprehension of their drivers

### TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE SUPPORTED BY LIVING LABS



### LIVING LABS SERVICE OFFERINGS

- Project preparation services
- User development methods
- Online focus groups
- Prototype creation
- Need finding
- Commercialization
- Innovation and development services for companies Usability testing

- Pilot and innovation environment
- Prototype testing
- Service concepts
- Networking
- Meeting place
- Living lab methods
- Project management services
- Product development services

