

EIP Water: Removing Barriers to Innovation

Innovation is central to economic growth and business competitiveness, and is at the heart of the EU's [Europe 2020](#) strategy. Since its launch in 2012, the [European Innovation Partnership on Water](#), an initiative within the European Union's 2020 Innovation Union, has worked to address European and global water challenges and to support implementation of the [EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#).

EIP Water's three key objectives are to facilitate development of innovative solutions to deal with European water challenges; to create demand and market opportunities for these innovations; and to support implementation of European water policy through innovative approaches.

"Innovation and water cannot be separated," said Marianne Wenning, Director, Quality of Life, Water & Air in DG Environment, EC. *"Improving water efficiency in light of increasing scarcity will require innovative solutions, as will emerging pollutants, reducing leakage, and water reuse. Water governance will also be positively influenced by innovative methods and approaches."*



"Water innovation contributes to tackling the societal challenges of the future, while at the same time creating sustainable growth and employment."

Through its Online Marketplace, EIP Water also matches up stakeholders across the entire innovation chain, with a particular focus on linking innovators with potential users.

It promotes collaboration among the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations and the general public to promote change and innovation in the water sector. It accomplishes this primarily through its 25 Action Groups and other Working Groups.

The partnership has eight priority areas, selected to address challenges and opportunities in the water sector and promote innovation-driven actions that will deliver the highest impact. These include thematic priorities – water reuse and recycling; water and wastewater treatment and recovery of resources; the water-energy nexus; flood and drought risk management; and ecosystem services – and cross-cutting priorities – water governance, decision support systems and monitoring and financing for innovation.

The EU Water Framework Directive

Adopted in October 2000, the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the operational tool that sets the EU's objectives for water protection for the future. It commits EU member states to achieve "good status" of all water bodies (surface water bodies, groundwater, and transitional and coastal waters) by 2015.

This "good status" has qualitative and quantitative aspects related to biological quality, physical-chemical quality, and chemical quality including concentrations of specific water pollutants as well as to hydrological regime and morphological conditions.

The Directive also requires Member States to establish river basin districts, each with a river basin management plan that is prepared, implemented and reviewed every six years. The plans include assessment of the impacts on river basin districts; environmental monitoring; establishment of environmental objectives; and designing and implementing programs needed to achieve those objectives.

With the WFD 2015 deadline looming, the [European Water Alliance](#), a coalition of European water-related umbrella organization, has asked the new European Commission led by President Jean-Claude Juncker to prioritize water because of its importance to the economy, environment and quality of life in the EU.