

# The EIP Water Annual Conference

In 2013, EIP Water launched its first Annual Conference in Brussels, as part of its efforts to engage with stakeholders and to stimulate creative and innovative solutions to water challenges at the European and global level.

Building on the success of the inaugural event (and having added an additional 16 Action Groups since then), EIP Water held its second Annual Conference in Barcelona on November 5,

2014, under the theme “*Connecting Innovation Demand and Supply*.” Making this connection involved “*showcasing impact*” through presentations of successful experiences in accessing markets and implementing innovation; identifying demand for innovation, particularly with regard to water policy implementation and the private sector; and addressing barriers to innovation in the water sector, from both the demand and supply side.

## Barcelona: The Innovation Capital

*The EIP Water Conference 2014 was hosted by Barcelona – the 2014 European Innovation Capital, or iCapital. The city earned the title from the European Commission “for introducing the use of new technologies to bring the city closer to citizens.”*

*Those efforts started in September 2011, when Barcelona’s city council launched the “Barcelona as a people city” project. Making the Catalan city a “people city” meant introducing new technologies to foster economic growth and citizens’ welfare through open data initiatives; sustainable city growth initiatives including smart lighting, e-vehicles, and residual energy heating and cooling networks; social innovation; and alliances between research centers, universities and private and public partners.*



The 2014 Conference looked at the water challenges EU member countries face in implementing the WFD, and what innovative solutions are available to address these issues. It also examined the role of the Water Action Groups in addressing these challenges, and sought to identify gaps in action and research, as well as challenges at each stage of the innovation value chain.

A significant component of the 2014 event was finance for water innovation – the mechanisms already available, the roadblocks to financing innovation, and the possibilities for innovative financing tools.

Before and after the conference, participants held a series of open and closed meetings. The day after the event, many had the opportunity to see some of Spain’s water sector innovations in action through site visits to a laboratory, water and wastewater treatment and desalination plants, innovative water research facilities, a managed aquifer recharge system, a rainwater detention tank, and a wastewater quality monitoring system. EIP Water organizations also presented during the Conference Exhibition.

The EIP Water Conference 2014 was organized by the [European Commission](#), with the support of the [Barcelona City Council](#), [Aigües de Barcelona](#), [Barcelona Cicle de l’Aigua](#), the [Government of Catalonia](#), the [Government of Spain](#), and [Aqualogy](#).