



B-WaterSmart: A Success Story for a Water Resilient Planet

For Water Smart Societies in Coastal Europe and Beyond



Context

Climate change, paired with unprecedented economic and demographic dynamics, has led to water scarcity, pollution, and increasing water demands. This has resulted in the overexploitation of resources, quality loss, and regional imbalances in the availability of water.

B-WaterSmart: A SPIRE cPPP Project



B-WaterSmart (**full title:** *Accelerating Water Smartness in Coastal Europe*) kicked off on 1 September 2020. It was funded by Horizon 2020 under a call of the **SPIRE cPPP** (the predecessor of **Processes4Planet**), and was implemented by an ample consortium of over 35 European partners, among which **Water Europe**, the association advocating for ‘*building a water secure, sustainable, and resilient, Water-Smart Society across Europe and beyond.*’

Goals and Vision



The overarching aim of B-WaterSmart was to accelerate ‘*the transformation to water-smart economies and societies in coastal Europe and beyond*’ through new technologies and digital solutions. The solutions were designed to reduce the use of freshwater supplies, improve the recovery and reuse of resources and improve water efficiency. The vision behind B-WaterSmart included enabling systemic innovation through Communities of Practice and Living Labs. B-WaterSmart addressed the need to create water-smart coastal regions while fostering resource recovery, circular economy, and ecosystem regeneration.

The project also aimed to demonstrate water-smartness as a holistic concept, facilitating culture, business opportunities, and global uptake of innovations.

Collaboration and Echoes: The Cirseau Project

B-WaterSmart was, alongside four other ambitious water projects – **REWAISE**, **ULTIMATE**, **WIDER UPTAKE** and **WATER-MINING** - part of a collaborative initiative called **The CIRSEAU Cluster**. The five sister projects were funded by Horizon 2020 under the SPIRE call CE-SC5-04-2019 ‘*Building a water-smart economy and society.*’

‘The CIRSEAU cluster projects contributed to the circularity of the European water ecosystem by identifying alternative water sources, reducing water consumption, increasing use efficiency, recovering valuable materials from water, producing carbon-free water cycles, and strengthening resilience to climate change’ (source).

On 1 September 2024, **the CIRSEAU project** started. The project aims to establish a Circular Water Economy Community, bringing together key stakeholders committed to fostering a water-smart society through digitalisation, water reuse, and brine mining.

Living Labs and Potential Impact

The six **Living Labs** (and the Communities of Practice built around them) were in **Spain (Alicante)**, **Norway (Bodø)**, **Germany (East Frisia)**, **Belgium (Flanders)**, **Portugal (Lisbon)** and **Italy (Venice)**. While each of them is dealing with different challenges, the areas had one thing in common (apart from the beautiful scenery): facing the climate change effects, which translates into water scarcity for some regions, and heavy rains, extensive energy use and pollution for others.

The **Alicante** living lab, dealt mainly with water scarcity, researched technologies and methodologies to boost water reuse. In the **Bodø** Community of Practice, blue-green solutions were explored to help preserve resources and disrupt the water cycle as little as possible. Smart digital solutions were employed to monitor water leakage and infiltration. The living lab in **East Frisia** addressed the challenge of increased water demands from private households and the industrial and agricultural sectors. In **Flanders**, the living lab focused on monitoring water-smartness for a more robust water system, a need generated by a combination of factors, among which; a dense population, high water demand and groundwater exploitation. Belgium ranked 23rd globally in the 2019 National Water Stress Ranking. **Lisbon** focused on improving the city’s water efficiency while increasing the quality of life. The **Venice** living lab centred on a strategy to boost water reuse at multiple levels.

All six living labs developed and implemented **digital tools and smart measuring systems** to correctly assess the volumes of waste water, the water demands and the available water resources. Furthermore, the labs acted like communities of practice, hinging on tight collaboration between key actors and stakeholders. As the [project's website](#) shows, all living labs had ambitions beyond the project, and an upscaling or transferability vision.

The Success Story

The project finished on 31 August 2024. B-WaterSmart has created a comprehensive framework and explored new business opportunities, while encouraging continued collaboration and learning to rethink water management systems. Moreover, the B-WaterSmart project developed a series of products and tools at the [Water Europe Marketplace](#) - the platform facilitating the knowledge exchange about innovative economy solutions and systems for water, energy and materials. The platform also fosters networking and connections among Circular Economy stakeholders. The products and tools are also available on the [project's website](#).

A.SPIRE considers B-WaterSmart and the collaborative effort of The CIRSEAU Cluster a success story that proposed an economic and environmental alternative, having a broad, long-term vision behind the developed solutions. On a societal level, the project raised awareness of European and global water issues and encouraged people to reduce their water consumption. A promising future-oriented initiative that invites us to 'Let's B-WaterSmart!'

Visit the B-WaterSmart project's [website](#).

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