

# WATERLINE

## NEWSLETTER

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# Meet the Team



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# Update from WP3

WATERLINE Digital Water Curriculum:  
A technology-supported hand given to digital water education

Teaching all water-themed topics such as management of water resources, planning, design and operation of hydraulic structures, hydro-meteorological extremes increasingly experienced under climatic and environmental pressures, etc. requires giving theoretical subjects in an integrated way with practical teaching. The biggest weakness in water education carried out online, e.g., during lock-down events such as the recent Covid epidemic or after natural disasters, has emerged specifically in practice subjects trained with physical means in normal periods. One of the effective tools of the WATERLINE project, which considers the technology-supported provision of the practical water education at this point as one of its strategic goals, is the creation of a digital water curriculum to be designed and implemented at the graduate level for capacity development of early-career researchers within the digital water sector.

To this end, the academic committee that was formed within WATERLINE has created a postgraduate digital water curriculum in effective communication with all stakeholders, which are among necessary components of the education improvement process. The committee has taken into account the expressed development needs that have been addi-

tionally analysed through the gaps analyses and needs assessments conducted within a stakeholder community through (still ongoing) consultations within the project. This process resulted in a Master degree programme, called "Digital Water and Water Systems Management", which involves core lectures to form the common teaching denominator on water science, and three specialization tracks (in its current state): (1) Water transmission systems design, control & operations, (2) Coping with hydrologic extremes, risk & emergency management, (3) Digital water applications for SMART environmental management. Each specialization field in the programme is supported by tailored courses in support of the core subjects such as hydrology, hydro informatics and water resources management. Transversal lectures on digital water ethics and research development complement this curriculum with transversal information. The program was designed to meet the advanced education needs of, for example, a hydraulic engineer employed in a water utility company with only online participation availability, or a newly granted environmental engineer who wants to specialize on smart environmental management as a regular student, or a departmental head in a water resources management administration who wants to benefit from some



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# Update from WP3

WATERLINE Digital Water Curriculum:  
A technology-supported hand given to digital water education

elective courses instead of the full program. One of the most effective aspects of the program is that it was structured in a way that courses on digital water teaching can be given as supported by extended reality (assisted, augmented or virtual reality environments in support of the emulated learning facilities) recitation sessions. The water Rig VR experiment developed by MCAST in support of water distribution / wastewater collection network systems education, the river flood experiment by MENDELU to help practically teach hydraulic aspects of river flooding, the virtual dam-break experiment developed by DEU for revealing downstream impacts of a catastrophic failure event, or the hydraulic losses VR experiment by UNI for contributing to the teaching efforts on fundamental hydraulic subjects are just one of a few examples serving this feature.

The program, which can appeal to target groups such as local students studying at the higher education institutions involved in the Master programme, or foreign students benefiting from international mobility grants to travel to the host institution, or students abroad who cannot physically participate in the program and can only benefit from online opportunities, was aimed to be developed in a way that will provide both theory and

practical teaching through digital water technology-supported learning environments, while the program outcomes and learning outcomes have been created taking into account international accreditation criteria to assure programme qualification. With all these priorities, structure and learning framework, it is believed that the "Digital Water and Water Systems Management" graduate program, which is one of the niche outcomes of the WATERLINE project, will make effective contributions to meeting the need for trained people in this field with its digital water education tools and platforms.



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# WATERLINE

## Ambassadors Program: Empowering Water Innovators Across Europe

By Naomi Timmer (H2O People) and Albert Chen (UNEXE)

The WATERLINE Ambassadors Program is a dynamic initiative to ensure sustainability and wider uptake of WATERLINE. This program aims to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovation in the water sector. In this article, we delve into the key aspects of the WATERLINE Ambassadors Program and its impact on water research, education, and entrepreneurship.

### What is the WATERLINE Ambassadors Program?

The WATERLINE Ambassadors Program serves as a bridge between water experts, researchers, educators, businesses, entrepreneurs, and practitioners. Its primary objectives include:

1. **Building Critical Mass:** By bringing together a diverse network of stakeholders, the program creates a critical mass of expertise and knowledge. This collaborative environment encourages cross-disciplinary interactions and accelerates water-related research and innovation.
2. **Capacity Building:** The program focuses on capacity building across three crucial areas:
  - o **Education:** Developing a digital water curriculum component to enhance water-related education.
  - o **Research and Innovation (R&I):** Equipping participants with the skills needed for cutting-edge research and innovation.
  - o **Entrepreneurship:** Empowering entrepreneurs to drive water-related solutions.
  - o **Businesses and practitioners:** Building innovation capacity and digital competency.
3. **Sustainability and Alliances:** The WATERLINE Ambassadors Program sustains its impact by:
  - o Establishing ambassador networks that facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.
  - o Identifying funding opportunities within the R&I landscape.
  - o Creating synergies with EU initiatives, institutions, projects, and networks.



## Key Activities

### 1. Capacity Building

The WATERLINE Ambassadors Program actively contributes to capacity building through:

- Digital Water Curriculum: Developing a comprehensive curriculum to educate the next generation of water professionals.
- Compendium of Capacity Building Output: A repository of resources, best practices, and success stories.

### 2. Technology Transformation

To drive technological advancements, the program focuses on:

- WATERLINE Website: A central hub for information, updates, and resources related to water research and innovation.
- Common Workspace for Technology Developments: A collaborative platform for sharing ideas and solutions, knowledge exchange, and skills development.
- Technical and User Documentation: Ensuring transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders.

### 3. Facilitating Sustainability

The program actively contributes to sustainability by:

- R&I Funding Landscape Analysis: Identifying funding opportunities for water-related projects.
- Policy Exploitation Guideline Recommendations: Guiding participants on leveraging policies and regulations.
- WATERLINE Ambassadors Network: A vibrant community of water enthusiasts, researchers, and advocates.

## Conclusion

The WATERLINE Ambassadors Program embodies the spirit of collaboration, knowledge dissemination, and sustainable impact. As water challenges continue to evolve, these ambassadors play a pivotal role in shaping a resilient and innovative water future for Europe. Are you interested to play a role in the ambassador program? Do not hesitate to contact us!

*Views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Horizon Europe Programme<sup>1</sup>*

*For more information about the WATERLINE project, visit the official website<sup>2</sup>*

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# Update from WP4

We are planning to use AR technology to enhance learning experiences by providing additional information, 3D models, or interactive elements in educational materials for the subject of fluid mechanics. This will be achieved through the use of existing devices such as smartphones or tablets in combination with purchased equipment through the WATERLINE project i.e. smart glasses and AR headsets. Combining the real-world view from the laboratory captured by the device's camera with computer-generated information, such as images, text, 3D models, and animations, our application will create an interactive and immersive experience for students as end-users, allowing them to interact with both the physical and digital elements simultaneously.

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies offer a remarkable transformation of traditional material giving it a digital context for better engagement of students and teachers in the process of education.



VR, a technology that transports you to a completely digital environment, will be used to create a 3D laboratory environment that we can explore and interact with by wearing cutting-edge VR headsets. Planned using VR for exploring laboratory exercises in a fully immersive way can provide significant benefits in future education and training. VR creates a realistic and immersive environment, allowing students to feel as if they are physically present in a laboratory setting. This will enhance the learning experience by making it more engaging and create an immersive learning environment at the University of Nis, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture. On the other hand, students will learn at their own pace in a virtual environment, repeating experiments giving them an opportunity to accommodate various learning styles and speeds.



With the help of VR/AR technologies, our students will learn about complex concepts in fluid mechanics more interactively and engagingly.

We are satisfied that both technologies will deliver more memorable and realistic experiences not only to our students but also to our teaching staff. In our future activities, we are planning to integrate virtual labs with the curriculum to enhance achieving the overall learning objectives.



The day we received the VR headsets and Assisted Reality glasses was a monumental occasion for our team, marked by a palpable sense of anticipation and excitement. As we gathered in the faculty to unbox the equipment, there was a buzz of enthusiasm in the air. Upon first glance, it was evident that the technology was cutting-edge, sparking a wave of curiosity and eagerness to delve into its capabilities.

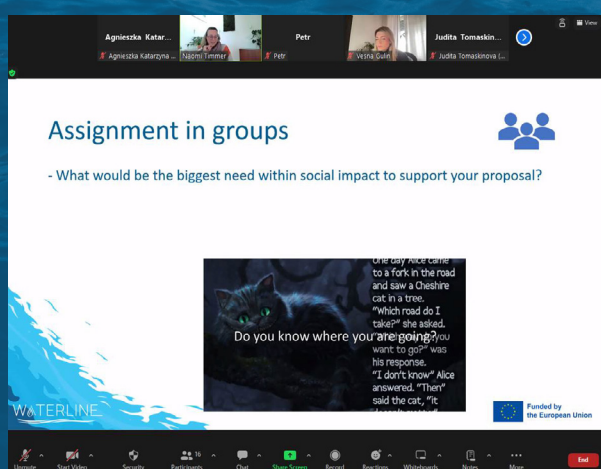
However, it was the initial experience of using the VR and AR equipment to visualize our digital models that truly left a lasting impression. Despite my extensive experience in modeling, witnessing our creations come to life in a completely immersive environment felt like a pivotal moment, propelling us into the realms of the future. The sense of awe and wonder as we explored our designs in virtual space was unparalleled, igniting a newfound passion for our work and reinforcing our commitment to the project. Through triumphs over technical challenges and the adaptation to a virtual environment, we discovered unexpected benefits that made the learning curve not only worthwhile but exhilarating. Our journey with this technology has been transformative, offering us a glimpse into the endless possibilities it holds for innovation and creativity.



# WATERLINE R&I Seminar organized by NMBU

## Unlocking Success in Research Applications: A Recap of NMBU's Seminar on Writing R&I proposals

In late November 2023, NMBU brought together early career researchers over three dynamic days, offering insights for developing compelling research and innovation proposals. The seminar gathered 32 researchers, including young professionals from the Waterline consortium. The seminar was designed to equip early career researchers with the essential tools and insights for drafting winning research proposals across diverse funding programs.

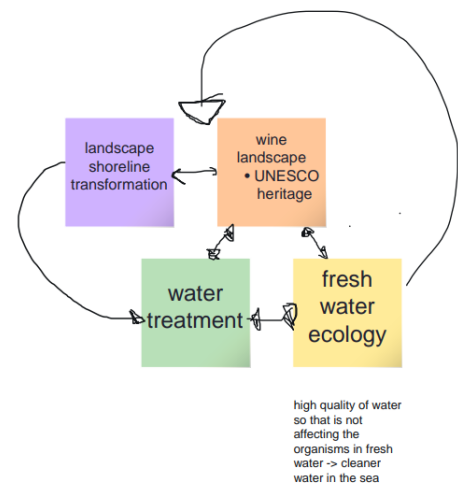


Day one was dedicated to building the foundations of writing the projects. The seminar kicked off with an energetic introduction and ice-breaking session, setting the stage for collaborative learning. The day unfolded with engaging sessions on collaborative and platform projects, featuring valuable inputs from senior researchers from Waterline consortium, such as Milan Gocic from UNI and Harsha Ratnaweera from NMBU. Noteworthy discussions revolved around best practices for ERASMUS+ calls and the conceptualization of projects. Participants also benefited from insights into structuring research proposals, including MSCA guidelines, shared by Agnieszka Cuprys (NMBU) and Zakhar Maletskyi (NMBU). The day ended with engaging group work sessions for hands-on application.

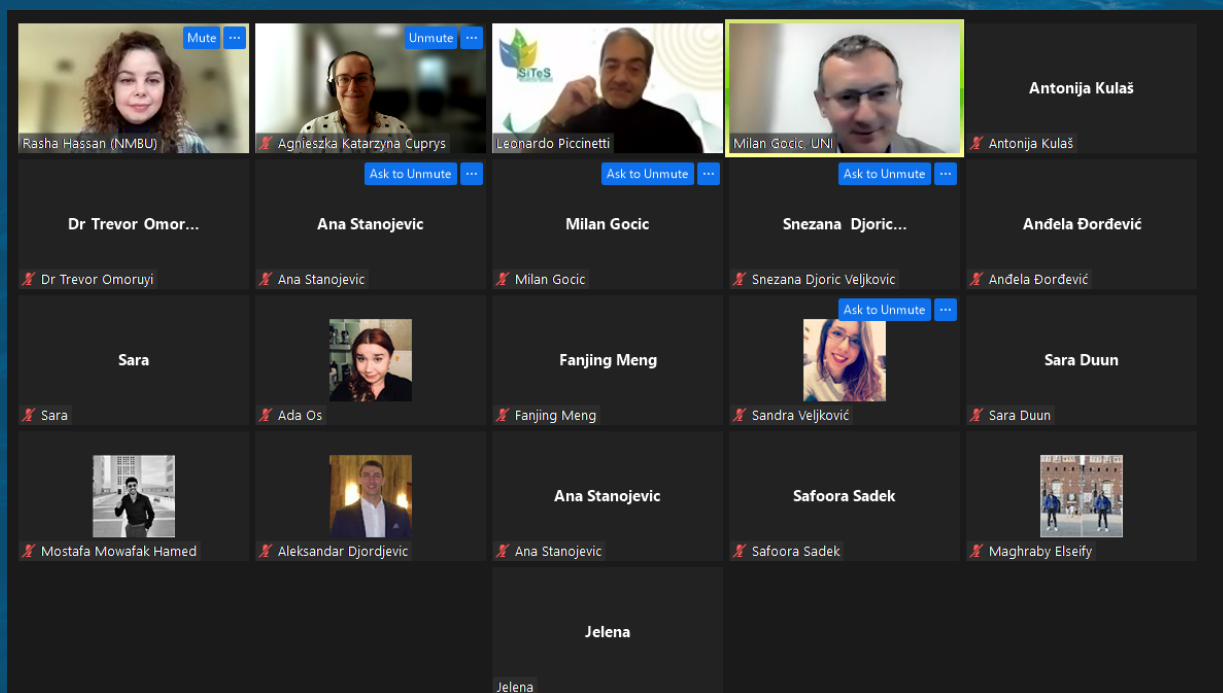
During the second day, the participants learnt how to navigate in EU Calls. Naomi Timmer from H2O people shared her insights on promoting social impact, young researchers and enhancing proposals. Elisabeth Tangstad from NMBU provided invaluable tips and tricks for crafting compelling proposals tailored to Horizon Europe requirements. Agnieszka Cuprys (NMBU) further enriched the session by delving into effective strategies for disseminating and communicating research outcomes. The day concluded with dedicated group work sessions, empowering participants to refine their proposals, followed by insightful discussion sessions.



<div>Brainstorm</div> <div>List the driving forces creating change and the restraining forces slowing it down, expanding on what others have said as needed.</div> <div>Everyone can add Brainstorming collaboratively</div>	
Driving Forces :	Restraining Forces :
+	+
Lack of opportunities	Lack of connections with industry
Survive in a scarce market	Lack of network
Solving problems	research is following the trends of policy
Excitement and new beginnings	Uncertainty
Survive and secure your own position	Pressure on our social life
Knowing yourself and skills	nepotism
Innovation	Old white man institutions
Connecting with people	Administrative process
curiosity	Conducting the work and repetition
Growing in your career	Poor salaries
Joy of conducting research	Lack of financial support and resources
Developing an idea and bringing into fruition	Entangled ideas and lack of clear direction
making a positive impact on our life	Energy draining process
saving the world	Lack of tools and resources needed
Lifelong learning	Lack of experience
Gaining multidisciplinary perspectives	
Exchanging knowledge and experience	
cooperation	



The final day started with a captivating case study analysis led by Leonardo Piccineeti from SITES, shedding light on lessons learnt from project management and successful projects in the Digital Water Sector. Rasha Hassan (NMBU) continued the momentum by exploring strategies for forging partnerships and joining consortia, essential for project success. Participants enthusiastically continued their group work, mapping out potential research proposals initiated earlier, culminating in reflective debriefing sessions and a successful wrap-up of the seminar.



In summary, the seminar was a catalyst for empowering early career researchers with knowledge and practical skills for developing winning proposals. The engaging sessions, interactive group activities, and expert insights collectively contributed to making this seminar a resounding success, fostering a community of aspiring researchers poised for impactful contributions to research and innovation.



# WATERLINE's events during the past 6 months: Community of practice Meetings

MCAST had the pleasure of organising and hosting the first Face to Face Community of Practice meeting for the EU Funded WATERLINE Project at the MCAST Applied Research and Innovation Centre where experts ranging from corporations, regulators and industry all came together to discuss the future of digital water higher education enabled by assisted and virtual reality.







Very interesting and insightful discussions about the future of education in the water, and digital water realms ensued! Several contributions and new ideas were made all with the main aim of enhancing the educational experience of future students in this critical sector; all whilst ensuring that what will be achieved is relevant to our current and future challenges.







On November 3rd 2023, Prof. **Harsha Ratnaweera** moderated a face-to-face workshop on **digital water** in Oslo, **Norway**, and the event was a success! It brought together representatives from **universities, businesses, government**, and the community to discuss the intricate aspects of co-creating the Digital Water Higher Education Institution (HEI) Alliance within **Waterline**. The attendees delved into the challenges Norway faces, the needs that must be addressed, and the gaps that need to be filled. The insights shared during this workshop were not only valuable but also perfectly aligned with the Norwegian context.

The next step on this exciting journey is being taken by the Norwegian Regional Committee of Practice for Digital Water, as they prepare to draft a comprehensive roadmap. This roadmap will serve as an input for the guiding framework, enabling the WATERLINE consortium to collaborate effectively and establish a shared governance structure for the WATERLINE campus.

However, this is just the beginning! Our commitment to enhancing digital water solutions remains steadfast. We have a plethora of plans and ideas for the future, all aimed at making digital **water** even more efficient and sustainable.



# WATERLINE's events

## During the past 6 months

From 14th to 15th September 2023 the UNI Team participated in an international conference SINARG 2023 (International Conference – Synergy of Architecture & Civil Engineering, <https://project.gaf.ni.ac.rs/sinarg/aktuelno>) in Nis, Serbia. At a special session inter-project coaching Vuk Milošević presented the Waterline project on 15th September 2023.



From 25 to 30 September 2023, the UNIRC Team participated in the SuperScienceMe event, which included Researchers' Night 2023.

From 4 to 7 October 2023 the UNIRC Team participated in attended the Cosmos Festival.





On October 25th, 2023 the University of Nis hosted a face-to-face workshop on digital water in Serbia. The event gathered 20 stakeholders from the quadruple helix, fostering discussions on digital water development and creating a joint governance framework for sustainability. The workshop introduced the WATERLINE project and shared insights from Tasks 2.1 and 2.2. Fruitful discussions emerged, contributing to the future of the Digital Water campus.

In November 2023, 'Creating synergies with WATERLINE (EU) Project' workshop was organized by H2O people and NMBU team to bring closer the various aspects of digitalisation of waster sector and to have an exchange about relevant technological development in AI/AR. The discussion was between the representatives of industry and academia.



During the inter-project coaching event organised back-to-back with the training of the Erasmus+ project DGTRANS at the Faculty of Occupational Safety, University of Nis on 20th February 2024, Milan Gocić had an opportunity to present the Waterline project.



## INTRODUCING THE DIGITAL WATER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Aleksandar Đorđević<sup>1</sup>, Milica Ćirić<sup>2</sup>, Vuk Milošević<sup>3</sup>, Milan Gocić<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract:**  
The world is becoming intensely digitalised with the rapid development of digital technologies. Digitalisation has spread throughout our daily life, but education has mostly remained unchanged. On the other hand, natural resources are becoming scarcer including clean drinking water. This paper contains an analysis of contemporary literature about digitalisation of higher education with special emphasis on introducing digital water in higher education. Digitalising the teaching process is one of the ways to bring the subject of water closer to students. By making the learning process interesting and using the latest technologies the ultimate goal is to transfer the necessary knowledge about water resources management and raise the awareness of the importance of water in younger generations. The secondary goal is to innovate the teaching methods not only in water-related subjects but in the whole curriculum. This topic is comprehensively analysed as a part of the Horizon Europe WATERLINE project.

**Key words:**  
digital water, digitalisation, higher education, XR technology, Waterline project

Soft skills are required from the students in order to use digital water in real world and economy. Only a fraction of the comprehensive research and report is presented here. Next steps in the project include collaborative development of a range of water-related elements for master's level programs and conversion of partner HEIs laboratories into immersive virtual and augmented reality environments and establishment of a European community of academics and researchers collaborating with quadruple helix stakeholders to facilitate the exchange of knowledge in the fields of water and extended reality technologies (waterline-project.eu). Developing virtual and augmented reality applications is the next milestone that is currently underway. We sincerely hope that the pilot implementation will demonstrate the benefits of learning in digital environments and help introduce digital water into higher education institutions.

### CONCLUSION:

This paper is focused on digital transformation in higher education with the emphasis on digital water subject. Digitalization is taking over different areas of life and education is a logical continuation. Digital technologies offer various economic, environmental, and social advantages. Technology could also affect the sociological part of education. It requires the adaptation of all the participants, professors, students, administrative workers, etc. Considering that among computer skills and digitalization tools a lot of soft skills are required in order to adapt to new teaching ways and change the mindset of all the participants in the process. Another issue is the institutional barriers and laws about education especially in developing countries which require change. The results of the survey showed that higher education institutions should include more soft skills and specific water-related knowledge skills along with the information and technology related subjects into their curricula. These skills were recognized as needed in the industry and non-government sectors by the majority of respondents from participating institutions. Using modern technologies will be the future of learning not only in the water sector but also in other curricula. Also using virtual reality technology can help improve the focus of the students, make the knowledge more accessible and interesting, and further improve the whole learning experience not only related to water but also other subjects. Therefore, the intention of the presented WATERLINE project is to prove with the pilot concept that using XR technology is beneficial and to improve the curriculum and create a so-called water campus that will serve as a base for future master or bachelor study curricula. In further research papers, we will keep the scientific and general public informed about the results of the pilot lesson with the use of XR technology and how it performed compared to the conventional lessons and teaching techniques.

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The UNI team members Aleksandar Đorđević, Milica Ćirić, Vuk Milošević and Milan Gocić wrote and presented the paper titled "Introducing the digital water in higher education" at the International conference Challenges of contemporary education – CCHE 2024 (29th January – 3rd February 2024, <https://cche.rs/>).

From 5th to 8th March 2024 the UNI Team participated in an international conference GNP 2024 (9th International Conference – Civil Engineering Science and Practice, <https://www.gnp.ucg.ac.me/>) in Montenegro. At a special session inter-project coaching Milan Gocić presented the Waterline project and discussed the experience in project implementation on 7th March 2024.





# FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2024

31  
MAR

Deadline Registration  
New European Junior Water Programme Group 6  
[www.juniorwaterprogramme.eu](http://www.juniorwaterprogramme.eu)

10-12  
APR

Water Sustainability Colloquium – United Nations Ocean Decade  
Conference  
Online Conference  
Registration:  
[https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/water-sustainability-colloquium-united-nations-ocean-decade-conference-tickets-748142302767?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&keep\\_tld=1](https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/water-sustainability-colloquium-united-nations-ocean-decade-conference-tickets-748142302767?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&keep_tld=1)

15-17  
APR

Global Water Summit 2024  
Physical Event, London (UK)  
Registration:  
<https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/news/global-water-summit-2024#:~:text=The%20biggest%20event%20in%20the,on%2015%2D17%20April%202024>

23  
APR

Webinar: Best practice and innovation in water sensing  
Online Webinar  
Registration:  
<https://www.watermagazine.co.uk/event/webinar-best-practice-and-innovation-in-water-sensing/>

26  
APR

Your knowledge journey starts soon: With our free webinars 2024!  
"There is a large potential for recycling industrial wastewater"  
Online Webinar  
Registration: <https://www.h2o-de.com/en/about-us/news/webinars-2024>

20  
MAY

Kick off new Group EJWP6, Finland  
<https://juniorwaterprogramme.eu/>

22-24  
MAY

European Navigation Conference  
Physical Event, ESA ESTEC (Netherlands)  
Registration: <https://enc-series.org/2024/>



28-29  
MAY

National Sustainability Summit  
Physical Event, Dublin (Ireland)  
Registration: <https://www.sustainabilitysummit.ie/>

29-30  
MAY

Green week 2024: Towards a water resilient Europe - Europe's leading environmental conference  
Physical Event, Brussels (Belgium)  
Registration: [https://green-week.event.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://green-week.event.europa.eu/index_en)

02  
JUN

BlueTech Forum  
Physical event (conference), Edinburgh (Scotland)  
Registration: <https://www.watermagazine.co.uk/event/bluetech-forum/>

17-19  
JUN

Water Innovation Europe 2024  
Physical Event, Brussels (Belgium).  
Registration: <https://watereurope.eu/event/water-innovation-europe-2024/>

25-27  
JUN

Connecting Green Hydrogen Europe 2024 (CGHE2024)  
Physical Event, Madrid (Spain)  
Registration: <https://www.europe.gh2events.com/>

END  
JUN

Deadline registration Blue Innovation Track, for advanced water leader, Fall 2024 Edition <https://h2o-people.eu/programs/blue-innovation-track/>

11-15  
AUG

IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition 2024  
Toronto, Ontario (Canada)  
Registration: <https://worldwatercongress.org/>



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<https://www.facebook.com/WaterlineProject.EU>

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MCAST



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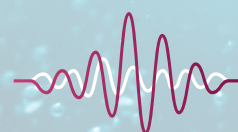
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