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Water RtoM

Water Research to Market

DELIVERABLE: BUSINESS PLAN

Associated action n°5

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1 List of key-words and abbreviations

ReMas: Research to Market Assessment Strategy

WaaS: WaterRtoM as a Service

SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises

2 Context and background

LIFE+ Water RtoM project (2010-2013) has developed a strategy to speed up the transfer of water related research outputs to the market. During the three years of the project, the “Research to Market Assessment Strategy (ReMAS)” was designed and tested in order to get a set of tools to reduce the time of the knowledge transfer for water related research outputs.

The project scheme comprises: a permanent watch of the innovative research results in the water domain as the raw material to evaluate the distance to the market, a set of tools for the assessment of what is missing to be ready to use, a set of communication tools for their promotion, an online database with the assessed outputs.

Thanks to the strategy developed to facilitate market analysis, dissemination and promotion of research outputs into the market, Water RtoM improved time-effectiveness on Knowledge Transfer, and also the quality of the process for 12 research outputs. Water RtoM attempts to offer a “service” based on the developed tools and strategy.

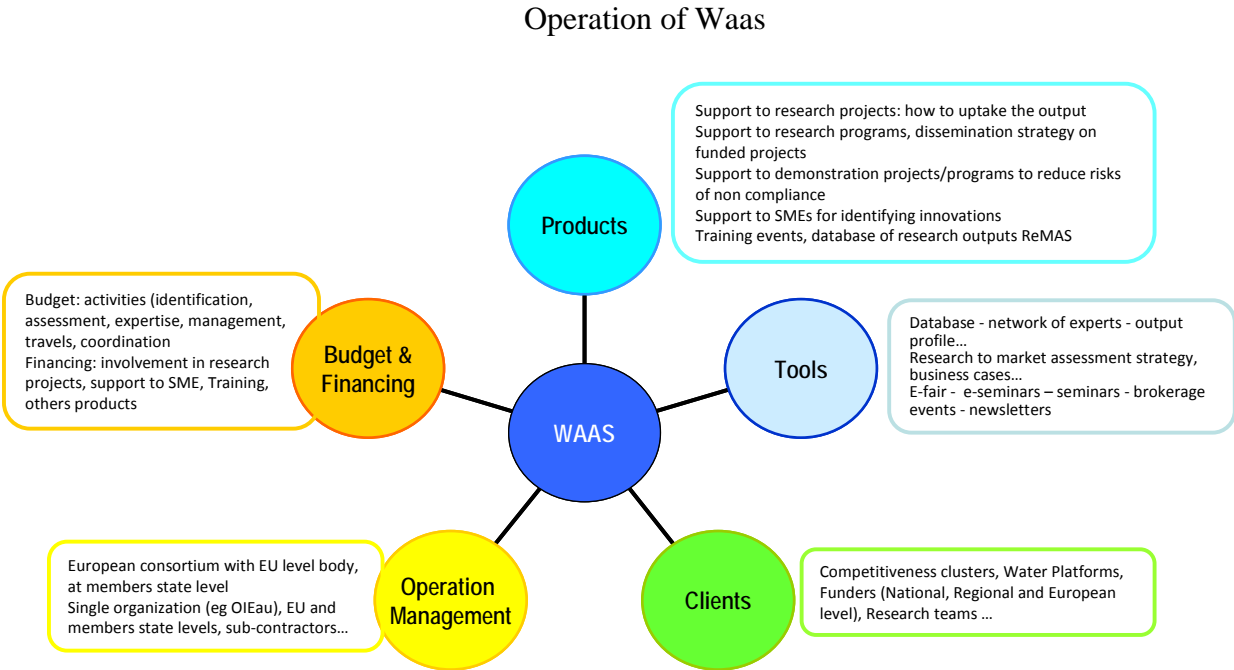
3 Objectives of Water RtoM as a Service

The objectives of “WaterRtoM as a Service” (WaaS) will be to provide: 1°) a support to disseminate the research outputs at national and European levels, 2°) tools and methods to speed-up the transfer of research outputs in the water innovation ecosystem, 3°) a dissemination strategy of innovations.

WaaS will link the authors of the outputs (most often researchers) and the target group (most often practitioners), and fill the gap between knowledge dissemination and knowledge use within the frame of existing procedures.

The service will be able to remove the obstacles and to pass the main barriers for transferring research's results into the market. Its main activities will be:

- Promoting the dialogue and networking between researchers and users
- Identifying and collecting complete information about the research outputs linked with the current markets needs
- Evaluation of the research products in terms of distance to market
- Promoting research outputs to the market



From the lesson learnt during the 3 years of Water RtoM, the basic assumption is that the ratio between sorted list of innovative products and the business case of some of them is:

Sorted list	ReMas	BC	Reduction of transfer time
200	80	30	10
100%	40%	15%	5%

4 Products of Water RtoM as a Service

The main products to be sold by WaaS are:

- **Support to individual research projects** to develop and implement the innovation-oriented part of their dissemination strategy (mid-term assessment of the transferability of the foreseen outputs, recommendations for improvement, evaluation in term of distance to the market (named ReMASization) of the outputs, elaboration and implementation of the transfer strategy, promotion activities). The idea is to convince researchers and collaborate or sub-contract with them to a work package “uptake the innovation”.
- **Support to (national or regional) research programmes** to develop and implement an innovation-oriented dissemination strategy, targeted at the projects funded by the programmes; the idea is to convince the research programmers to introduce a specific deliverable in the financed research project as “Uptake of the product” and based on the ReMAS
- **Support to (national or regional) demonstration projects** or programmes to assess the demonstration and innovation dimensions of on-going projects, in order to reduce risks of non-compliance to the criteria (Audit the project or programme)
- **Support to SMEs** and groups of SMEs (clusters) for identifying innovation precursors, adapted to their needs, and for accompanying them during the innovation process.

Additional products include:

- **Training events** on targeted innovations, a state of art of the innovations in the field of water, to help public and private procurers (demand side) to identify what is/will be available from the offer side,
- A database of research outputs ReMAS, with information on results of projects

5 The market and potential clients of the service

The Business plan should estimate the market of this service at national level in the 4 countries of the partnership (France, Spain, Poland, Romania) and more general at European level (through European institutions). Water RtoM sets up a market survey to 60 people representative of researchers, end-users, knowledge brokers, funders. For a part, the information is collected by the projects partners and the Liaison committee members. For another part, OIEau organised some telephone interviews¹ in order to evaluate the “market” interest for the service (see in annex the market survey).

The overall response of the interviewees was positive. 65% of the responses stated that the service is marketable. Further development is needed to take forward WaaS. Within these 65% positive answers, just over half saw further development necessary. In terms of financial support and commercial viability the picture is more complicated with only 2% stating yes they would pay for the service and 26% of the responses saying yes they would be willing to pay for the services using a public grant.

¹ The list is in annex

Against this there were 30% stating they are not at this moment willing to pay and 23% would not at all pay for the service.

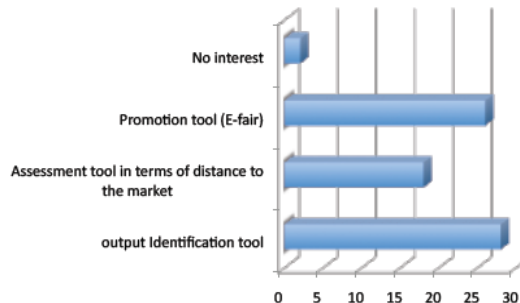
The possible clients/users of the service:

- In France (OIEau): Several contacts are in progress, especially to the competitiveness clusters (DREAM, Water cluster, Hydreos, Limousin Environment), SWELIA and some funders who could be potential clients (Water Agencies, Ministry of Environment, National research agency...). OIEau is confident to work closely with some research projects as partners (and managing the work package “Uptake”), and/or through sub-contracts with the researcher project team
- In Poland (GWF): WaterRtoM will not be in favour to be financed by any means of administration offices, technological centres or private companies. There is also a little chance for obtaining additional funds in either the regional or national environmental protection fund- there are just too many investments that will have priority. Also the reason for this is the fact that such a service is not seen as an independent marketing strategy or element and although former experience has shown us that it is indeed needed, it is quite clear that a financing of such service would have to come from an external, preferably European fund. What is more, it is believed that the target group (potential companies, researchers, end-users) will not finance a service that can exist (in a smaller scale) in their own company, for example permanent watching, output profile, business case – these activities would not be difficult to be scheduled in someone’s working hours and it is believed, that at this stage of art, it would be nearly impossible to convince the potential end-users otherwise. Private working units have a very strict budget – as well as companies involved in project and actions like this cannot be justified otherwise than in working hours – and for working hours it is highly impossible to employ someone on contract just to provide this service.
- In Spain (Amphos21): We do not envisage any possibility of national or regional funds for this service for several reasons, first in the current economical public institutions are facing economical problems, second, the service has been seen as a complementary of existing ones, improving existing initiatives, at this moment these existing initiatives cannot afford more resources. Summarizing, it should be a service emerging from an international funding scheme.
- In Romania (CFPPDA): The service in Romania has a limited market. Due to the investment process that it’s the progress now, the main water utilities focus their interest for negotiation with product’s owners which are already in the market. Still there is a need for this type of service in relation with water research. There, the service of dissemination is sustained by the owners. CFPPDA together with the Romanian Association for Water will continue the process of advertising the service among the research environment. For short term is expected the service to be supported from both side (owner and final user). The service will be promoted in conjunction with brokerage events organised in parallel with main events. CFPPDA will allocate one person (part time) to promote the services among the potential clients (researchers and water utilities). The service will be dedicated for interested partners in Romanian market.
- At European level : Horizon 2020 projects (DG RDI), European Innovation Partnership for Water (DG ENV), Joint Programming Initiative (JPI), WssTP...

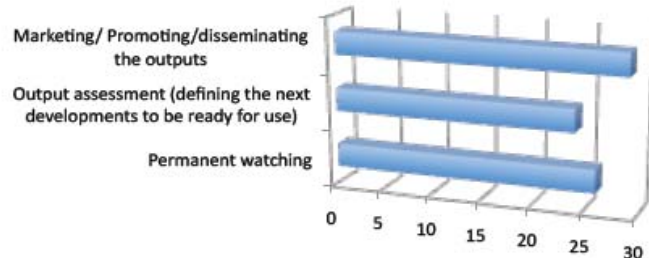
From the market study (interviews of 60 people from Researchers, users, funders, knowledge brokers) – July/Aug 2013:

There are many potential clients and aspects to consider in the development of the service and this need to be clearly set out from the beginning in order for the products to be clearly focused on their intended audience. Across the interviews it is highlighted that the tools need further development. The market survey expresses the interest for the tools and services provided by WaaS (based on 60 interviewed):

Number interested by the tools



Number interested by the services



Seen in the market survey, the researchers are the most interested in WaaS (100% of the researchers) and marketing and promotion services are the most popular; 70% of the users are very or fairly interested by WaaS (permanent watching is the most popular); all the knowledge brokers are interested in the service (50% says that it is commercially marketable). Nevertheless it is very important to maintain good business relations with both researchers and users to effectively perform its stated goal.

The overall conclusion from the market survey analysis is that there is a future for this type of service but at the current time, it seems not 'commercially' viable without further development and public funds.

6 Existing Competitors

The partners of WaterRtoM have identified some concurrent initiatives such as:

- Universities/Research Centres knowledge transfer departments: focused on their own research products, generally not specialized in the water sector. WaterRtoM will work closely with these agencies by completing their action through pooling the knowledge at national and European level,
- Market place of the European Innovation Partnership on water (EIP <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/innovationpartnership/>), we don't know so far what should be the content of this website. We should stay connected and aware with this initiative to be sure that WaaS and the Market place are complementary²
- Wise-RTD (<http://water.europa.eu/>) is the gateway to information on European water issues. It comprises a wide range of data and information collected by EU institutions to serve several stakeholders. This website gathers many research projects but does not assess them in term of distance to the market. The available information is not really concurrent to WaterRtoM as a Service. An agreement with the database owner could be an opportunity for the WaaS

² The objective of the web based market place is to create and establish a community on and a place for "matchmaking" in innovation topics in the field of water in Europe and worldwide, connecting problem owners and owners of solutions, regardless of their geographical position. The market place will offer several features, driven by the stakeholders' interests.

- InnoWater is downstream of WaterRtoM, starting by identifying a research output having a high market potential and coaching the owner to the marketing of output. They are complementary with Water RtoM, and could be an opportunity to work closely
- Greenovate! Europe is an independent expert group dedicated to the development of sustainable business. Their members are experienced professionals with industry and technical know-how, who are able to implement innovative processes along the entire value chain – from research to market. In order to effectively support companies in their innovation processes, Greenovate! Europe has established a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and integrated innovation network and offers selective and targeted access to key knowledge providers and potential collaboration partners throughout Europe. WaaS will contact them in order to better analyse the complementarities and the potential collaboration.
- Isle Utilities : their forum for Water Innovation, the UK Technology Approval Group (UK TAG), that they plan to enlarge to EU <<http://isleutilities.com/>>
- www.ecoweb.info : ECOWEB provides information on 3,310 European eco-innovations, including technologies, applications, products, processes and other solutions. It aims to link enterprises, in particular SMEs, and eco-innovations to increase the uptake of European-funded research. The project are groups by topics (water sector have – 380 project), by outcome, by implementation area, by status, by completion period, by financing programme and by partner countries. The available information is not concurrent to WaaS.

7 The operational organization of the service

Two scenarios are proposed: one based on a consortium of European partners, the second one based on a single organization working at European and member states levels with the possibility to subcontract for collecting national information when needed, and affiliated bodies (franchise) for some specific markets. The partners of Water RtoM (OIEau, GWF, Amphos 21 and CFPPDA) have decided to go on with the first scenario: a **consortium of European partners** from different Members States, each of them selling the Service in their domestic market, with a shared overarching structure, either formal (better) or even informal (consortium agreement).

- The EU level body could be a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG), which role should be to collect information at EU level (e.g. EC supported projects), to lobby the European organizations, to centralize all data collected by the members, ...
- At partners (Member States) level, each of them will collect information from national and regional bodies, feed the EU level, and market the service locally.

8 Marketing plan

The activities to be performed in order to create the service in the best conditions are:

- 1) Create the formal organisation for operating the service: cluster, European Economic Interest Group (GEEI)
- 2) A watching brief of the new research projects in each partners countries to identify those who are interested in the support of the WaaS to improve the uptake of their results
- 3) Organise meetings with the research projects managers and research programmers to contract with them for a support
- 4) Adaptation of the “guidelines” as market documents (leaflet, poster, newsletter, etc...) to explain the products and tools offered to the potential clients (Researchers, programmes managers, SME)
- 5) Promotion of the service through the networks and clusters and during day to day activities: training sessions, newsletters, agreement with professional associations, participation to events...

9 Risks evaluation

One of the occurring risks connected with the continuation of WaterRtoM project is the lack of interested clients willing to pay for the service. It is a common risk confirmed by all four partners and the reason for that is that most of the companies and research units are able to create their own division performing similar actions. Another constrain is connected to the outputs that might not be interesting enough to promote them to the BC status. They might be interesting from the research point of view but might not target any interested end-user and therefore will not pay off. So far the biggest limitation related to the future of WaterRtoM service is connected with the lack of funds enabling the continuation of the project. Regional and National Funds in Poland have no possibility in financing this issues, especially now, when 2007-2013 EU financial support from EU has passed. Each of the project partners have decided to continue the search for potential financial resources, however, they all agree that the best situation would occur if the support would result from external (EU) cooperation.

10 Annexe: the market survey