EU policy (including the CAP) and national policy recommendations for drinking water management involving farming systems and land management

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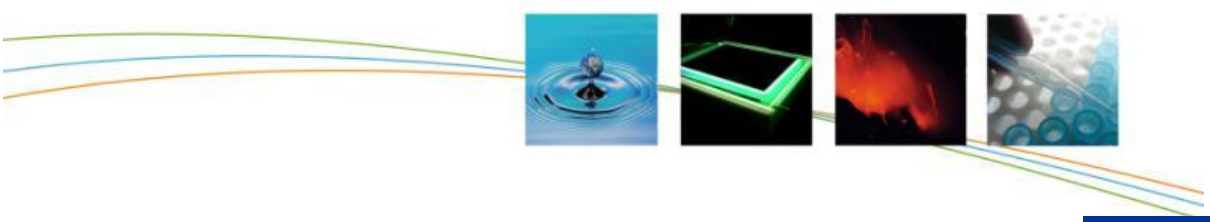

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1. Objectives and approach

The WP7 work included among objectives the development of policy recommendations for sustainable water management in farming systems and land management.

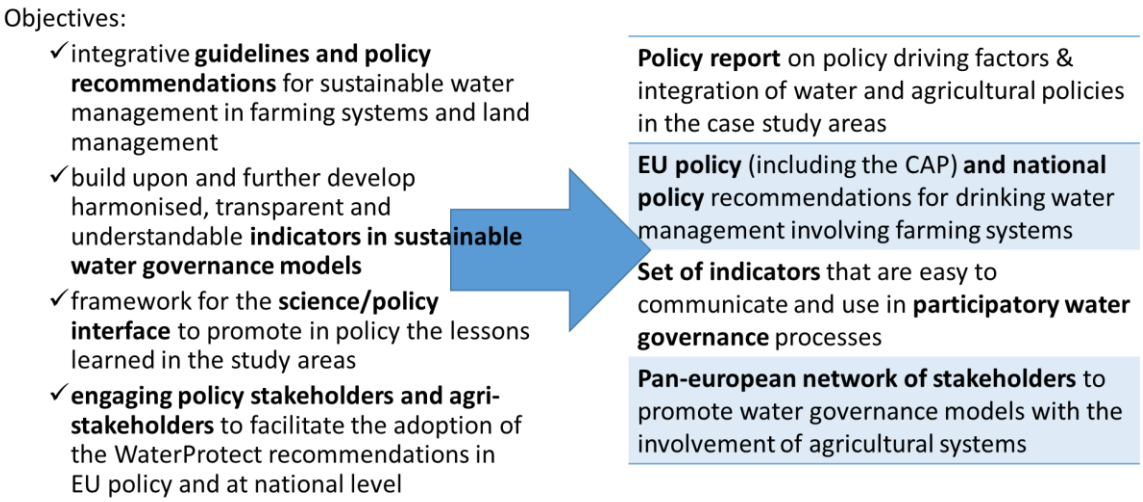

Fig 1. Objectives and deliverables of the Water Protect WP 7

The approach for the implementation of the WP 7 as well as for the identification of the policy recommendations was decided with the large consultation of all the partners in the project and taking into account the feedback from the advisory board. This approach consisted of creating a virtuous cycle where the findings in the project, being them even partial, were brought to the attention of the stakeholders and together with additional expertise and information of activities outside the project constituted a basis for debates and identification of recommendations.

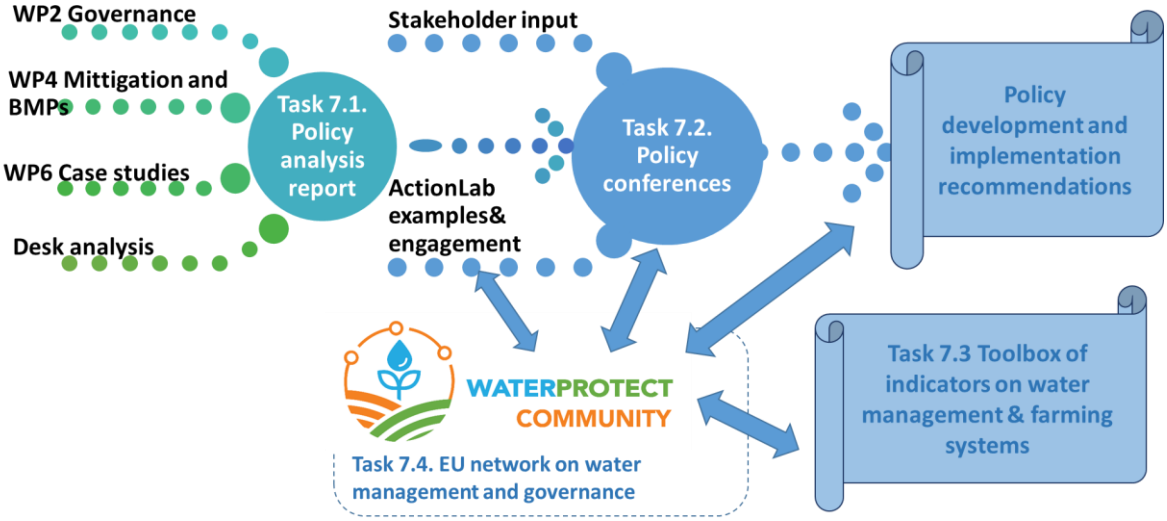

Fig 2. General approach for the implementation of WP 7

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Consistently during the project the results from the WaterProtect project were presented and discussed with stakeholders in the policy conferences organised to obtain their feedback and elaborate policy recommendations.

One of the main inputs from WaterProtect project in the process of debating with stakeholders the policy recommendations constituted the policy analysis report, Deliverable 7.1. "Analysis and recommendations on the level of integration of water and agricultural policies in the case study areas".

The purpose of this report is to provide guidelines that stimulate coherence and synergies between agriculture and water related policies. The ultimate general aim being to incorporate sustainable water management into existing farming systems and land management. The report has the ambition to promote into policy processes (i.e. Common Agricultural Policy review) the lessons learned in the study areas, to contribute to integrating the goals of Water Framework Directive (WFD) and general principles of sustainable water and land management.

The report looks at the relevant water and agriculture related instruments and policies to identify the policy-related driving factors that influence water quality in the case study areas. The analysis is based on the work performed in the specific case study work packages of the project (WP 2-5). The assessment considers the critical success factors that enhance the effective integration of water concerns in agricultural practices, including the contribution of agricultural policies and regulatory frameworks, in the case study areas.

The finding of this report can be summarized as follows:

- Effectiveness of the exchange of information and interaction
  - ✓ **Awareness** of water quality issues is **low** in the farming community
  - ✓ Farmers get information on water quality mainly through **informal channels**
  - ✓ Data following controls and/or monitoring, **not systematically used** in policy implementation.
- Coherence of the requirements to the farmers
  - ✓ Farmers are lost in the **complexity** of standards (legal baseline, local, water industry, sustainability, etc.)
  - ✓ There are **no one-stop-shop information sources** on the requirements to protect water. Information flows through consultants or extension services – where accessible.
- Relevance of the implementation mechanism in relation to the objectives
  - ✓ Instruments relevant for individual policies (RBMPs, nitrates, pesticides, etc) – **better coherence and coordination of measures** desired
- Added value of coordination and synergies between policy areas
  - ✓ **Synergies and better exchange of information** have the potential to boost the implementation of best management practices and mitigation measures.

The report contributes to building a better framework for the science/policy interface and aims to facilitate the adoption of the WaterProtect recommendations in EU policy and at national level.

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Agriculture and water management go hand in hand, and within the EU policies related to these two sectors, there are many opportunities for synergies and reinforcements. However, the water and agriculture EU policies also have individual objectives and different implementation mechanisms which creates fluctuations in the depth and coherence of their coordination.

Another relevant contribution was the constant coordination and involvement of past and present water management related projects financed from the Horizon 2020 program. Additionally, locally or nationally funded projects and initiatives were a perpetual presence in our debates.

In this context, during the June 2018 Annual Project meeting (organised in parallel to the project meeting of FAIRWAY project) we have organised consultations with the relevant partners of the project FAIRWAY to align actions and decide on common activities. The consultations were followed up during the 2019 and 2020 implementation years. Based on these discussions the following areas, relevant for WP7, of common interest and cooperation were agreed with FAIRWAY project:

- Sharing information on stakeholder outreach
- Joint participation (when possible) and exchange of information on relevant workshops and events organised by the European Commission
- Organisation of a joint EU policy conference and drafting of a common outcomes report, including common policy recommendations from that conference.
- FAIRWAY is invited to participate in all subsequent policy events organised under Task 7.2.
- Exchange of information on the results of policy related WPs of FAIRWAY and WaterProtect

WaterProtect has also taken a proactive approach in involving policy makers in the debate. UCSC, the WP7 coordinator has maintained contacts with DG AGRI and the Water and Agriculture Task Force to discuss the scope and the approach of the policy analysis.

Additionally, the WaterProtect project has been presented at the workshop “Water and Agriculture – Addressing Diffuse Water Pollution through the post-2020 CAP” organised by the European Commission, Task Force on Water and Agriculture on 27/11/2018 in Sorø, Denmark.

The WaterProtect Coordination team and the WP 7 coordinator have participated in the “Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Water and Agriculture” organized by the European Commission on the 22nd of January 2019 in Brussels.

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2. The policy conferences

For the first policy conference in Task 7.2**.**, we decided to join forces with the project FAIRWAY to organize a common policy conference: *"The role of EU policies in addressing drinking water management challenges involving the agricultural sector"*. The conference was organised on December 7th, 2018, in Brussels, at the premises of the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU.

The two other policy conferences foreseen in Task 7.2. were organised in September 2019, in Piacenza, Italy with the theme "*Main elements for a long term strategy for the drinking-water management involving farming systems and land-use management"* and respectively in April 2020 as a webinar, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, with the theme *"Local policies, initiatives and partnerships making a positive contribution to the drinking water management involving farming systems".*

2.1. EU level dialog with stakeholders

The **first policy conference** (see agenda in Annex 1) saw a very good participation (52 attendees) from all stakeholder categories, representing the farming sector (COPA-COGECA); agri-business industry (ECPA, Fertilisers Europe); water industry (EurEau; EFBW), research community, policy makers (DG AGRI, DG ENVI, DG Research, Ministry of Agriculture Slovenia) and other interested parties.

Background of the conference was an actual European dialogue on sustainability of the farming sector currently marked by the discussions on the new EU multi-annual financing framework and implicitly by the discussions of the role, scope and focus of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In parallel, discussions are conducted on the review of several water related policy instruments and the adoption of new frameworks.

The main objective of the conference was to seek stakeholder perspectives on pathways for integration and building synergies within EU agricultural and environmental policies that effectively address challenges of nitrate and pesticide pollution of drinking water resources.

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The interim findings and the analysis produced in the two projects was presented in the joint presentation by both coordinators (Gerard Velthof for FairWay and Piet Seuntjens for WaterProtect) to be discussed and contextualized with stakeholders prior to the next phase of the assessment.

Stakeholders attending the event and the representatives of the two scientific projects have committed to continue the important dialog on developing and promoting solutions to enhance the synergies between water policies and agricultural policies at EU, national and local level.

The discussions with the stakeholders were consistent and the main points to be extracted from the debate are:

- Water and agriculture stakeholders are all keen and ready to engage in developing and deploying solutions for better water management
- Bottom-up initiatives driven by the agricultural input providers (i.e. fertilisers, pesticides) already exist to stimulate adoption of best management practices, but there is also a call for more training to farmers for implementation;
- Smart farming is an area where further solutions can be developed;
- The new CAP implementation mechanism, through the National Strategic Plans is an opportunity to promote tailor-made solutions to the water management challenges at national, regional and local level;
- It is important for the farming community that monitoring of the status of the water resources recognises the progress that was made to incentivise farmers to further take additional measures;
- Water industry stakeholders are calling for a long-term approach for the management of the water resources since pollution impact can be felt for decades;
- Good examples of cooperation between farmers and water industry already exist throughout Europe, their results should be disseminated

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- The EU policies are evolving to take into account these new realities of the interactions between water and agriculture and they provide new opportunities and tools for action.

2.2. Experts and stakeholders' dialog for the future of water & agriculture management

The **second policy conference** was organised back to back with the international XVI Symposium in Pesticide Chemistry of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Piacenza, Italy, and gathered experts and project stakeholders with a reach background in water protection and agriculture.

During the symposium, the UCSC project team presented the findings in WaterProtect under the heading "Policies and stakeholder's role in groundwater protection in areas with intensive agriculture" with the following content:

OBJECTIVES
•define the level of engagement of stakeholder groups in groundwater protection
• debate on the role and impact of EU and national policies in water management
• define elements for the long-term strategy for water management with support of agriculture
HIGHLIGHTS
• EU policies are evolving to consider these new realities of the interactions between water and agriculture
• implementation in Member States should further enhance policy synergies in the areas of water management and agriculture
• stakeholders are all keen and ready to engage in developing and deploying solutions for better water management
• best management practices exist, but more training to farmers is needed.
• Progress made needs to be communicated to incentivize farmers to continue

For the WaterProtect conference that followed with the theme "*Main elements for a long-term strategy for the drinking-water management involving farming systems and land-use management"* the agenda (see Annex 2) was structured in the following main components:

- **Session I: Key challenges in water management & agriculture – scientific research findings**
  - WaterProtect Project,
  - FAIRWAY Project,
  - GLOBAQUA Project
- **Session II. Objectives of long-term water management strategies involving farming and land-use management**
  - *Expectations from agriculture for wholistic basin water management*
  - *Operational groups in action to share the land management in the viticulture hills of Emilia -Romagna*
  - *Challenges of integrated water management in the value chain*
- **Field visit – Val Tidone ActionLab**

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The purpose of the event was to identify the long term objectives and effective instruments that constitute building blocks for long-term drinking water management in collaboration and synergy with land-use management and farming.

The target groups for the event were: Participants to the XVI SYMPOSIUM ON PESTICIDE CHEMISTRY "ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT"; WaterProtect and FAIRWAY case study or ActionLab stakeholders; policy makers, industry organizations of the value chain, NGOs, farmers, consumer platforms and associations; DG AGRI – DG ENVI; Working group on drinking water directive.

The format was an interactive debate with stakeholders. Introductory session to set the scene for the discussion, followed by interactive panel debates.

2.3. Enabling initiatives and local policies for implementation of participatory water management

The **third policy conference** *"Local policies, initiatives and partnerships making a positive contribution to the drinking water management involving farming systems"* was scheduled to take place on March 19th 2020, in Poland, being hosted by the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation. Due to travel and meeting restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic this regional policy conference was transformed into a webinar (see final agenda in Annex 3).

European dialogue around sustainability of the farming sector is marked by the EU cycle of policy reforms and implicitly by the discussions of the role, scope and synergies between agriculture and water policies. The implementation of these policies and the effectiveness in producing real results is very much influenced by the initiatives and implementation mechanisms at local level.

In this context, the **WaterProtect** project, organized this webinar with the participation of regional stakeholders from its action labs to identify examples of local policies, initiatives and partnerships making a positive contribution to the drinking water management involving farming systems.

16 speakers

157 registered participants

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Objectives:

- To identify examples of local policies, initiatives and partnerships making a positive contribution to the drinking water management involving farming systems.
- Encourage dialog and networking between local authorities and stakeholders from various ActionLabs to discuss the factors that contribute to the success of these initiatives, platforms or policies.

The agenda has been structured to cover **four major areas of interest**, each including relevant examples that contribute to water management with the involvement of agricultural systems:

- Legal and policy initiatives towards better integration of activities within the catchment management
- Initiatives driven by industry to establish partnerships between water managers and farmers
- Initiatives promoted by NGOs to stimulate cooperation between water management structures and farming
- Initiatives promoted by farmers toward better protection of water environment

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3. Policy recommendations

3.1. Policy recommendations at EU level

Several recommendations issued from the dialog with stakeholders in the first policy conference remain still valid and were recurrent or further discussed in the next policy conferences. Other recommendations are the fruit of the continuous interactions of the project team with local stakeholders and were reported in the regional events we organised. All of them were filtered through the expertise available in the WaterProtect project and were synthetised to express main areas of action needed:

- ✓ The strategic planning under the new CAP needs to be fully exploited to ensure coherence of objectives for water management and agriculture and to allocate much needed resources so that farmers can make a positive contribution to sustainable water management.
- ✓ The cross-compliance criteria and instruments requested to be implemented by the farmers (i.e. plat protection products register, nutrient balance, etc.) should be equally an information and education instrument as it is a control element. Farmers should be given benchmarks and complementary information to understand the impact of their choices and decisions.
- ✓ The EU policy architecture that governs the water and agriculture areas is complex, partially due to the historical evolution of the two EU policy areas, partially due to the complexity of challenges these need to address. Proposals that have been launched (i.e. Water Reuse Regulation) or the strategic planning included in the new CAP will add to the complexity of interaction, but also creates new opportunities.
- ✓ Water management can not be done in isolation from the stakeholders that locally manage the land. It is imperative that strategies and policy instruments are developed having in mind the needs and means available to stakeholders, including knowledge and expertise.
- ✓ Coherence of water and agriculture policies at EU level is recognized as an area where improvements are needed. Several actions have been taken at political and technical level, but there are also further opportunities for improvement. The EU should exploit the cycles of policy revisions to better integrate objectives and create mechanisms and structures of coordination.
- ✓ Some national/regional stakeholders (i.e. Po River basin Authority) have indicated that the dimension of the river basin may influence significantly the possible actions at local level. The core mission of such authorities is to implement the EU legislation 2000/60/CE, hence resources are lacking to foresee actions reaching out to all stakeholders groups.
- ✓ Various models of varying complexity exist in the Member States for the implementation for the two policy areas. Member States should strive to streamline the implementation structures and procedures based on sound governance concepts that ensure the involvement of all concerned stakeholders and provide opportunities for contributing to long term sustainable management of water resources that takes into account the needs and potential contributions of agriculture.

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- ✓ For a more integrated and consistent water and agriculture policy impact, it is recommended to establish an institutional coordination mechanism at EU level which will not only harmonize water and agriculture policy objectives and implementation instruments, but also take into account emerging challenges related to climate change and Sustainable Development Goals. In general, water and agriculture policy objectives are coordinated, and implementation instruments somewhat work together, but many things remain to be improved.
- ✓ Proactive provision of information on the challenges in water quality and their potential cause are essential to ensure awareness at farm level and understanding of the positive contribution farmers can make. Currently, information is often unclear, scattered or not easily accessible. In many cases farmers rely on informal channels (farmer associations, media, extension consultants, etc) to obtain such information.
- ✓ Continuous research and innovation is key to developing the necessary solutions both at EU and local level. Investment in the development of new technologies to improve the technological basis for precision farming will provide long term benefits through rolling-out at large scale of sustainable resource management concepts.

3.2. Policy recommendations at local and regional level

- ✓ The protection of water requires coherence in implementation between different policy areas at the regional and local levels. The fact is that many policy regulations aim at the same – protection of water, however through various means, different governmental departments and subsequently many regional/local institutions. Consequently, common goals become unclear, are not efficiently achieved or are not achieved at all. Structures and initiatives on water protection and farming at regional and local levels must be better linked and support integrated and coherent use of available resources and financial tools in a complementary way.
- ✓ Rules and regulations, being them EU, national or local ones, create a framework that set the minimum requirements to have a uniform protection of the resources. What we should be aiming for is that the majority of stakeholders go beyond those minimum requirements and take further initiatives to proactively protect and optimise water resources.
- ✓ All categories of stakeholders: farmers, industry, NGOs, local authorities can and should contribute to development of platforms and initiatives that have a positive enabling effect on the development of participatory water management. There are many examples of such platforms that can take different shapes and forms - i.e. sustainability certification, local produce promotion, tourism, knowledge transfer, etc. – their main objective might not be water protection, but indirectly they can promote enabling measures for sustainable water management. Opportunities should be created at local level to support their activities and integrate water among their priorities.
- ✓ Future new or improved policy implementation approaches in both areas – water and agriculture – should state the need for further exchange of information and data

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between the various programmatic and enforcement instruments and structures. Results of controls over agricultural activities will have to influence priorities in water management and, equally, information on water quality and quantity issues, should be better transferred to the farmers.

- ✓ Especially in water scarce areas in addition to the protection of the existing resources, additional pressure comes from the need to allocate for use the appropriate amounts. Innovative approaches to recycle water and to reduce use go hand in hand with the water quality protection goals.
- ✓ Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and participatory water governance models are recommended. The value added is generated by: their capacity to easily transfer information on the water management challenges; collaborative development of solutions; capacity to address local specificities and limitations; and can create synergies with other action areas. However, the building of such governance structures and partnerships requires efforts in building trust and requires partners to commit resources.
- ✓ Agriculture as economic activity needs to access water, hence there is an expectation from agricultural stakeholders to be consulted in the management of the resource in their area. This is an opportunity for awareness raising and for education as well as for dissemination of innovative solutions and approaches that reduce water consumption or eliminates weak spots in point source or diffuse contamination of water.
- ✓ In certain agri-food sectors (i.e. fruits, vegetables, wine production, etc.) there is a high degree of integration of the value chain, so processing or conditioning activities usually take place in the same geographical area as the primary production. Water management approaches need to take into consideration such contexts since there are many opportunities for synergies to optimise water use and to implement innovative solutions for management and protection.
- ✓ The positive contribution to sustainable water management of agriculture, including through implementing best management practices (BMPs) and mitigation measures (MMs) should be evaluated, recognized and communicated. A set of indicators that highlight the contribution agriculture has into water management (able to capture positive and/or negative trends) will help involvement of farmers and will stimulate ownership of the process.
- ✓ Perception on costs vs. benefits of implementation of various BMPs or MMs have an important impact on the willingness of farmers to implement them. Hence, direct information, know-how as well as support for actual investments needed for implementation of BMPs and MMs will play a key role in the future uptake of such measures by farmers.

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Annex 1.

The role of EU policies in addressing drinking water management challenges involving the agricultural sector

Venue : Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU,
Rue de Commerce 44, Brussels
December 7th, 2018.

Agenda

8.30 – 9.00 Registration and welcome

9.00 –9.45 Introduction/setting the scene

- *WaterProtect – Policy Analysis report and governance models*
- *FAIRWAY – Governance arrangements and legislative analysis*

Q&A and discussion on project findings

9.45 – 10.45 Session Ia. Interactions and policy synergies at EU level

- *Priorities, bottlenecks and bottom-up initiatives to address agriculture and water management challenges (15 min each)*
  - *Nenad Peric, Copa-Cogeca*
  - *Arjen Frentz, EurEau – European Federation of National Associations of Water Services*
  - *Jeremy Dyson, ECPA – European Crop Protection Association*
- *Discussion and policy contextualization with the European Commission*
  - *Tobias Biermann, DG Environment, European Commission*

10.45-11.15 Coffee break

11.15 – 12.30 Session Ib. (cont.) Interactions and policy synergies at EU level

- *Priorities, bottlenecks and bottom-up initiatives to address agriculture and water management challenges (15 min each)*
  - *Ermis Panagiotopoulos, European Federation of Bottled Waters*
  - *Elisabeth Bömcke, Fertilisers Europe*
- *Discussion and policy contextualization with the European Commission*
  - *Valentin Opfermann, DG Agriculture, European Commission*
- *Open debate with the participants*

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30- 14.30 Session II. Governance and implementation at national/regional or local level

- *Case studies from the two projects*
  - *WaterProtect*
  - *FAIRWAY*
- *The national and regional approach to water management and synergies with agriculture*
  - *Maša Žagar, Ministry of Agriculture Slovenia*
- *Open debate with the participants*

Conclusions and recommendations

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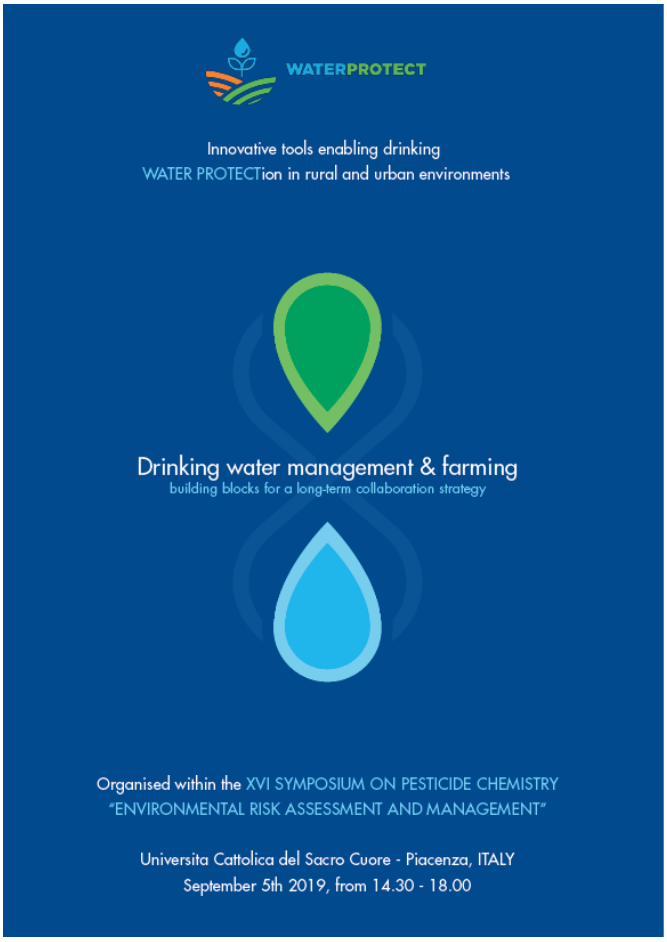
Annex 2



14.30 - 14.40

WELCOME AND SETTING THE SCENE
Ettore Capri, *Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, WaterProtect partner*

14.40 - 15.30

SESSION I

KEY CHALLENGES IN WATER MANAGEMENT & AGRICULTURE
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Ingeborg Joris, *WaterProtect Project*
- Gerard Velthof, *Fairway Project*
- Damia Barcelo (Antoni Ginebreda), *Globaqua Project*
- Werner Brack, *Solutions project*

Q&A and discussion

15.30 - 16.30

SESSION II

OBJECTIVES OF LONG-TERM WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
INVOLVING FARMING AND LAND-USE MANAGEMENT

- Leanne Roche, *DG ENVI European Commission*
"WFD relevant links with agriculture"
- Valentin Opfermann, *DG AGRI European Commission*
"CAP - cross-compliance & nitrates calculator"
- Simona Caselli, *Regional Minister for Agriculture for Emilia-Romagna*
"Objectives and planning of water uses in water-stressed areas"

16.30 - 17.00

Coffee Break

17.00 - 18.00

SESSION III

EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- Meuccio Berselli, *Secretary General, Po River Basin Authority*
"Expectations from agriculture for wholistic basin water management"
- Antoni Munne Torras, *Spanish water management authority*
"Strategies and approaches for integrated water management"
- Marco Profumo, *DOC Wine Consortium "Colli Piacentini"*
"Challenges of integrated water management in the value chain"

Open debate with the participants

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Annex 3

Sustainable drinking water management & farming – successful local policies, initiatives and partnerships

Venue and date: On-line Zoom webinar meeting- April 2nd, 2020

Registration: Use this link to register: https://waterprotect.eventbrite.co.uk . Please note that only registered participants will receive the link to participate in the webinar.

Agenda:

9.45-10.00 Participants connecting and solving minor technical problems

10.05-10.15 Setting the scene of the webinar – scope and objectives –Alexandru Marchis, Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC)

10.15– 10.30 **WaterProtect:** Scope and results & WP2 Governance evolution through multi-actor processes – Ingeborg Joris, WaterProtect Project Coordinator, VITO

10:30-11:25 Session I: Legal and policy initiatives towards better integration of activities within the catchment management

- **Revision of DWD: risk-based approach to manage risks in water supplies – Tobias Biermann, DG Environment**
- **Initiative on strengthening local coalitions, Patrick Verstegen, Flemish Land Agency**
- **Overview of Agricultural Catchments Programme, its role and links into the national strategy in Ireland, Per-Erik Mellander, Teagasc**

Q &A

(5 min Bring your Tea & Coffee Break)

11:30 – 12:15 Session II: Initiatives driven by industry to establish partnerships between water managers and farmers

- **Water production in an agricultural environment – a case study in Flanders - Rhune Van Cleemput, Watergroep**

1 slide & Five key messages

- **Case study- Ermis Panagiotopoulos, European Federation of Bottled Waters**
- **The role of local TOPPS Experts in Delivering CleanWaters across Europe – Jeremy Dyson, ECPA**

Q &A (10 min)

12.15- 13.15 1h LUNCH Break

13.15- 14.00 Session III: Initiatives promoted by NGOs to stimulate cooperation between water management

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structures and farming

- **Cooperation for water management, farming and eco-tourism - Alexandra Puscas, Ecologic**

1 slide & Five key messages

- **The Water Boards Netherlands – the case study from the Netherlands - Tom Vereijken, EWP**
- **Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year- initiatives to encourage reducing farming impact - Mrs Weronika Kosiń, WWF Poland**

Q &A (10 min)

5 min Bring your Tea & Coffee Break

14:00- 14:45 Session IV: Initiatives promoted by farmers toward better protection of water environment

- **VIVA Sustainable Wine, Certification schemes and impact on water management – Ettore Capri, Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore**
- ***1 slide & Five key messages***
  - **The role of cooperatives in promoting sustainable water management – Pat Murphy, Teagasc**
  - **Improving water quality through new BMPs in agriculture: the Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park case study in Barcelona, Gemma Francés, Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park Consoritum**

Q &A (10 min)

14.45 – 15.15 Launch of the pan-european WaterProtect Community and proposal for EIP Focus Group on water&farming

- **WaterProtect Community: scope of the network and e-platform for stakeholder collaboration - Tom Vereijken, EWP& Alexandru Marchis, UCSC**

Q &A (10 min)

➢

15.15 – 15.30 Discussion & Closing

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