



Info-package 6

Authorities and Policy Makers

Fact Sheet 6.5 – Confronting barriers for agricultural irrigation with reclaimed water and promoting synergies in geographical clusters.



SUWANU EUROPE is a H2020 project aiming to promote the effective exchange of knowledge, experience and skills among practitioners and relevant actors on the use of reclaimed water in agriculture. This factsheet is part of a total of 5 factsheets in Info-package 6 aimed at authorities and policy makers, that describe suitable and effective ways to confront and overcome the barriers for agricultural irrigation based on key policy priorities. It also proposes synergies for adaptation in different geographical clusters.

1. Introduction:

Water reclamation and reuse is considered a priority according to the dependency on the amount of the water needs in each geographical region. Several technologies developed are being well-established and applied for water reuse in many countries. Still, there are numerous barriers that prevent the widespread implementation of water reuse in European and at a global scale. Those barriers can be overcome through the adaptation of innovative **socio-economical, technological and ecological strategic plans**. The agricultural sector, that shows the highest water demand of all sectors, needs to expand the applications of water reuse in agriculture. Issues and barriers such as storage, distribution, risk management and financing must be addressed and confronted.

2. Key barriers to reclaimed water in agriculture in the EU:

Despite the reuse of treated wastewater being an accepted practice in many EU Member States experiencing water scarcity issues, including Spain, Italy, Cyprus, France, Greece, Malta and Portugal, **only a small proportion of treated wastewater is currently reused in the EU**. The reuse potential that could be achieved in the case of stronger regulatory and financial incentives at the EU level are of the order of **6,000 million m³/year by 2025**. **Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and Greece** are the six Member States in the EU with the highest reuse potential. Spain is the one with the highest water reuse rate, expressed as a percentage of their total annual water abstraction, estimated in 4% of their total annual water abstraction by 2025. In order to increase the amounts of reclaimed water for agricultural irrigation we have to overcome some barriers.

The key barriers and challenges identified can be grouped into the following categories:

	COMPLEXITY	Water reuse is more complicated than conventional resources
	COST	Water reuse is more expensive than conventional resources
	RISK	Water reuse is perceived as being more risky than beneficial
	PRODUCTION	Possible trade barriers for food products grown using reused water



3. Technical and non technical barriers:

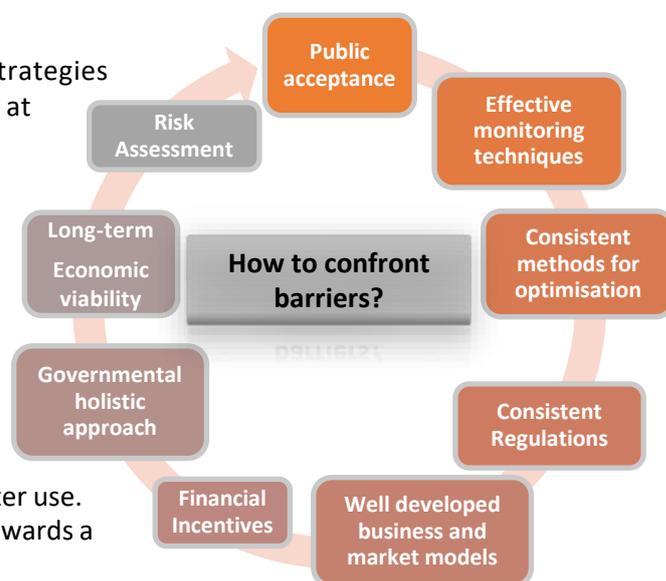
There are two main categories in which barriers can be grouped: Technical, including all aspects on water reclamation and irrigation in research and applied methods, technologies and infrastructures and non-technical such as Institutional, financial, organizational barriers and poor public perception and education. In many cases combined obstacles lead to reluctance in water reuse.

4. How to overcome the barriers:

These barriers have to be overcome if wastewater reuse strategies are to be adopted on a larger and more effective scale than at present. The ultimate goal will be to develop a high eco-innovation potential in terms of technologies and services related to water recycling in agriculture and other sectors. We need to provide significant potential for creation of synergies and opportunities for increasing water resources efficiency.

5. Synergies and opportunities:

Synergies should be identified and strongly encouraged in a multi-level approach. The participation of all sectors is critical to overcome the barriers and move forward to reclaimed water use. There are many opportunities given to follow the roadmap towards a synergistic approach:



Synergy approach

- Engage agricultural communities
- Public outreach programs to build awareness
- involve agricultural community in planning strategies
- Public outreach campaigns
- Stakeholders' involvement
- Promote synergies between stakeholders, key players, funding organizations
- Enhance partnership in regional (ERDF) and European funding projects
- Engage in EIP-AGRI operational and focus groups
- Build multi-actor communities for knowledge exchange
- Translate knowledge into practice
- Build bridges between research and practice

Reference/further readings

Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes Guidance for policy-makers and implementing bodies, 2014, European Commission

EU-level instruments on water reuse. Final report to support the Commission's ImpactAssessment, 2016, European Commission

Minimum quality requirements for water reuse in agricultural irrigation and aquifer recharge, JRC, 2017, European Commission

<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/reuse.htm>

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en>

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