



SUWANU EUROPE

Deliverable 2.5

French Regional Working Group Report

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Executive summary

In recent years, water scarcity has become a serious problem in Southern Europe and in some other EU Countries. In several EU Regions and territories are suffering from water shortage; even in some of them there is still a regime of drinking water use in the respective mayor cities.

In the light of these circumstances, finding alternatives is crucial for agriculture, agrifood industrial sites, daily life and the economy as a whole. In our SUWANU EUROPE view, the creation of a Regional Working Group is crucial to overcome the problems and to generate a Regional Action Plan to promote the use of reclaimed water in agriculture and in other uses.

The results and the experiences gained by the Regions here involved from the 8 Countries - France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Flanders. Belgium – have been proven to be useful to spread in other sites of their countries.

But still there are also local peculiarities in the functioning of the administration, economy and interconnections with stakeholders, in particular farmers, authorities, NGOs and citizens, in different regions/countries.

The specifics of the organization of the relationships, the flow of information in the field of water reuse, as well as the main players, were clarified in WP 2 . Tasks 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and AKIS analysis.

In this regard, the establishment of a RWG for the different regions as in our task 2.5. was consistent with the involvement of a wide range of actors who play a key role in the design and coordination of the regional action plan.

Stakeholders from the administration, local authorities, universities and research institutes, farmers, NGOs and others were involved. Each group of these actors has an important contribution to play in drawing up the regional action plan, in task 2.6.

On the other hand, all of the selected representatives in the RWG are settled and located in the territories, which will ensure a very good coordination, too. The engaging of relevant stakeholders started since the beginning of the project.

This aim resulted in 18 meetings in various regional organizations and relevant institutions with the idea of involving competent organizations to participate in SuWaNu Europe project and goals, explaining the approach and objectives of the EU project and the role of each internal partnership and external organization into.

The 2.5. Report elaborated by Confagricoltura tries to identify the main activities and conclusions that RWGs offered to our partnership and our European stakeholders, with the strategy to contribute for the common interest of water reclamation and sustainable water use.

1 Introduction

The Regional Working Groups (RWGs) are the result of an intense contact with actors of the water and agriculture sectors in order to engage them in the SUWANU EUROPE project activities. These contacts started from the very beginning of the project in each region/country.

In the first stage the engagement consisted in sharing the information of the project objectives and foreseen activities. The organization of the participatory workshops in different regions pushed the consortium for a more intense contact. Several activities were organized to engage the stakeholders, such as sending the invitation letters, telephone calls, in some countries drafting a newsletter to disseminate the workshops, to extend the audience and to multiply the dissemination of the information.

The purpose of the work was to ensure a participatory process in the development of action plans and to guarantee an effective transfer of knowledge in the next project steps by the active participation of stakeholders.

Therefore, relevant actors have been involved in the process and engaged as RWG members in each region: farmers using or interested in reused water, regional and national authorities, wastewater treatment operators, rural development groups, researchers, agri-food industries, consumers associations, NGOs and private companies, engineers, advisory groups.

In terms of definition, Regional Working Groups are precisely groups of actors *out of the consortium* that have been engaged to participate and to provide feedbacks to the SUWANU EUROPE project and that have been involved in some relevant project activities such as the development of the Regional Action Plans of the task 2.6. The role of the Regional Working Group (RWG) in different regions is fundamental *to build the participatory actions and the Regional Action Plans*.

In different Regions, the Partners have defined a strategy and an implementation plan to involve the main actors, including the following activities:

- Initial contact with stakeholders
- Regional revision of key documents by key stakeholders
- Invitation of stakeholders through news/letter/phone call
- Regional meetings with RWG members
- Materials dissemination, documents, leaflets, summaries, power points
- Draft versions of the regional action plan to get feedback from RWG members
- Final version of the regional action plan for validation
- Presentation in a regional/national event/fair/conference,workshop etc.

In particular every Regional Working Group, following the Agreement and the WP 2 task 2.5, *in the first beginning*, had to:

- Involve actively all the partners of the Consortium
- Ensure a stakeholders engagement through a deep analysis of the key actors and the accession to other relevant organizations to be involved
- Disseminate intensively at local and regional level using appropriate channels to reach the identified stakeholders
- Ensure a multi actor and a participatory approach that make regional actors feel part of the Suwanu Europe project, and the Suwanu Europe project activities.

The RWG *second step* had to:

- Contact the regional, national and european relevant associations such as Copa Cogeca, the farmers and agrocooperatives Umbrella confederation in Bruxelles and in each region/country, EURAU and ANECOOP with their wide regional/national networks:
 - ✓ to better align the Suwanu Europe project with their national and european objectives and cooperation actions and
 - ✓ to better identify national / regional memberships and reference organizations;
- Identify at least five members out of the Consortium
- Organize frequent meetings during the running of the Suwanu Europe project, at least five

The RWG *third last step* will:

- Elaborate together with the Consortium Partners the preparation and implementation of the Regional Action Plans, under task 2.6
- Facilitate the Implementation of water reuse solutions
- Seek new opportunities to perform collaborative/cooperative projects
- Seek also new opportunities to build operational groups in the framework of EIP Agri
- Consolidate the Regional Working Groups after the project ends
- Create therefore a permanent cluster in each region to adopt and disseminate water reuse solutions.

2 Strategy for the engagement of the RWG

The aim of this strategy at this stage of the project is to present a strategy for the engagement of the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) which will be applied throughout the second period of the project. Experiences and lessons learned emerging from first period RWGs has been taking into consideration keeping this a dynamic process that can be updated during the project.

This collection of information will be used to engage identified stakeholders in the RWGs and will be used to stimulate discussions within the RWGs. It will serve to promote the joint development of strategic thinking, the two-way exchange of ideas between the different stakeholders and will also feed with practical recommendations for the formulation of the Regional Action Plans (task 2.6).

2.1 Functioning of the RWGs

The facilitator from each RWG will enroll the stakeholders in the active participation in the meetings, preparing a set of topics to be discussed and the activities to be implemented following a multi-actor approach and a participatory approach. This can be done with the prior discussion with the members, so that there is a consensus on the topics to discuss during the meeting so to actively engage the stakeholders from the beginning.

It is vital that the objectives and the expected outcomes of the RWGs are perfectly clear to all members that take part in the meetings and that the roles of engagement are also clear. The members of the Regional Working Groups, following the Agreement and the WP 2 task 2.5, must among others to:

- Propose practical recommendations for the formulation of the Regional Action Plans (task 2.6)
- Disseminate intensively at local and regional level the SuWaNu Europe project results and outcomes, through their own communication channels;
- Be engaged in the implementation of reclaimed water use solutions;
- Seek new opportunities to perform cooperative projects and to build operational groups in the framework of EIP Agri.
- Create permanent clusters in each target region of the project, to adopt and disseminate reclaimed water use solutions.

2.2 Role and responsibilities of the project partner facilitator

The facilitator will be a project partner of each region and their main responsibilities are collected in the following table:

Table 1: Role of the project partner facilitator

Responsibility	Expected Contributions	Outputs
Setting-up of the RWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite and enroll active members (multi-actor approach) ▪ Prepare topics for discussion ▪ Plan activities (participatory approach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invitation letter/email to potential members ▪ Prepare program of the meeting
Running the RWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the objectives and expected outcomes of the RWGs and members expected responsibilities ▪ Oversee the meeting runs as planned ▪ Ensure that all members actively participate in the discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report with practical recommendations for the formulation of the Regional Action Plans (task 2.6)

<p>Communication and outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize and contribute to communication and dissemination activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send inputs for the SuWaNu Europe website (brief description of the RWGs, members, calendar of events, scientific articles, news, etc.) ▪ Publish at least 1 social media post per RWG meeting (before, during or immediately after) ▪ Register RWGs members as followers of the SuWaNu Europe social media accounts and relay social media posts published by the central communication team to increase outreach
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2.3 Stakeholders engagement support tools

In order to actively engage stakeholders during the meetings, there are several tools that follow a participatory methodology, and that facilitate effective engagement of target stakeholders. The activities aim at promoting the engagement of stakeholders, collaboration and in a participatory approach.

Such an example is the World Café method, that can be found in the <http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7402>, which is a method for engaging groups, both within organizations and in the public sphere. This method is founded on the assumption that people have the capacity to work together, no matter who they are.

A World Café follows seven core design principles: (1) Set the Context; (2) Create Hospitable Space; (3) Explore Questions That Matter; (4) Encourage Everyone’s Contribution; (5) Cross-Pollinate and Connect Diverse Perspectives; (6) Listen Together for Patterns, Insights, and Deeper Questions; and (7) Harvest and Share Collective Discoveries.

World Cafés can create results to generate new ideas, to enable joint decision-making on key strategic issues, to discover new ways for collaboration, to reflect on the implications of a complex issue and in identifying specific step(s) for further exploration and implementation.

The recent events related with COVID-19, called for the need to use of online tools in the organization of initially predicted physical events. There are several online platforms that can be use, and that still allow the planning of dynamics as described before.

Tools such Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex meetings are just some examples.

2.4 Engagement of stakeholders during RWGs

Besides the different tools that can be used during the RWGs to promote participatory process and engagement of stakeholders, there are several methodologies that creates more interactive and collaborative formats.

- Initiate the meeting with an icebreaker to get thongs started in a good way. This is particularly important if the participants don’t know each other or come from a different background. This can be achieved by asking participants to bring an object or to pick a word that can in some ways define them and, in this way, they can make a brief presentation of themselves.
- Promote participatory discussions, where tools like pinup.com can be a powerful tool promoting debate and discussion.

- Questionnaires using tools like *Mentimeter* or *Sli.do*, which are live interactive applications to get feedback from the participants, that allow to create pools and Q&As, among others experiences with the participants.
- Networking is a powerful tool for having during breaks for participants to get to know each other and to exchange ideas and experiences.

2.5 Communication with stakeholders after RWGs

After each RWGs it is important to make a follow up communication with the participants to keep them involved with the project and to get them to participate in the next RWGs.

This can be accomplished simply by:

- Send an email right after the meeting thanking the participants for attending the event;
- Send an email to participants who did not show or attended and share some of the outcomes of the meeting. This might compel them to participate next time;
- Once the major outcomes of the meeting are prepared, send an email with the major conclusions and results and if possible, an indication for the next RWG agenda.

2.6 Main themes raised in RWG activities

During RWGs meetings, the critical discussion points and the axes towards which the RWG activities that the RWG Groups should be focused on were the following:

a) In terms of regional informations/data policies:

- Incomplete or updated soil map
- Irrigation water quality data monitoring systems and swap crops for irrigation water
- Reference to indicators of consumption & quality. Quantities lost/quantities consumed
- Measurable water saving elements.
- Regional problems in water supply, water transport issues - open ducts
- Basin Management Plans, how they were developed and how reliable they are
- Reference to different water supply and irrigation networks

b) In terms of harmonized methodologies/EU critical issues:

- Reflections on difficulties in water volume management and services
- Integration with main issues and subjects of the Regional Policy
- Reference to the AKIS method, (and networking) what it is and how it works
- EU guidelines/directive approved on reuse of treated water, costs and fines for non-compliance.
- The new Agricultural Policy has strict restrictions and measurable terms, with constant and strict scrutiny of residues.

c) In terms of the farming systems/stakeholders/users:

- Information, behavior and irrigation systems
- Farming systems/ habits of farmers.
- Policing and controlling in agriculture.
- Use of treated water in non-edible crops-concerns- difficulties
- Industrial food processors water use/reuse
- Environment-friendly policy.
- Some proposals to facilitate farming/industrial reuse waters

d) In terms of local/regional rules:

- Licenses and re-use licenses
 - Secondary treatment, effluent quality, and reuse of treated waste.
- e) In terms of the economy:
- Design and problems in water transportation and unit costs
 - Reliability of the processes of reuse.
 - Water recycling from drainage canals-advantages and disadvantages.
 - Water treatments costs/efficiency/piloting plants
- f) In terms of management/new skills/gaps:
- Competencies, development planning
 - key management issues, best practices to share
 - Reference to remote management and its importance
 - Cross-compliance of operators and consumers with irrigation processes.
 - Consumer/citizenship analysis/acceptance/willingness to buy

3 Discussion and participants in the RWG meetings/events

3.1 French Working Groups meetings

In France, the Occitanie SUWANU Regional Working Group (RWG) aimed to gather a wide scope of stakeholders involved in water reuse in order to identify obstacles and to offer viable alternatives to overcome barriers. This group was composed by stakeholders involved in each step of a water reuse project from policy makers (Région Occitanie) to final users (farmers), including public financiers (water agencies), local authorities (municipalities, departments), agricultural advisors (agricultural chambers) as well as experts for both organizational aspects (AD'OCC) and scientific aspects (INRAE-IRSTEA).

Each stakeholder member of the RWG have been chosen regarding the expertise he can provide for the elaboration of the SuWaNu Regional Action Plan. The following list describes the composition, each type of actor and the role in the RWG: Region/ Departments , Water agencies, WWTP Operators, Research institutes, Agricultural chambers , Farmers & farmers associations, Municipalities/Provinces , Consulting firms (15 representatives).

Table 2 : 15 members of the Regional Working Group for Occitanie

Name	Organization	Category	Role
Jean-Michel Clerc	AD'OCC Agency	Region/ Departments	Expert water reuse implemation at regional level
Régis Ingouf	Région Occitanie	Region/ Departments	Responsible regional policy regarding water reuse
Katy Pojer	Rhône Méditerranée Water Agency (AERMC)	Water agencies	Fund water reuse projects
Ariette Sourzac	Adour Garonne Water Agency (AEAG)	Water agencies	Fund water reuse projects
Brigitte Goral	Veolia	WWTP Operators	Water reuse projects
Bruno Molle	INRAE (former IRSTEA)	Research institute	Field reuse projects
Jonathan Perot	Agricultural chamber of Pyrénées Orientales (CA66)	Agricultural chambers	Water reuse projects
Alexandre Mullens	Agricultural chamber of Tarn (CA81)	Agricultural chambers	Water reuse initiatives
Christophe Lafon	Regional agricultural chamber	Agricultural chambers	Expertise on overall water
François Flisiak	FRSEA	Farmers & farmers associations	Represents farmers
Laetitia Carbonell	Grand Domaine du Littoral	Farmers & farmers associations	Wine-grow holding /reuse
Jean Charles Laclau	Toulouse Metropole	Municipalities/ Provinces	Water reuse projects
Claudine Vibert	Federation of municipalities of Grand Narbonne (GN)	Municipalities/ Provinces	Pioneer on water reuse
Thierry Alignan	Federation of municipalities of Grand Pic Saint Loup	Municipalities/ Provinces	Host 4 water reuse projects
Emmanuel Alonso	Municipality of Aureilhan	Municipalities/ Provinces	Involved SmartFertiReuse

Occitanie's RWG has been established during spring and summer 2019, the first meeting took place on October 1st, 2019. All participants have been introduced to each other. The overall strategy of the RWG construction was to gather both water reuse experts and water reuse practitioners (on field including farmers) in order to facilitate knowledge and feedback exchanges. Gathering those people enables to have a big picture from policy makers to final users.

Beyond this meeting, RWG members have contributed to several SuWaNu tasks: SWOT analysis: only experts have been involved for the SWOT analysis. AKIS analysis: all RWG members have been involved for the AKIS analysis. Participative workshop: most of the RWG members made a short presentation during the workshop. Moreover, some of them helped by giving contact lists or using their professional networks to ensure event's success and broadcast.

RWG members will participate to the Region Action Plan elaboration in early 2020. They will give their recommendations for the implementation of solutions regarding the use of reclaimed water in Occitanie, starting from the SWOT analysis and the participatory workshop results.

RWG also disseminates information concerning SuWaNu project (deliverables, online courses, etc). All workshop participants have been requested to answer to a quick survey. Feedbacks from the RWG members and from all 6th December 2019 workshop participants are good.

Several topics have been discussed with RWG members during these meetings:

- SuWaNu project presentation and tasks already achieved (State of Play);
- SWOT analysis and AKIS analysis on-going work discussions and feedbacks;
- As RWG meetings, members duties and benefits have been described (expected attendance to event, survey responses, dissemination);
- Then, participatory workshop organization and content have been elaborated.
- RWG members discussed the topic discussed during the roundtables.

The second Occitanie SUWANU participatory workshop took place in Narbonne on December 6th, 2019. Roughly all RWG members have been attending the event. Unfortunately, the event has been programmed on the second day of an important national transport strike event. Then, some RWG members couldn't travel to Narbonne and have been excused, but most of them managed to come. Many RWG members have been involved during the event by giving their expertise or their feedbacks.

Last but not least, the RWG constituted a core members group (see the list below) of stakeholders directly involved in project's policy and strategy at the regional scale.

With water reuse experts, agricultural experts, policy makers and grant agencies, the core group gathered stakeholders that can directly act in order to promote the use of reclaimed water at regional level (see below attendance and role of the Memberships)

Table 3: RWG members participation to each task (Occitanie)

Name	Organization	RWG core group	AKIS	SWOT	Attendance RWG WSs Role in the RWG Core Group	Attendance to SUWANU participatory workshop	Presentation at SUWANU participatory workshop
Jean-Michel Clerc	AD'OCC Agency	X	X	X	The Authorities point of view and feedback - RAP coordinator X	X	X
Régis Ingouf	Région Occitanie	X			The Authorities feedbacks and Co Coordinator	X	X
Katy Pojer	Rhône Méditerranée Water Agency (AERMC)	X	X		The Authorities point of view and feedbacks	X	X
Ariette Sourzac	Adour Garonne Water Agency (AEAG)	X	X	X	The Authorities point of view and feedbacks X	X	X
Brigitte Goral	Veolia		X	X	The Industrial partnership X	X	
Bruno Molle	INRAE (former IRSTEA)	X	X	X	The Research point of view X	X	X
Jonathan Perot	Agricultural chamber of Pyrénées Orientales (CA66)		X		The Entrepreneurial/Education point of view and RAP facilitator X	X	
Alexandre Mullens	Agricultural chamber of Tarn (CA81)		X		The Entrepreneurial/Education point of view X	X	
Christophe Lafon	Regional agricultural chamber Garonne	X			The Economical/Entrepreneurial point of view	X	X
François Flisiak	FRSEA				The Farmers point of view and feedbacks X	X	
Laetitia Carbonell	Grand Domaine du Littoral				The Authorities point of view-Revision RAP X	X	X
Jean Charles Laclau	Toulouse Metropole		X		The Local Authorities point of view		
Claudine Vibert	Federation of municipalities of Grand Narbonne (GN)		X		The Metropolitan Area Authorities Coordination	X	X
Thierry Alignan	Federation of municipalities of Grand Pic Saint Loup		X		The Metropolitan Area Authorities Coordination X	X	X
Emmanuel Alonso	Municipality of Aureilhan				The Local Authorities point of view		

4 Conclusions for Occitanie (France)

In **the French** experiences, the SUWANU Regional Working Group in Occitanie is composed of a wide range of highly motivated stakeholders. All of them are involved in water reuse or pushed forward a wider implementation of the thematic throughout the region:

- During SuWaNu first year, they have been involved in several tasks thus sharing their knowledge, their vision for the future, their enthusiasm but also their skepticism on certain issues related to the use of reclaimed water in agriculture.
- From all the discussions, it has been noticed a strong will to facilitate water reuse implementation at regional scale. Local and regional authorities seemed determined and voluntary in order to achieve that goal.
- However, brakes remained in place or could arise such as the difficulty to reach the economic profitability or the current and upcoming regulations.
- Many RWG members also argue for local stakeholder's skill improvement by expert support and specific trainings focused on water reuse project management, good practices, brakes encountered and solutions to overcome barriers.