

# Demo Network Update

## From BDG – Business Development Group

### The FOLLOWER Cities Workshop in November 2021

Summer of 2021 was quite intensive in approaching different Danube River water communities in setting up **Local Water Forums**.

From the FIWARE4Water project perspective, **Local Water Forums** are created in answer to a variety of local and/or global water-based concerns. Those which have been established within the FIWARE4Water project have aimed at a) *creating awareness regarding the global issue of water at a local community scale* and b) *contributing to and disseminating the progress of the more technical aspects of the project*.

Following the process that was established in the North Devon town of Great Torrington (United Kingdom), the FIWARE4Water project demonstrated the viability of engaging citizens and other representatives of the Quintuple Helix in furthering the effectiveness of the technical advances developed by the project.

This involved the systemic creation of what became known as **Local Water Forums**, a technique which was simultaneously adopted in 2020 by the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) under the umbrella of the United Nations Environment Programme, to form the basis of its Social Engagement Workflow, under the direction of the FIWARE4water partner EURECAT, with the participation in its Core Team of the Fiware4Water consortium partners, the *University of Exeter* and the Romanian SME *Business Development Group* (BDG).

One of the key common aspects of the work of both FIWARE4Water and the WWQA has been the desire to ensure that **Local Water Forums** from different regions, countries and continents **establish a strong relationship** between each other, exchanging knowledge, experience and perspectives.

Having abandoned any hope (due to pandemic period) of being able to organise a face-to face encounter, the principal partners responsible for the FOLLOWER City Conference (EURECAT, UNEXE, BDG and OiEAU) agreed to create an on-line event which offered certain economic, logistical and ethical advantages.

The main purpose of on-line event was to offer to the already established **Local Water Forums** the opportunity to meet and to discuss the role of such “bottom-up” initiatives in overcoming local and global water-based issues and what support Local Water Forums required from third parties in order to be effective. The second purpose of the conference was to allow invited municipalities, water utilities and other local stakeholders who to date, that had not been involved in the actions of FIWARE4Water

and/or the WWQA, to understand the project approach on social innovation. Finally, it provided an occasion wherein a joint Declaration of Intent could be presented, aimed at further cementing future collaboration and cooperation between the participants.

It was an excellent opportunity for people from various geographical areas, backgrounds and cultures to meet. And of course, it was FIWARE4Water team pleasure to be the host of such interesting people, organizations and ideas.

For more details on THE FOLLOWER City Workshop and Danube Lower Basin Follower Cities network please contact Ciprian Nanu at e-mail: [ciprian.nanu@bdgroup.ro](mailto:ciprian.nanu@bdgroup.ro). You can follow **#fiware4water** on social media for more details.

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## Project Consortium



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