

Demo Network Update

From BDG – Business Development Group

Improving cooperation in the digitization of water sector services in Eastern Europe

Demo network #1 is one of the 3 FIWARE4Water Demo Networks. It aims to create a collaboration platform between Eastern European stakeholders at national and international levels in order to help implement IT solutions in the water sector.

Stakeholders in Romania, Serbia and Hungary participated to the 1st online event

On 3 November 2020, the team organized their first activities whose main goal is the creation of a collaborative platform between stakeholders in the Danube Lower River basin. The representatives from the water utilities and municipalities in Timisoara (Romania), Novi Sad (Serbia) and Szeged (Hungary) took part to the online event, which gathered together members of the FIWARE4Water consortium and other pro-active stakeholders (regional development agencies, IT developers, NGOs, citizens).

The key presentation focused on the “Creation of a Social and Political Consensus employing Digital Water”. Dr. Richard Elelman (EURECAT Foundation, Spain) considers that digital water is a new subject on the agenda of the water utilities in Eastern Europe. Hence, approaching all involved stakeholders in digitization processes should start with the creation of a solid regional social and political framework that could enable the collaboration.



Social and Political team setting up in Szeged, Hungary, November 2020; Source: Fiware4Water project

Local water forum to be created in municipalities in the three Danube countries

In each of the three cities previously mentioned, local water forums will be initiated and supported by the FIWARE4Water project team. A local water forum consists of 5-10 local volunteers, seeking to actively participate (together with local administrations) in actions contributing to solving local water-related problems. Each of the 3 cities will determine its field of work (sustainable water solutions in cities, circular economy, digitization...) and later on, together with local citizens, will discuss and design local action plans.

This approach has been already applied and proving very interesting in several other cities like Jerusalem (Israel), Sabadell (Spain) or Milton Keynes (United Kingdom). And other cities network have also started to discuss such approach, involving local communities in water issues.



Setting up local stakeholders group in PISA, Italy, 2019. Source: POWER Project, www.power-h2020.eu

During local water forums' meetings, people from the local government (municipalities, local councils, etc.), FIWARE4Water Project and the World Water Quality Alliance (a working group on water innovation under the umbrella of the United Nations) will support the volunteers and give them technical advice, so they do not have to be specialists in water neither to have previous experience in the sector to participate in the discussions.

Fiware4Water project team would like people who are willing to share their views on water-related issues to be able to participate and give their opinion. Later on, they can play an active role in the co-creation of sustainable development strategies, together with local or regional administrations.

The next online webinar will be held in January 2021, to advance step by step towards the development of a network of volunteers in the water sector in the eastern European countries.

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