

Collaboration of Water Stakeholders in Living Labs to Boost Innovations

ULTIMATE project organised first Water-Oriented Living Lab for in Italy

27 January 2024 - In the frame of the European project ULTIMATE, project partner Water Europe organised the first Water-Oriented Living Lab (WOLL) workshop in the public library Bottini dell'Olio in the city centre of Livorno, Italy. The event was organised by both the ULTIMATE partners Consorzio Aretusa and the water working group of the Polytechnic University of Marche. The workshop hosted a presentation of the project AquaSPICE (Alex Kritikos, NTUA) and from the Catalan Water Partnership (Lucia Gusmaroli, CWP) on the respective experiences in WOLLs development.

The mayor of Livorno, Mr Luca Salvetti, addressed the participants highlighting the importance of territorial collaboration of the different stakeholders to deal with current and future water challenges.

The event is one in series of four workshops to be organised in the project. In total 14 local stakeholders from the area around the case study in Cecina and Rosignano participated in the event. They were from various different industries such as chemical industries, utilities providers, schools, startups, libraries, and public administrations. Dr Di Falco was also present representing the Italian government.

What are Water-Oriented Living Labs?

Living labs are defined as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic user co-creation approach in public-private-people partnerships, integrating research and innovation processes in real-life communities and settings. Water-Oriented Living Lab are real-life demonstration and implementation instrument that brings together public and private institutions, government, civil society, and academia to jointly build structured grounds to develop, validate, and scale-up innovations that embrace new technologies, governance, business models, and advancing innovative policies to achieve a Water-Smart Society as defined in the [Water Europe Vision](#).

The workshop was moderated by Camillo Palermo (ASA, ULTIMATE case study leader) and Andrea Rubini, Director of Operations from Water Europe. In ULTIMATE his task is to set up the WOLL for the project. "The goal for the Water-Oriented Living Labs is to secure long-term resilience, stability, and sustainability of water for a Water-Smart Society. Local stakeholders specifically benefit from WOLLs as the form of collective and inclusive water governance," states Rubini.

Gerard van den Berg from KWR Water Research also participated in the workshop as coordinator of ULTIMATE. He stresses that it is important to translate the outcomes of ULTIMATE to the national context to increase the potential for implementation. Specifically, innovative circular solutions, proper governance and policy will enable water smart industrial symbiosis, contributing to the development of WOLLs and a water smart society in Europe.

In the ULTIMATE project, a team of European researchers and engineers from 11 countries are developing solutions to turn wastewater into a resource. This initiative is co-financed by the European Commission and started in June 2020. The aim is to create economic value and increase sustainability by valorising resources within the water cycle.

Coming up next are the WOLL in Kalundborg, Denmark, tentatively scheduled for March 2024.

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From left: Luca Salvetti (major Livorno), Stefano Taddia (president at water utility ASA), Francesco Fatone (Polytechnic University of Marche), Andrea Rubini (Water Europe); Source: Consorzio Aretusa



Gerard van den Berg, coordinator ULTIMATE (KWR Water Research) Source: Andrea Rubini, Water Europe