
ACTIONABLE WATER REUSE: VALUING WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event: OS276

Wednesday 22th March 2023, 18:30 – 19:45
Flanders House, New York

Organized by:



Partners: Government of Flanders, Water Reuse Europe, Flanders Investment & Trade, VLAKWA, WE&B, G-STIC.

Contribution to ID2: “WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Valuing water, water-energy-food nexus and sustainable economic and urban development”

Background on the event

Pro-active water governance, business models and water reuse schemes as building blocks to a systemic approach for the WEFE-nexus challenges. To make our water system more resilient, we need a mindset shift towards (1) recognizing the true value of water, supported by adequate financing structures and economic models, (2) shifting from linear water use towards more circular (re)use of the water (3) we need to adopt a systemic view and implement a multi-actor approach which both addresses water needs and delivers sustainable solutions.

Water Action Agenda

Commitments done by different partners:

- Water Reuse Europe: share successful water reuse schemes to inspire and accelerate world-wide replication
- Government of Flanders: Blue Deal
- G-STIC: Creating a Science Technology & Innovation community to bridge the science/policy gap and providing a dedicated Climate Action Programme to support demonstration and capacity building to support the creation of a level playing field.
- VITO: to develop and share systems thinking approaches to strengthen the science/policy interaction by providing an open access tool with methodologies and training material, as contribution to the Water4all partnership.

Key Issues discussed

- The secret of the successful implementation of reuse schemes, by Inge Genné, Water Reuse Europe
- How can we ensure economic sustainability for water reuse ?, by David Smith, WE&B
- Pricing mechanisms to enhance the correct valuing of our natural resources, by Steven Broekx, VITO WaterClimateHub
- Importance of system thinking and co-creation in building sustainable Water-Energy-Food pathways in Ghana, Edo Abraham, TU Delft
- Youth and digital innovation as game changers, by Karen de Sousa Pesse, Salesforce
- The transition from reactive to pro-active water governance, by Barbara Vael, Flemish Environment Agency

Key recommendations for action

- To implement actionable water reuse schemes we need to look for win-win-wins. Water can bring additional benefits to nature and people that need to be valued in the payback times of water reuse investments.
- Water governance is about think global and act local. Global, national and regional plans need to be connected to lessons learned from practical implementations on the field.
- Think about tomorrow: strengthen our young “waterlovers” in research and innovation, and entrepreneurship to build a future generation of strong water experts, also by making sustainability more attractive.
- Water is an essential part of solutions towards smart cities, tackling climate change and implement circular economy loops. We need to bring together the different initiatives, promote research and innovation and break silos.