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STEP-WISE and STREAM Final Conference, 3rd -4th December, Brussels: A roadmap with recommendations for a better uptake of EU water research

The EU projects STEP-WISE and STREAM Final Conference “Building Bridges - Facilitating Water Information Exchange between Science, Policy and Industry” was concluded with a session at the European Parliament on 4th December with the attendance of 67 participants from 12 countries representing 16 from Policy, 21 from Research and 17 from Industry and Consultancy sectors, and 13 from other areas (NGOs, media, communication and education).

The first day at the International Auditorium focused on presenting, evaluating and discussing practical instruments to enhance communication and dissemination of projects research results to improve their uptake by policy-makers, industry and society. STEP-WISE, STREAM and WaterDiss2.0 had prepared a “Roadmap For Uptake of EU Water Research in Policy and Industry”, which was further improved during the conference.

The key-note session was opened with the European Commission’s approach to the Science Policy Industry Interface (SPII) activities was presented by Dr. Phillippe Quevauviller, Scientific Officer from DG Research and Dr. Karen Fabbri, Policy/Science Programme Officer from DG Research & Innovation. Both of them underlined the importance of policy-relevant and industry-driven research, as well as the engagement of societal actors in the research and innovation processes. Dr. Bob Andoh, from Hydro International, presented the water industry perspective and stressed the importance of scientific result uptake in water innovative solutions that improve societal factors. A panel discussion followed chaired by Xenia Schneider from XPRO Consulting.

In the following session, the project coordinators Hinano Spreafico from Minerva, Gaelle Nion from OIEAU and Guido Vaes from Hydroscan, of the STREAM, WaterDiss 2.0, and STEP-WISE projects respectively, shared the projects’ experiences and results.

The conference actively involved all participants in three parallel workshops in order to discuss and collect further recommendations regarding the different aspects of science policy industry interfacing. The themes of the three workshops were “Tools To Make Research Visible” facilitated by Hinano Spreafico, “Effective Science Policy Industry Interfacing” facilitated by Xenia Schneider and “Keeping Research Information Available” facilitated by Kees Kramer from Mermayde. At the end of the day, the three facilitators presented the final recommendations to the audience for one last endorsement. Finally the results were embedded in the Roadmap, which was finalised to be presented during the second day at the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the conference provided an exchange of experience and ideas during poster presentation sessions, where EU funded water research projects were presented to interested participants. Various videos produced by STREAM and STEP-WISE were shown at a video corner, illustrating how audiovisual production may present effectively research results in an accessible and friendly language.

The second day of the conference, hosted by the Member of the European Parliament Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, took place at the European Parliament and a high-level discussion was made on the roadmap recommendations. Among the research, policy and industry representatives in the panel were Philippe Quevauviller (DG Research & Innovation) Claire McCamphill (DG Environment), Stuart Rutherford (ECPA) and researchers Daniel Sempere-Torres, Adriana Hulsmann and Angeles Blanco. The highlights of the debate was the importance of a result-oriented approach in dissemination of research results, using “translators” to transfer scientific information to stakeholders and to make information accessible to all. Practical examples were also illustrated showing the communication between the actors is pivotal for an integrated water management.

The main Roadmap recommendations are that the research projects should ensure to have professional communication strategy and e-learning targeting the necessary stakeholders, the European Commission should provide resources and online tools for making research results available after the project ends, disseminate the research results by linking them automatically to policy guidelines through the [WISE-RTD Water Knowledge Portal](#), research projects should prepare standardised-format policy briefs to demonstrate how their results are relevant for EU and national politicians, how prime-time information campaigns will involve society in water issues and thematic conferences gathering various research projects should be considered to reach the industry more effectively.

[STREAM](#) and [STEP-WISE](#) projects are finishing at the end of 2012 following their 2-year efforts to improve the uptake of the EU water research results by policy-makers and industry.

All conference presentations and the Roadmap are available [here](#).

The European Parliament debate is available online [here](#).

The information collected and disseminated by the two projects will be further available at the [WISE-RTD Portal](#).



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