

WaterMan

Promoting Water Recycling in the Baltic Sea Region

Roundtable Discussion

Water recycling as a cornerstone of resilient water supply in humid regions? –

Practical lessons learnt in the WaterMan project
& conclusions for future policies in the EU

Organised by Region Kalmar County, the Water Core Group of Euroregion Baltic and the Interreg BSR project WaterMan

Welcome!



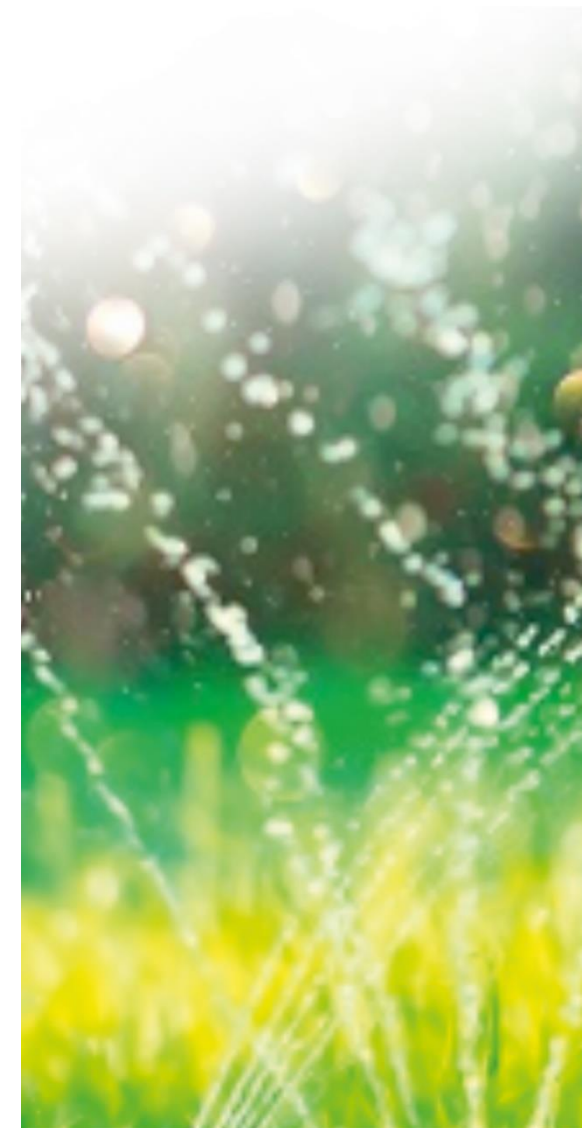
About the Euroregion Baltic Water Core Group

Mission, history & set up:

- Permanent **international exchange & cooperation platform** on water management for **local & regional authorities** in the Baltic Sea Region
- Embedded in the **Euroregion Baltic** cooperation
- Founded in **2005**

Thematic foci & topics addressed

- Initially: Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, **water management**
- In the last years, **increasingly**: Impacts of **climate change**
 - > Initiator: **WaterMan project - Promoting water recycling** in the BSR
 - > Host of today's Roundtable Discussion



Bringing water recycling in humid regions into practice

Prerequisites:

- Technical-organisational **solutions**
- Local actors that are **willing** to implement them
- **Strategic approaches** at local & regional level
- Support schemes & regulatory **frameworks** at national and EU level

Goal of today's (second) ERB & WaterMan **Roundtable Discussion**:

- Continuing the **policy dialogue** on specific demands of **water recycling in humid regions** launched at the 1st Roundtable on 16 Jan 2025
- **New aspects**: EU Water Resilience Strategy, results of WaterMan project
- Focus: What further **support** could encourage and help **municipalities & local water companies in humid regions** to start with water recycling?



Participants of today's Roundtable Discussion:

- **Tobias Facchini**, *Region Kalmar County / SE, WaterMan Lead Partner & Coordinator of the Water Core Group of Euroregion Baltic*
- **Loïc Charpentier**, *Water Europe*
- **Emmanuel van Houtte**, *Aquaduin / BE & Water Reuse Europe*
- **Klara Ramm**, *Economic Chamber „Polish Waterworks” / PL, ReNutriWater project & EurEau*
- **Pia Schumann**, *Berlin Centre of Competence for Water / DE*

Moderator:

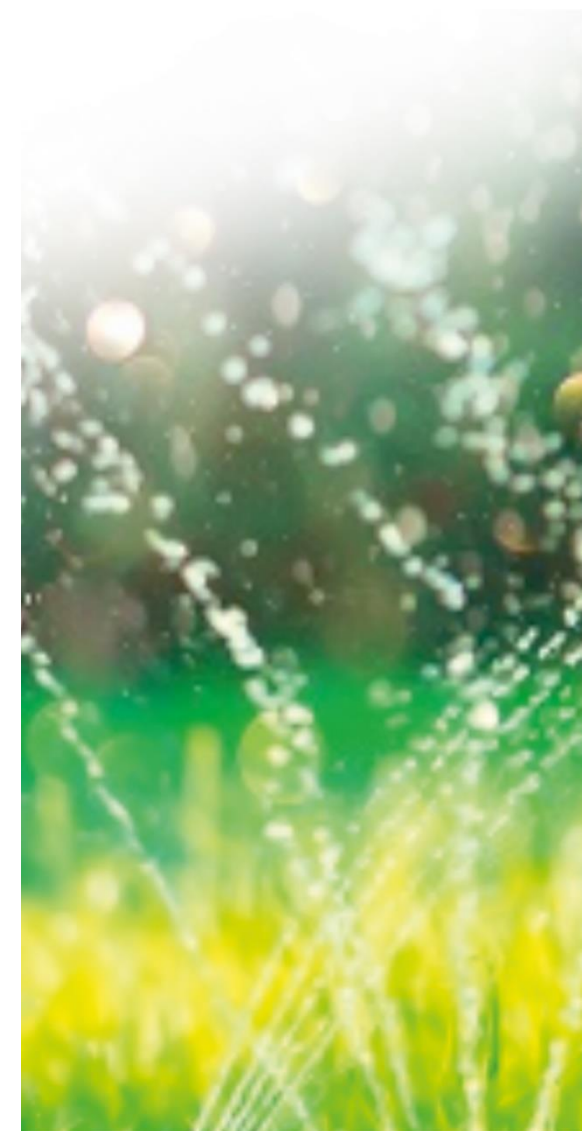
- **Jens Masuch**, *WaterMan project management, GA-MA Consulting*



Agenda

- **Welcome & introduction**
- **Update: Present & upcoming policy initiatives in the EU** related to water resilience and water recycling
Loic Charpentier, Head of Advocacy, Water Europe
- **Water recycling in humid regions: Practical experiences from the WaterMan project & inputs for future policies in the EU**
Tobias Facchini, ERB Water Core Group & WaterMan Lead Partner
- **PANEL DISCUSSION:** What further **support** could help **municipalities & local water companies in humid regions** to start water recycling?
- **Summing up & outlook**

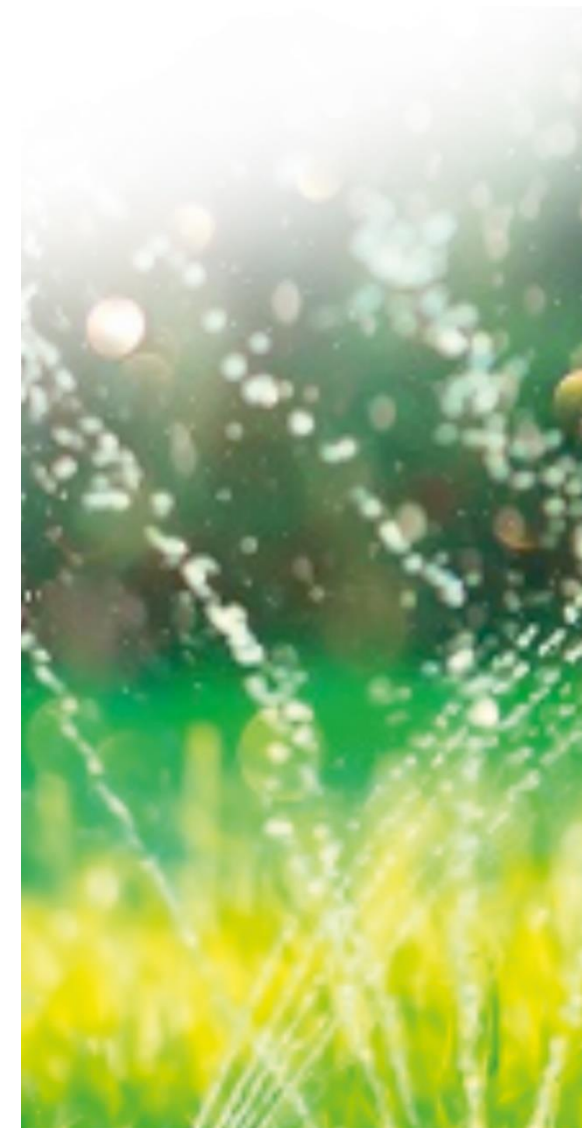
Networking coffee



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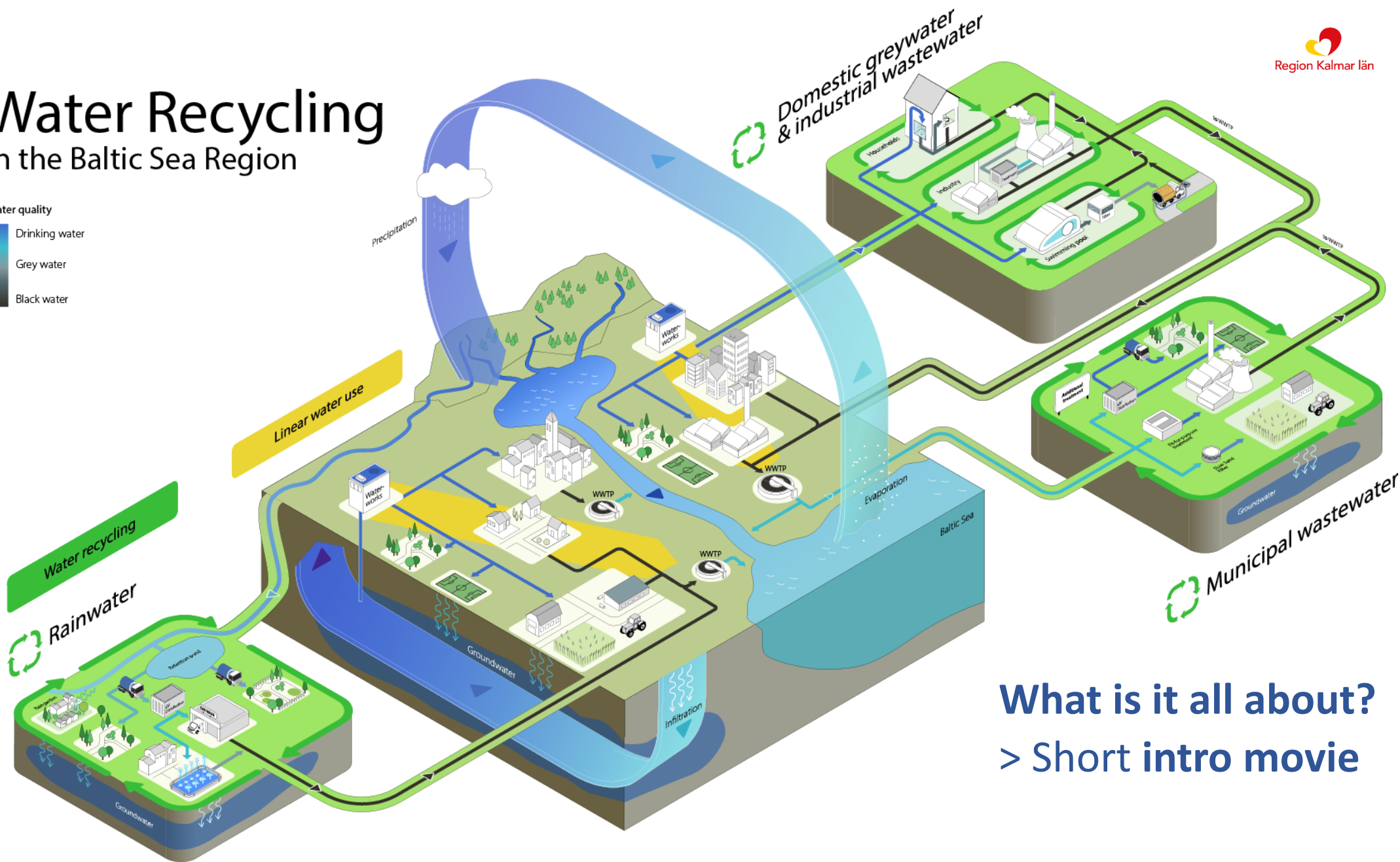
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Water Recycling in the Baltic Sea Region

Water quality

- Drinking water
- Grey water
- Black water

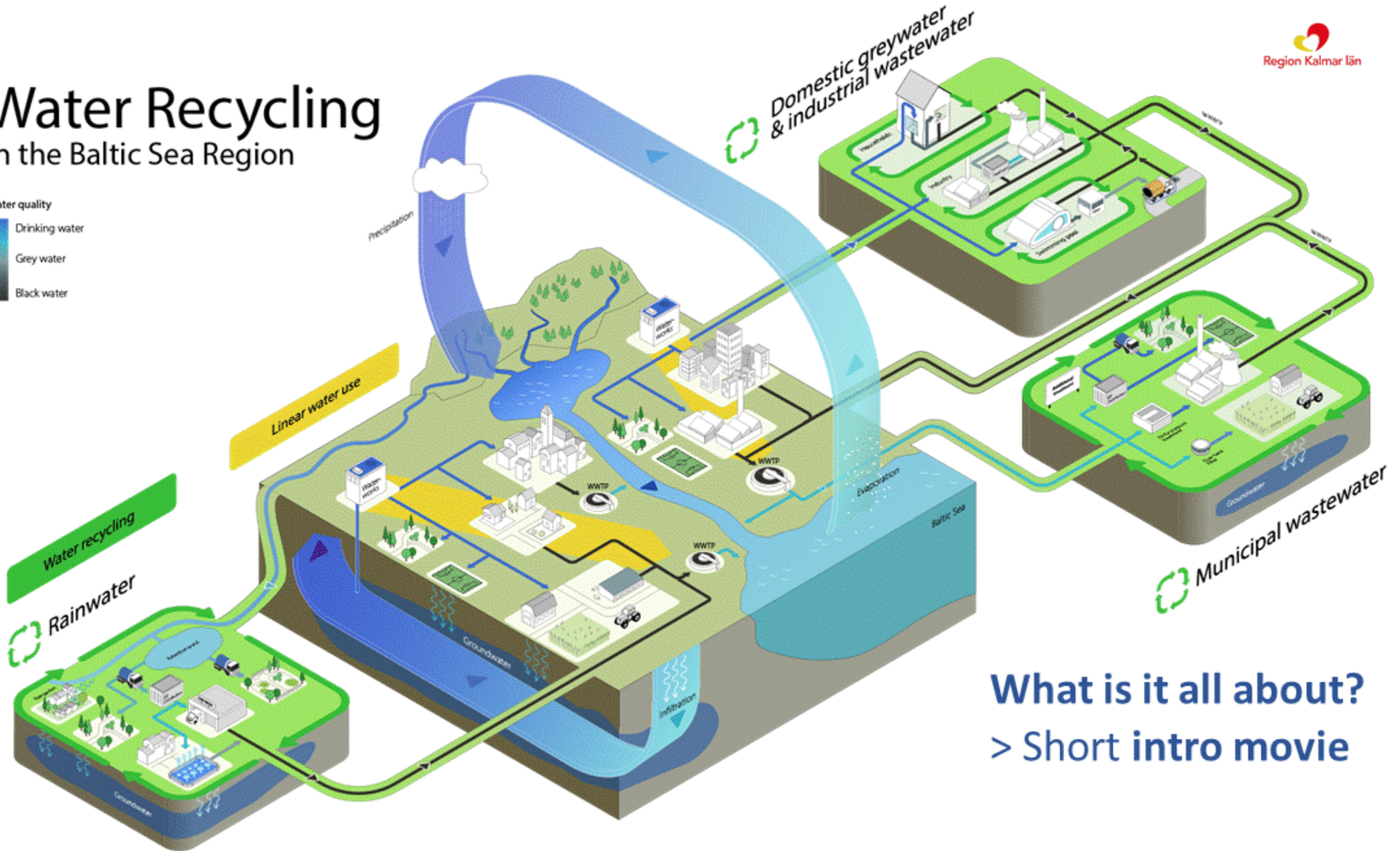


What is it all about?
> Short intro movie

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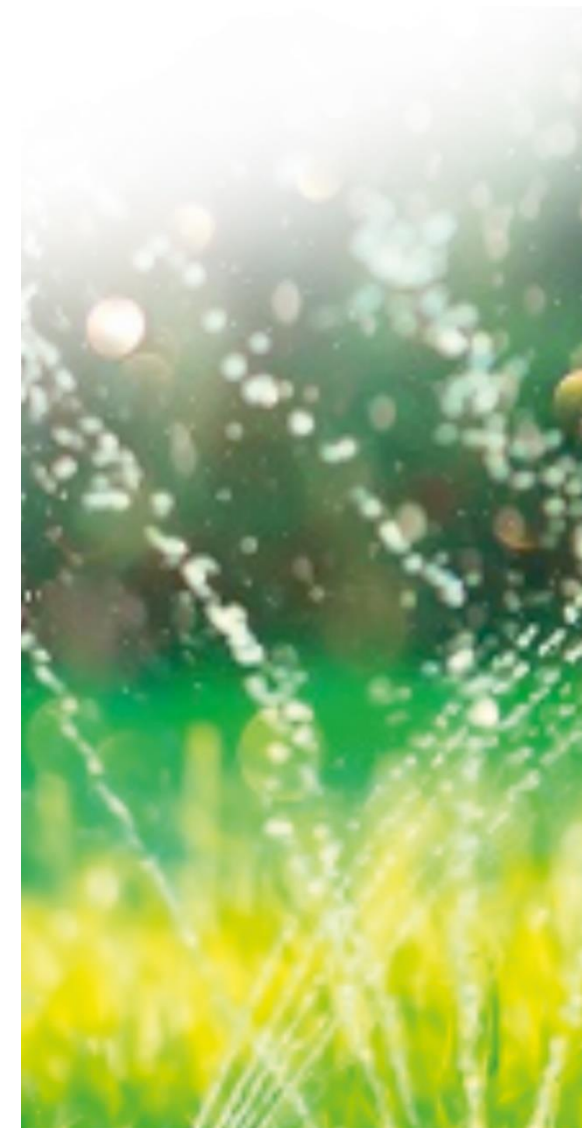


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Taking & shaping the next steps to strengthen water resilience in the EU: The EU Water Resilience Strategy, the evaluation of the Water Reuse Regulation

Who are we?

Recognized voice and promoter of water-related innovation, research, and technology development in Europe

Established by the European Commission as the European Technology Platform (ETP) for water

Mission:

- Improve **coordination and collaboration** in the water ecosystem in the EU and beyond;
- Enhance **performance and competitiveness** of the water ecosystem;
- Contribute to solving **global water challenges** through RTD&I.

Water Europe Strategy

- **Multi-stakeholder association** representing the entire range of actors in the innovative water ecosystem
- **Purpose-driven** and **value-based association**: Water Smart Society & Economy, and organisational identity



275+
members

from

31
countries

representing

1
million employees

and a

€232
billion turnover

College A: Multinational corporations

College B: Research & Technology developers

College C: Utilities

College D: Suppliers & SMEs

College E: Large water users

College F: Public Authorities

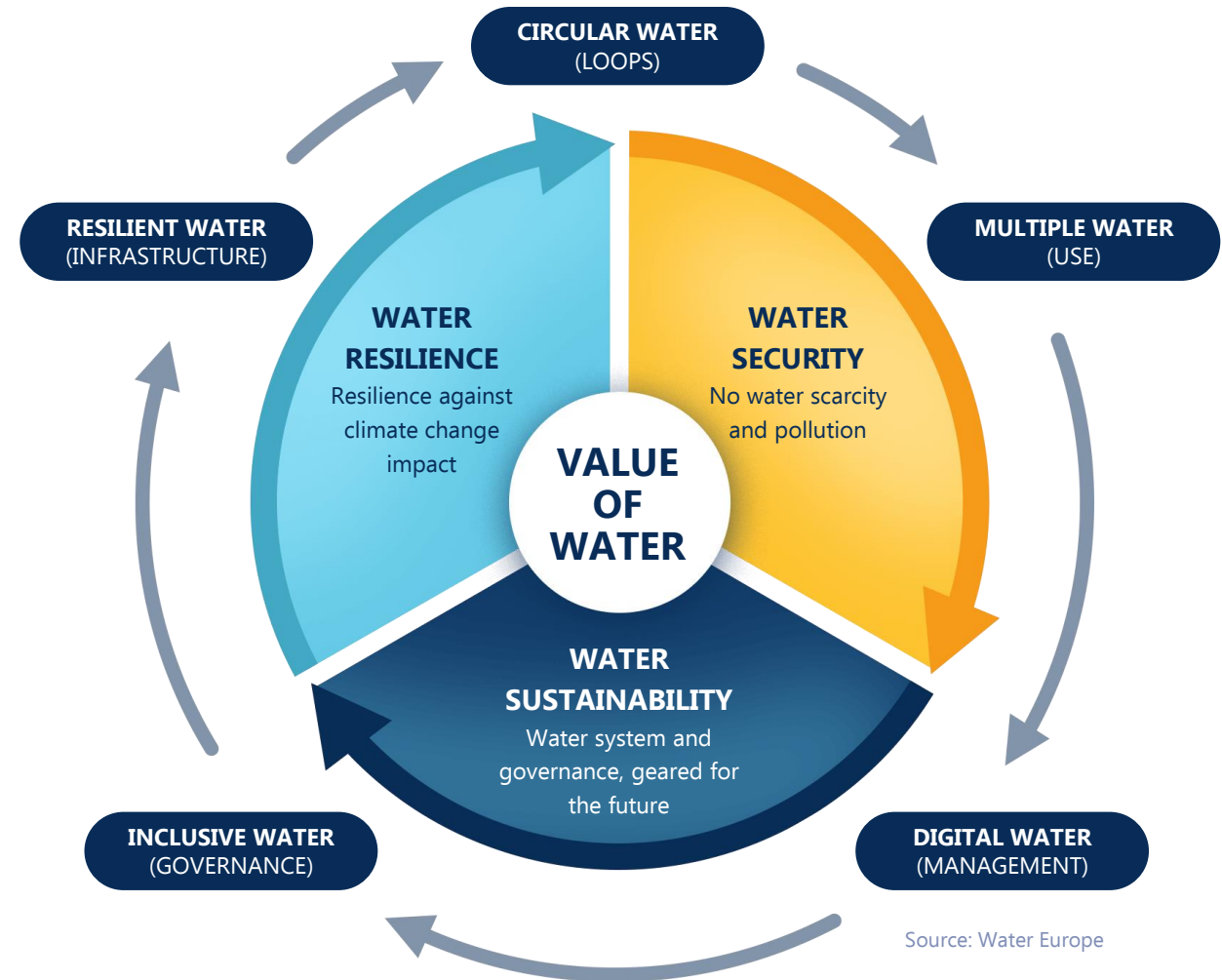
College G: Civil Society Organisations



Water Vision

Water-Smart Society:

- A society in which the **value of water** is recognised and realised to ensure water security, sustainability, and resilience.
- all available water sources are managed so **that water scarcity and pollution** are avoided.
- water and resource loops are largely closed to foster a **circular economy and optimal resource efficiency**.
- the water system is resilient against the **impact of climate and demographic change**.
- all relevant stakeholders are engaged in guaranteeing sustainable **water governance**.

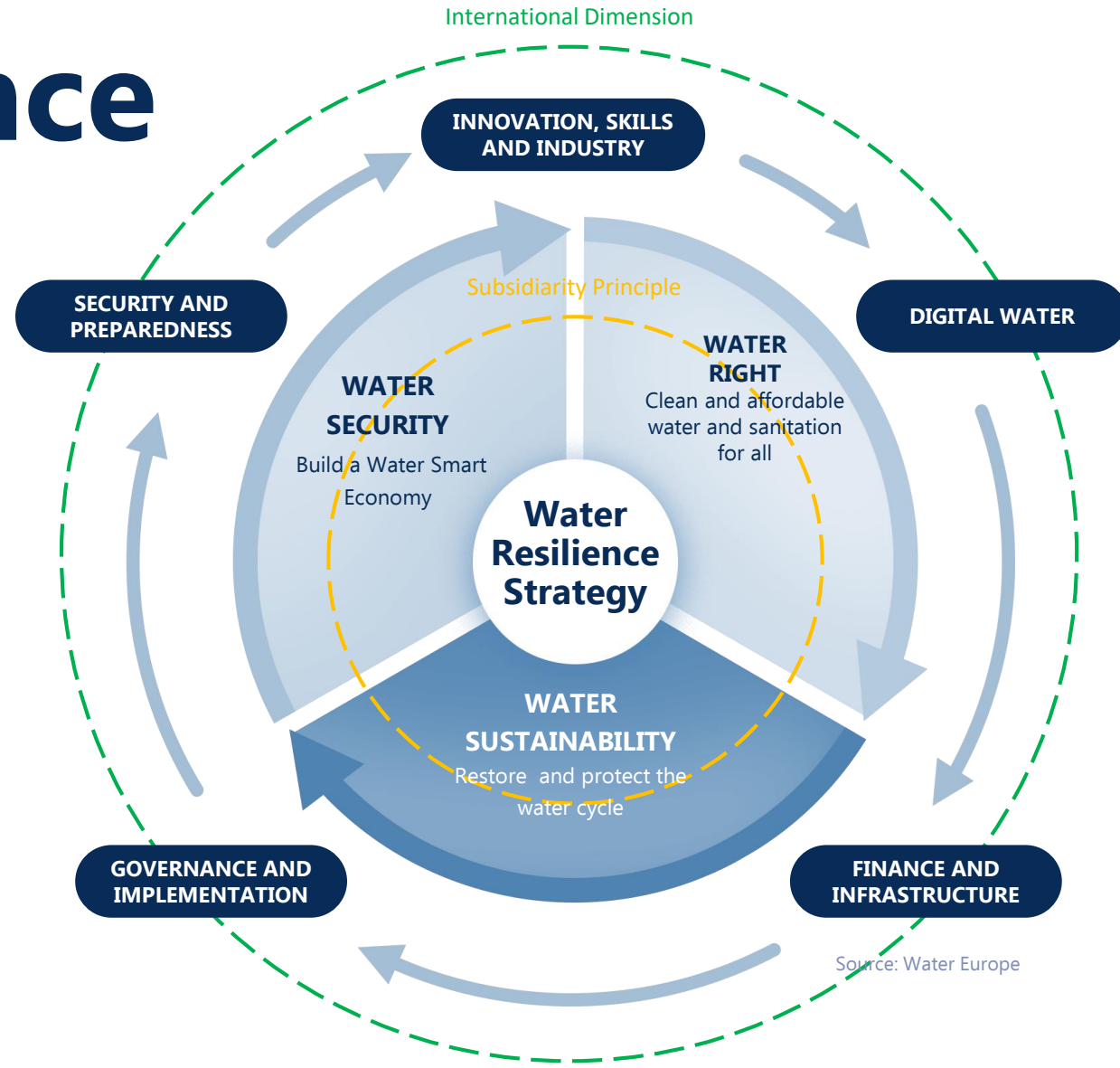


EU Water Resilience Strategy

Water Resilient Europe means a Europe with as little water-stress as possible and a Europe that acts as inspiration to the rest of the globe.

Objectives:

- Restoring and protecting the water cycle as the basis for water supply
- Building a water-smart economy together with citizens and economic actors in a way to support EU competitiveness is attractive to investors and promotes the EU water industry.
- Securing clean and affordable water and sanitation for all and empowering consumers for water resilience.



Restoring the Water Cycle

- **Source-to-sea Approach**
- **Investment in infrastructure**
- **Implementation of water acquis**
- **Tackling nutrients pollution and pollutants of emerging concerns**

Flagship Actions

- Establish implementation priorities of the WFD, focusing on quality and quantity.
- Enhance cooperation with MS on water scarcity (Technical guidance and indicators).
- Launch a public-private partnership to support PFAS Clean-up.
- Launch an Assistance toolbox for MS on reducing nutrients pollution.
- Revise the Marine Strategy Framework.



Building a Water-Smart Economy

- Balancing water demand and supply via water efficiency
- Better control of the resources (data collection)
- Segments approach: leakage reduction, industrial water saving, agri transition packages, water-smart energy
- Promote alternative water sources (desalination)
- Implementation of the Industrial Emissions Directive

Flagship Actions

- Aspirational EU Target: The strategy proposes to reduce water abstraction by at least 10% of water savings by 2023
- Support the uptake of the recommendation on the **Water Efficiency First principle**:

Reduce demand

Enhance efficiency

Reuse

Increase supply

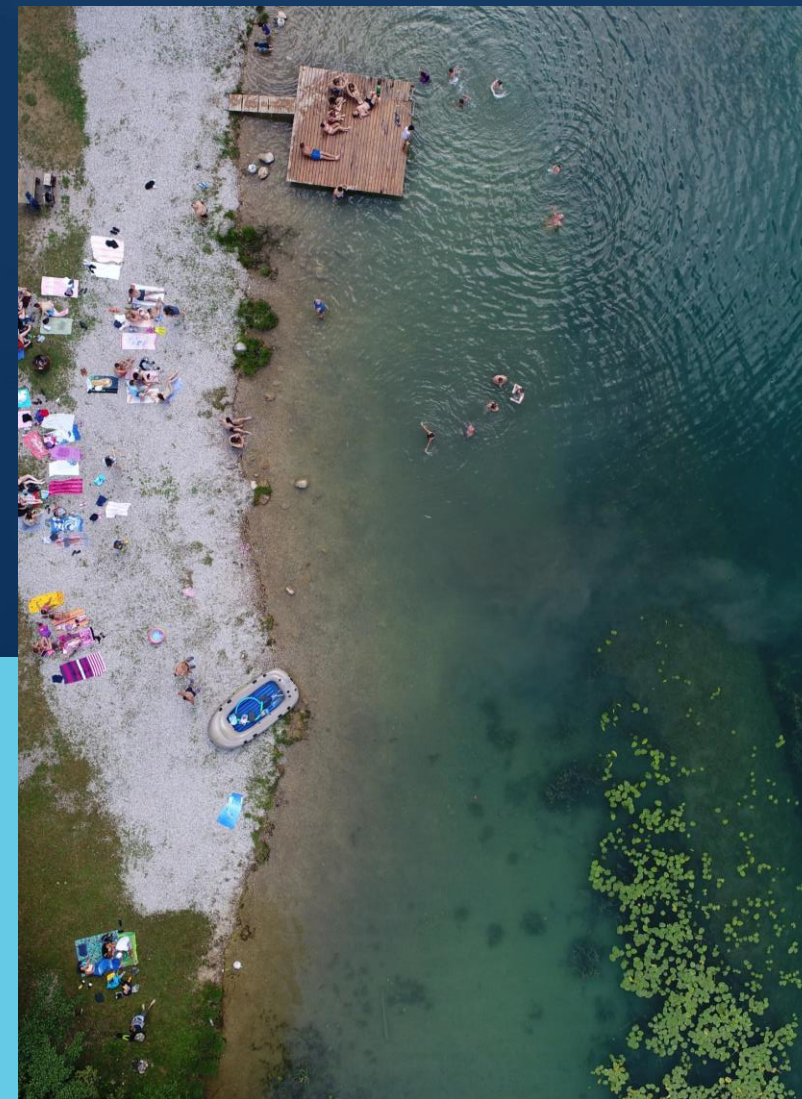


Clean & Affordable Water for all

- Access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation
- Align with the One health approach
- Stimulate consumers' demand for water-smart products

Flagship Actions

- Implementation of the new Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive
- Increased security and preparedness
- Empower consumers (e.g. Improve water pricing thanks to smart meters, which enable real-time data on consumption)
- Address water footprint of products (e.g. under ESPR and the EU ecolabel)
- Launch pilot projects to test the impact of smart metering on water saving in critical regions



Financial Tools

The WRS does not include a position on the next MFF but mentions a list of financial tools already available:

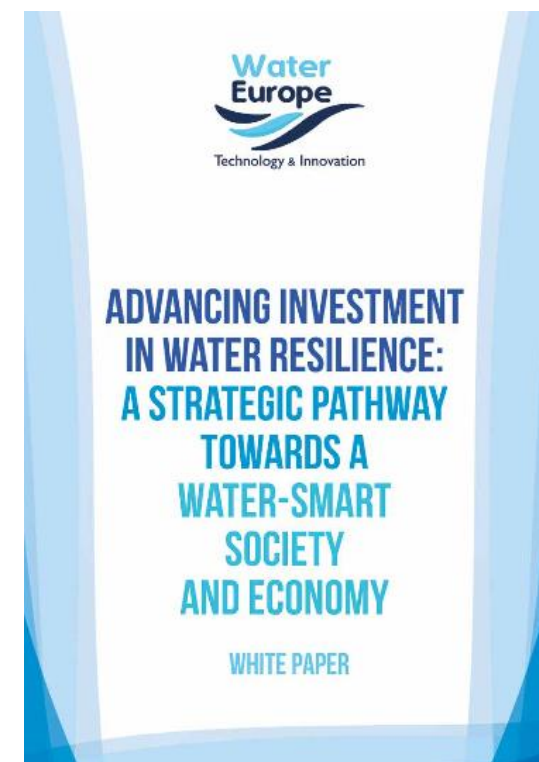
- **EIB Water Sector 15€ billion Lending:** Promotes expanded use of the European Investment Bank to co-finance water-smart projects.
- **Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP):** Encourages Member States to prioritise water in this industrial competitiveness instrument.
- **Cohesion Policy & Recovery Funds:** Invites regions to allocate EU funds toward leakage reduction, reuse, and water infrastructure.
- **Horizon Europe:** support research and innovation, including Digital tools, NbS and remediation solutions
- **EFSD+ and Global Gateway:** Used externally for blended finance and private capital mobilization (esp. for SDG6 in the Global South).

Financial Area

Overall Investment Gap	Recognizes €23B/year EU-wide gap
Dedicated Water Fund	No new fund proposed, but EIB water sector lending
EU Budget Tools (MFF)	Suggests use of STEP, Cohesion Funds, Horizon Europe, New European Bauhaus, etc.
Private Sector Mobilisation	Promotes EIB, EFSD+
Conditionality / Performance	Not directly proposed
Finance for Innovation & R&D	Encourages use of Horizon Europe & national funding
Access for SMEs & Living Labs	Not specifically mentioned

Financing a resilient water sector in Europe

- **The European Water Resilience Strategy and its listed 50 actions** need to be supported by dedicated funding under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of EUR 1.763 trillion budget between 2028 and 2034, with clear alignment to the following priorities
- The current annual capital investment for water measures reaches around **EUR 55 billion** (in 2022 prices), suggesting an **annual investment gap of around EUR 23 billion per year** (0.1% of EU GDP) to implement the existing water legislation
- Meeting these challenges will require an estimated **€855 billion in global water investments** over the next decade
- In Europe **€255 billion** in investments are needed for water supply and sanitation by **2030**, only to comply with the Drinking Water and Urban Wastewater Directives



Funding the WRS and the EU water sector

- Secure dedicated funds in the main segments of the European Budget up €300 billion.
 - €255 billion in the “EU economic, territorial, social, rural, and maritime sustainable prosperity and security fund”
 - €35 billion in the ECF to support research & innovation and build water efficient industrial supply chains
 - €10 billion in the “Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Global Europe” funds
- Set up performance criteria also for quantitative aspects.
- Ensure the prioritisation of water-related targets into single national plans.
- Support horizontal water-related objectives, which will stimulate synergies with other relevant strategies.



Committee of Regions and the WRS

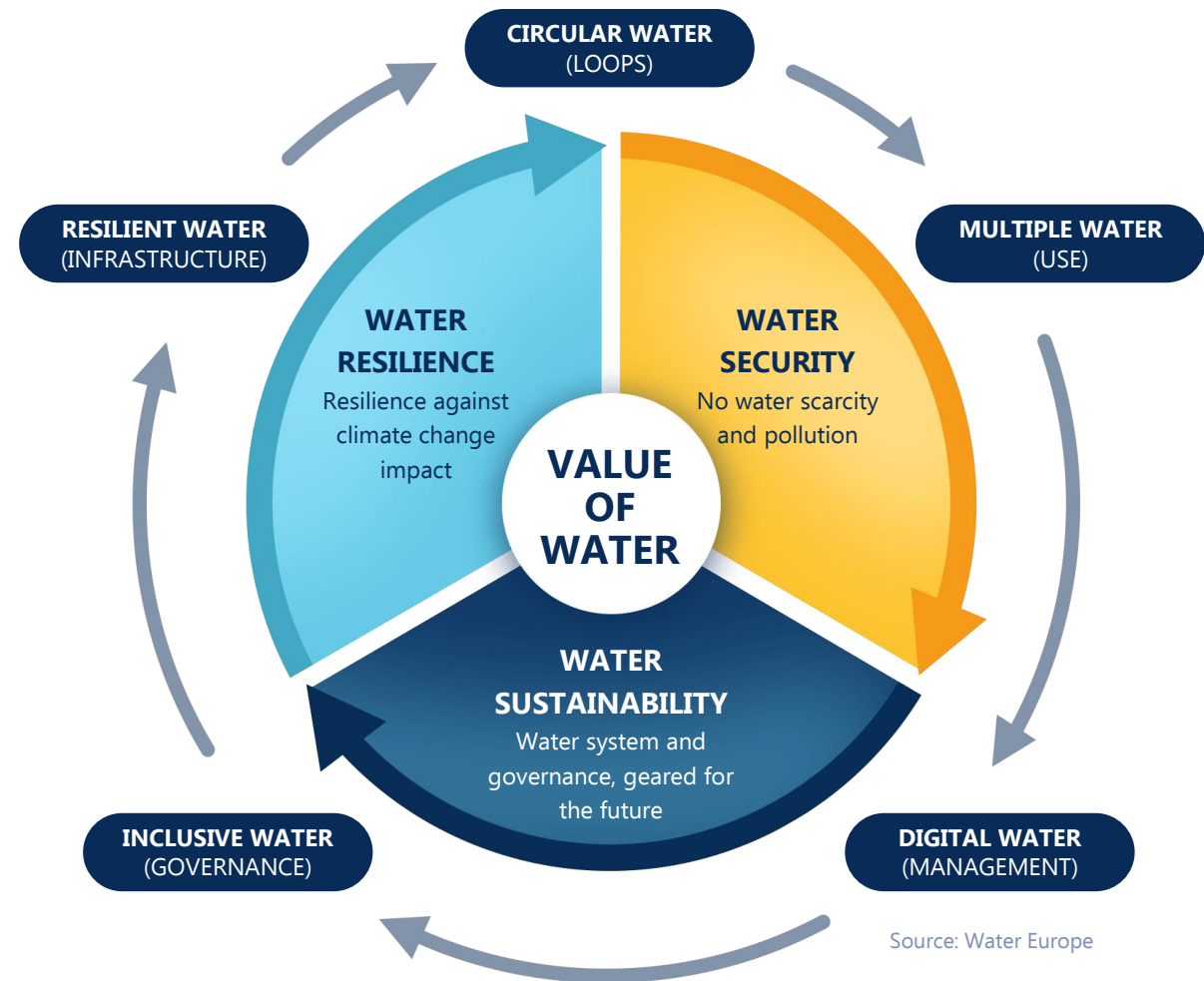
- Opinion on the WRS under Development to clarify:
 - The Role of LRAs
 - Policy Coherence & Governance
 - Ecosystem and & Water source protection
 - Civil Protection & Preparedness
 - R&I and Capacity Building
 - Financing and implementation
- Timeline:
 - 24 November 2025 – AMD submission
 - 5 December 2025 – vote in Committee ENV
 - 4-5 March 2026 – vote in Plenary



Opportunities for water

Water Reuse opportunities:

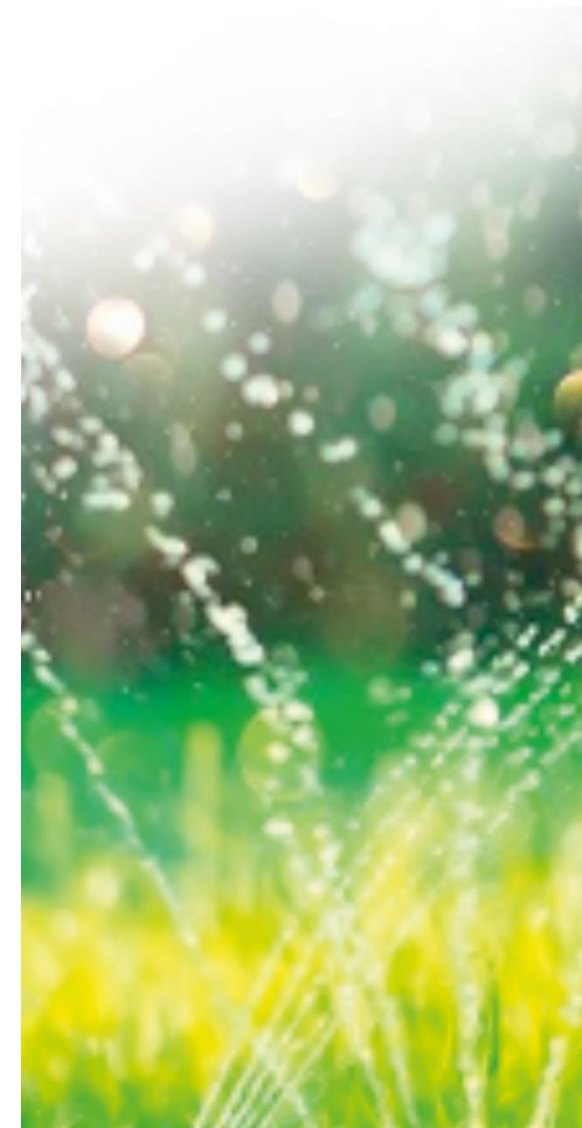
- **Implementaiton of the new EU Water Acquis** (UWWTD, WRR, IED)
- **Promotion of the NbS as well as alternative water sources** (incl. in agriculture).
- **Recast of the EU regulation on water reuse for agricultural purposes** ; a position also supported by the EU water community in the CEA and the Omnibus Environment.
- **Support to Water-oriented LivingLabs by the EU Commission** (e.g. HorizonEurope, Water4All)
- **Financial support possible with the next MFF and the cohesion policy & ECF**
- **Mobilisation of the Committee of Regions and the EESC on this dossier.**



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Water recycling in humid regions

Practical experiences from the WaterMan project & inputs for future policies in the EU

Work-in-progress

Tobias Facchini

Region Kalmar County / SE

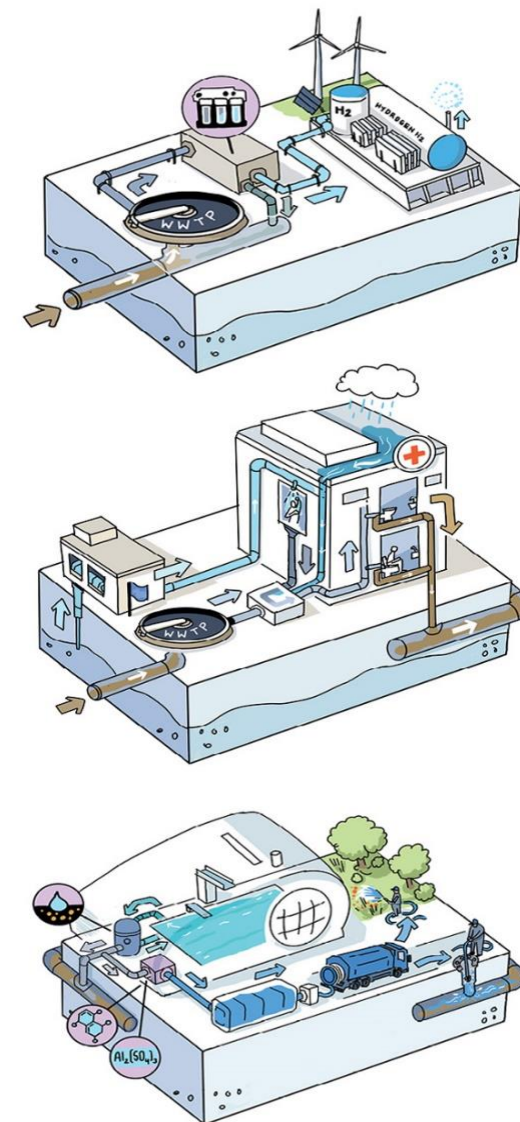
Coordinator of the ERB Water Core Group

WaterMan Lead Partner



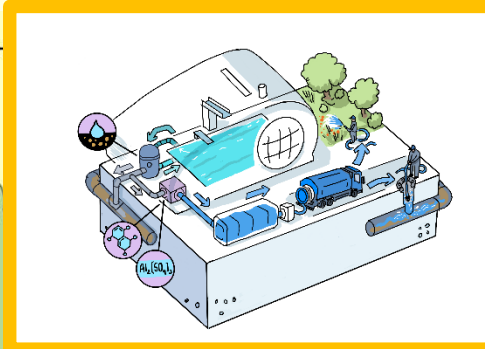
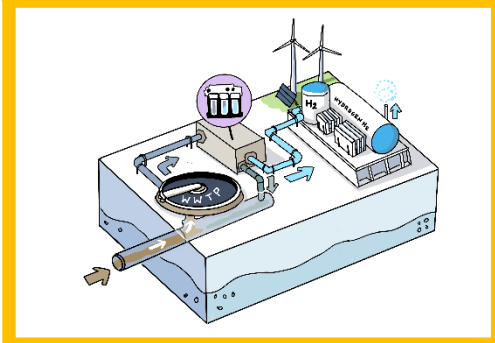
About the **WaterMan project** (“in a nutshell” version)

- **Goal & scope:**
 - Promotes **water recycling** in the Baltic Sea Region
 - **Helps** municipalities, water companies & authorities **to get started**
- **15 Project Partners** from **six humid countries** (SE, DK, DE, PL, LT & LV)
 - Municipalities & water companies
 - Regional authorities, domain experts, network organisations
- **Activities** from 1 Jan 2023 – 31 Dec 2025, incl.:
 - 10 **pilot measures** focussing on different, exemplary use cases
 - Elaboration of **local & regional strategies** in 7 model regions
 - Information, competence development & **policy dialogue**, e.g.
 - Hands-on **Toolbox** for practitioners, **on-site demos** of pilot measures
 - **Roundtable Discussions** / policy dialogue (> like today’s event)



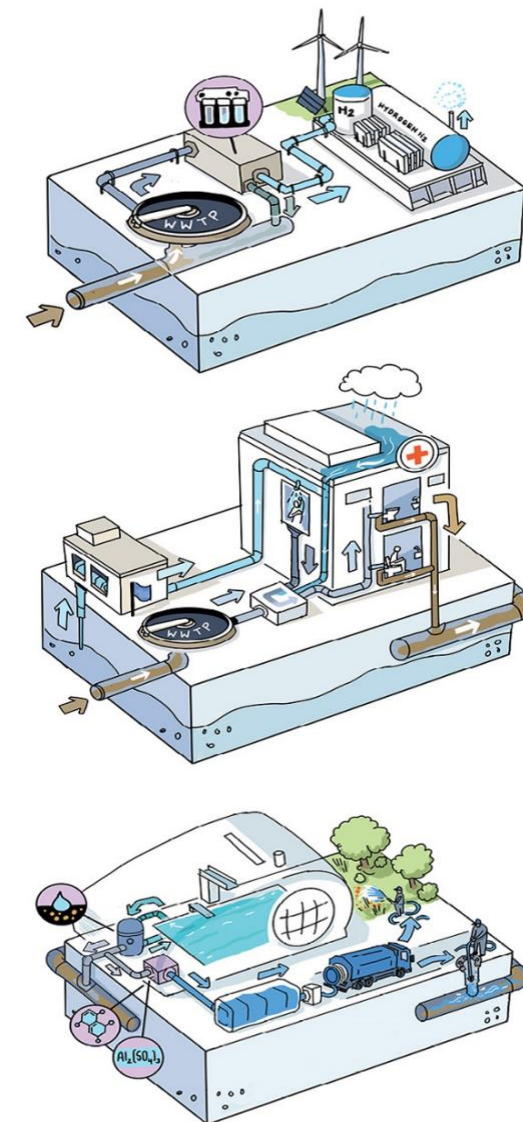
Local & regional model strategies for water recycling

Pilot measures that bring water recycling into practice



Origin & nature of the following policy inputs

- **Hands-on perspective of practitioners** of municipalities & local water companies working in the WaterMan project from 2023 - 2025
- Based on **practical lessons learnt** in the course of creating:
 - **Real-world** pilot measures on typical use cases of water recycling
 - **Feasibility studies** on further use cases with strategic value
 - **Local & regional water recycling strategies** / action plans
- Refer to **real-life experiences** of bringing water recycling into everyday practice within the current **policy & regulatory frameworks** around the Baltic Sea and in the EU (incl. EU Water Reuse Regulation)
- Led by the question: **How** could it be **made easier for municipalities & water companies** in humid regions to **get started with water recycling** and to bring it into wider application?



Revisiting & specifying water scarcity in humid regions

- Scarcity alternates with periods of **too much water**, turning rainwater & stormwater into both a problem (> floods) – and a resource
- Does not **refer** to water in general here, but **to the availability of drinking water** (> used so far for almost all human needs)
- Is **caused** by **less availability**, but also **more demand** (e.g. industry, tourism season) – and in particular if both factors occur together
- Implies so far mostly a **temporary shortage of drinking water** in specific, **geographically** rather **limited areas** – and usually over **shorter periods**
- Occurred **almost everywhere at times** – so there is experience that **human need** had to be temporarily **compromised** or even suspended
- Is – increasingly – **seen as challenge** by the general public, but **still not acknowledged** everywhere & consistently an issue **of strategic importance** that would justify radical policy shifts or larger public investments



Operationalising water recycling in humid regions

- Can build on **three main pillars** that should be examined with **equal attention** to make an effective contribution to water resilience:
 - Retention & recirculation of **rainwater** (> low threshold)
 - **Recycling loops** within households & industry (> low to high threshold)
 - Reuse of **municipal wastewater** (> rather high threshold)
- **Boils down** to the following **two questions** (to be answered locally):
 - For what specific **human needs** may the use of drinking water be replaced by **water of lower qualities**?
 - Are **alternative local water sources** available that can be utilised to supply such “fit-for-purpose” water and **satisfy these demands**?
- May in many cases substantially **stabilise local water supply** if these **three alternative water sources** are thoughtfully considered



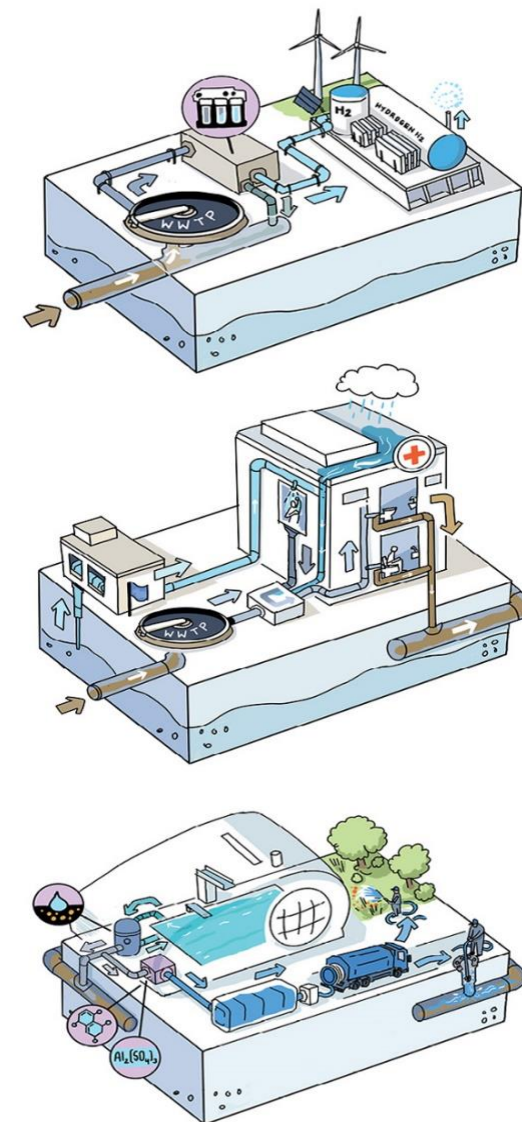
Shaping effective strategies at local & regional level

- Each single water **utilisation** that can be **served with non-potable** or from alternative water **sources helps** to stabilise local water supply
- Ideal: **Systematic analysis & identification** of potentials on both the **demand side** and **the supply side**, along with climate change projections
- Already of great help: Concrete **action plans** that **bring low-threshold measures** that are driven by willing local actors **into practice**
- Special potential: **Synergies** with acknowledged & **accepted investment needs** that improve cost-benefit ratio of water recycling measures, e.g.
 - Launching water reuse when upgrading WWTP for **recast UWWTD**
 - Adding water recycling to e.g. **flood prevention**, biodiversity or nutrient reduction measures (e.g. tap points at retention ponds)
 - Creating recycling loops (e.g. rainwater harvesting, dual pipe systems for grey water) when **(re-)constructing public (& private) buildings**



Designing meaningful technical-organisational solutions

- A **wide range** of effective **water recycling solutions** that can be implemented right away **based on available & mature technology** – and without need for further technological innovation
- Smart choice: **Adapting** field-tested (on-scale) **solutions** from **south & central Europe** (e.g. Spain, Flanders / BE) or **EU projects** (e.g. WaterMan, ANCHOR, ReNutriWater, etc.) – and utilising advice & resources of related networks and initiatives (e.g. Water Reuse Europe)
- First choice: **Low-hanging fruits** that bring **immediate & visible effects** at low effort (> proved to be game changers in terms of local awareness & door openers for further measures and strategic approaches)
- Consolidating choice: **Tailored solutions** for the **specific local situation** that address main strategic potentials and ensure long-lasting effects



Removing regulatory & institutional obstacles: Inputs & wishes

- Going all the way of the **paradigm change** in local water supply from **cost-efficiency** (“affordable supply”) towards **climate-resilience** – by making local & regional authorities drivers of the change process
- Financially **supporting municipalities / local authorities** that give their utilities the mission to **prioritise resilience** over cost efficiency - incl. funding for the costly initial investments in recycling infrastructure
- Enabling local water companies to **incentivise water recycling** by
 - Allowing local water companies **to charge different prices for different qualities of water**
 - If applicable: **Removing strict ties of production & consumer costs**
- Encouraging & supporting the **integration** of local **wastewater** companies **and** local **drinking water companies** – to enable integrated local strategies across the three main pillars of water recycling



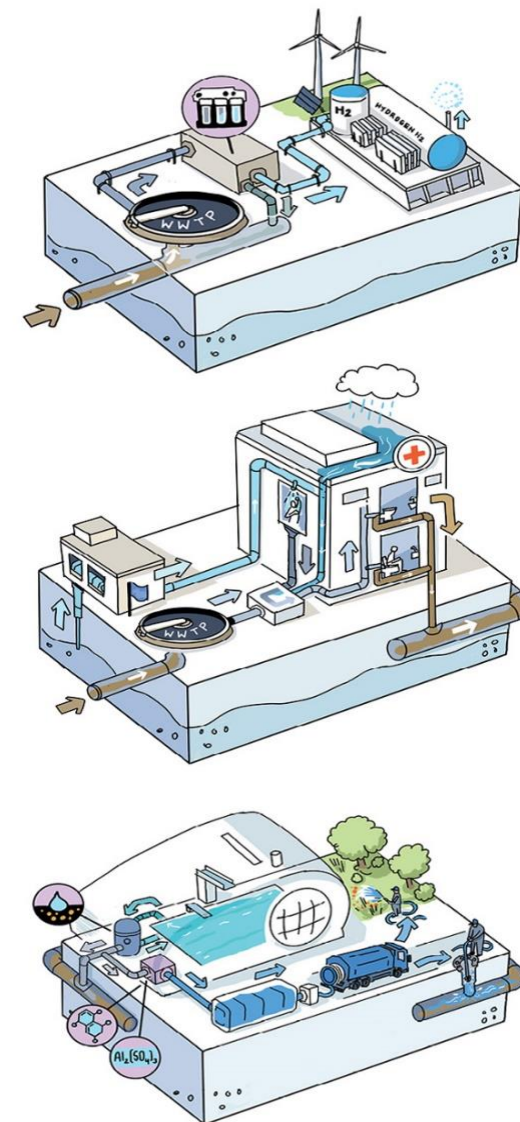
EU Water Resilience Strategy: Inputs & wishes

- Safeguarding **financial support** not only for research & innovation, but in particular **for the rollout** of real-world & **on-scale water recycling measures** that are based on field-tested and validated solutions
- Launching **specific support programmes for local & regional authorities** (e.g. municipalities, regions) to develop & adopt strategies and action plans for stabilising local supply through water recycling
- Supporting the creation of a **hands-on eco-system** that **supports local & smaller entities** in the design, implementation & operation of water recycling measures (e.g. specialised consultancy & laboratory services)
- **Alleviating the call for** affordable water for the benefit of strengthening **climate-resilient local water supply** in the long-term perspective
- **Acknowledging** the specific potential of **water recycling in humid regions** to **prevent** the need for **reducing water demand**



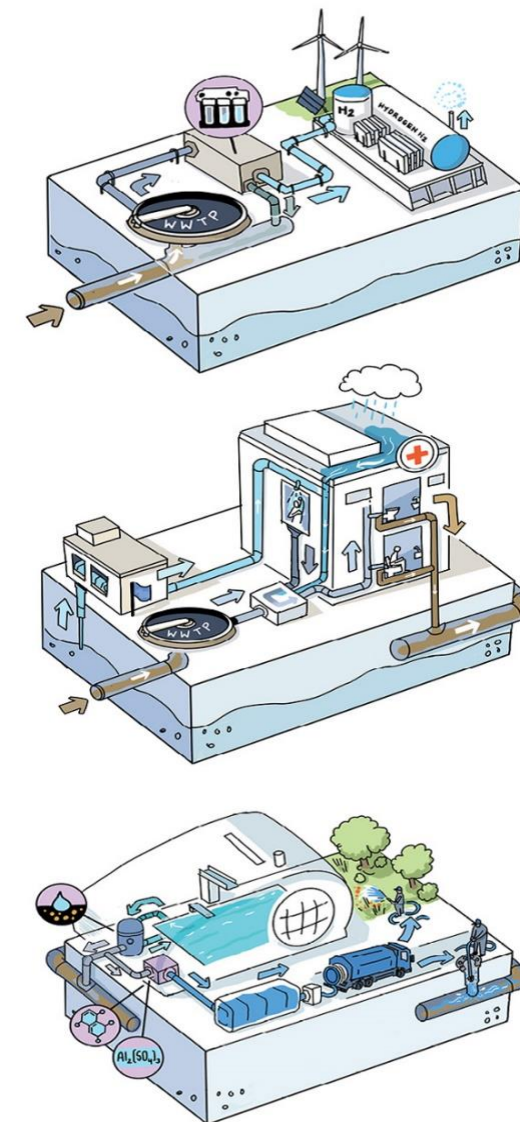
Recast EU Water Reuse Regulation: Inputs & wishes

- Developing the WRR towards a coherent EU-wide **guiding framework** for **using water of different qualities** that
 - Gives **implementers** a clear **orientation** for related measures
 - Facilitates their **communication with authorities**
 - Promotes the (sense of) **security** on the side of **consumers**
- **Better tailoring** it to the demands & potentials of **humid regions** by:
 - Adding **further utilisations** (beyond agricultural), e.g. urban irrigation, toilet flushing, canal flushing, groundwater recharge etc.
 - Adding **further water sources** (beyond municipal wastewater) including all three main pillars of water recycling in humid regions
- Maintaining the **risk-based approach** but simplifying it where possible (e.g. implementation guidelines for widespread use cases)
- **Limiting member-state opt outs** through stricter justification criteria



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Further dialogue on water recycling: Inputs & wishes

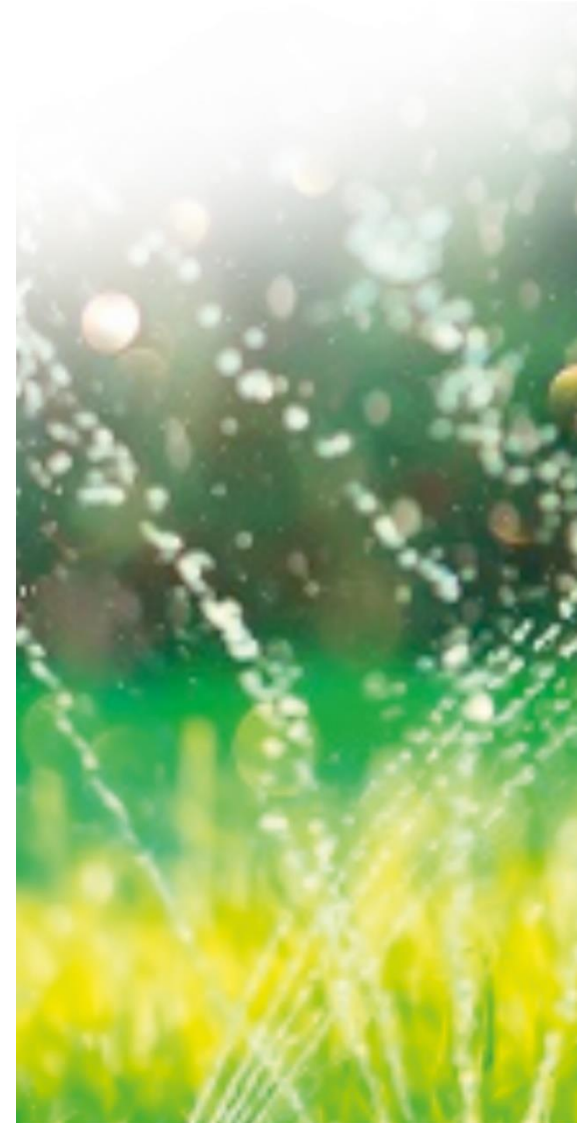
- **Water recycling is ready to get started** more broadly also in humid regions, **but** there still **a lot** to improve - and **to learn** from each other
- Knowledge **exchange & peer learning** within the **professional community** among local implementers, policy makers from different levels, R&D institutions **must be continued** –also **internationally** and with stronger involvement of representatives of humid regions.
- At the same time, **climate change** has turned **water management & water recycling** from an expert task into a **political & strategic issue**,
- This calls for **involving also non-experts** (incl. local decision-makers, general public / citizen) **into the dialogue** on setting the priorities at different levels – local, regional, national, international
- For this we need an **easier-to-understand communication & more unified terminology** that “clears out” the (precise but very complex) “expert speak” shaped by different professional circles over the years



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**Thank you very much
For your attention!**

eurobalt.org/waterrecyclingtoolbox

Panel Discussion

What further support could help municipalities & local water companies in humid regions to start water recycling?

...with involvement of the audience!



Panellists:

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- **Loïc Charpentier**, *Water Europe*
- **Emmanuel van Houtte**, *Aquaduin / BE & Water Reuse Europe*
- **Klara Ramm**, *Economic Chamber „Polish Waterworks” / PL, ReNutriWater project & EurEau*
- **Pia Schumann**, *Berlin Centre of Competence for Water / DE*

Moderation:

- **Jens Masuch**, *WaterMan project management, GA-MA Consulting*



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Panel Discussion

What further support could help municipalities & local water companies in humid regions to start water recycling?

Thank you very much for your contributions!



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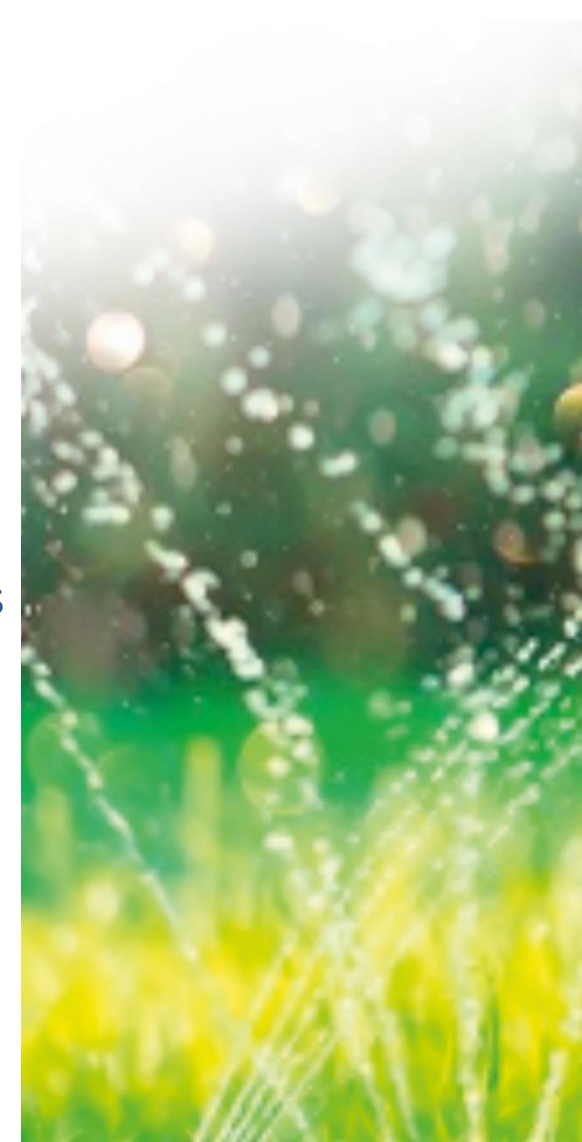
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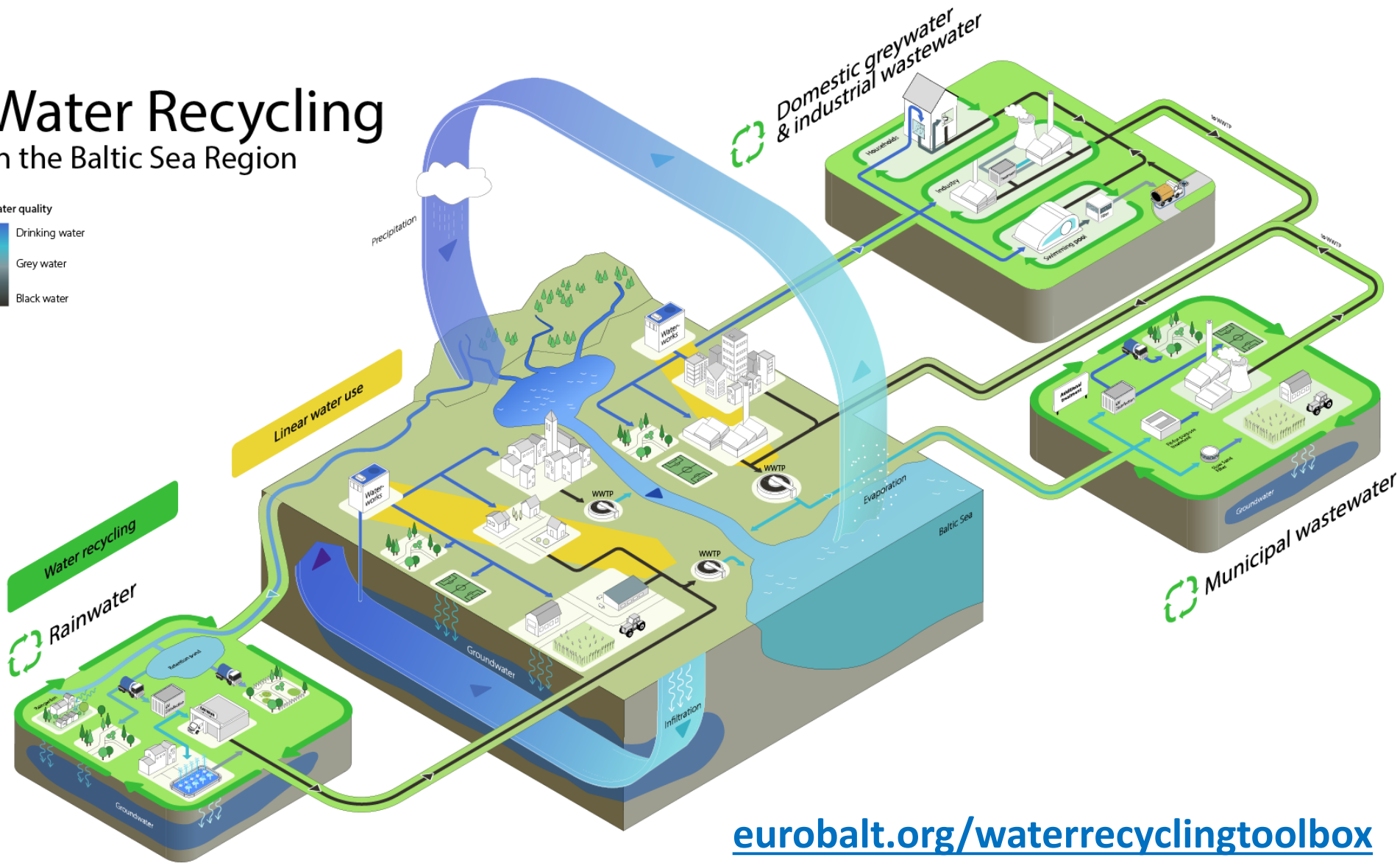
Upcoming WaterMan activities & offers

- Further **dialogue events**:
 - Nov & Dec 2025: Further **On-site demos** of WaterMan pilot measures
 - 25-26 Nov 2025: **WaterMan & ERB Dialogue Forum “Water Recycling in practice”** in Kalmar / Sweden, incl.
 - Practical experiences, concrete examples & dialogue on way forward in the BSR
 - On-site visits to pilot measures & Water Recycling Plant “Kalmarsundsverket”
 - Opportunities to meet hands-on experts of the project team from all six countries
- **Water Recycling Toolbox & Helpdesk**
 - Concrete **technical-organisation concepts & regional pathways**
 - **Personal advice** from the WaterMan **hands-on experts**
 - **Policy inspirations**: e.g. Full recording of Roundtables 1 & 2
- Get **IN THE LOOP** for more info on results & outcomes of WaterMan
 - 3-step **“Guided tour of water recycling”** in the BSR until 31 Dec 2025



Water Recycling in the Baltic Sea Region

Water quality



Water Recycling Toolbox & Helpdesk



IN THE LOOP 3-Step Guided Tour



eurobalt.org/waterrecyclingtoolbox

interreg-baltic.eu/project/waterman

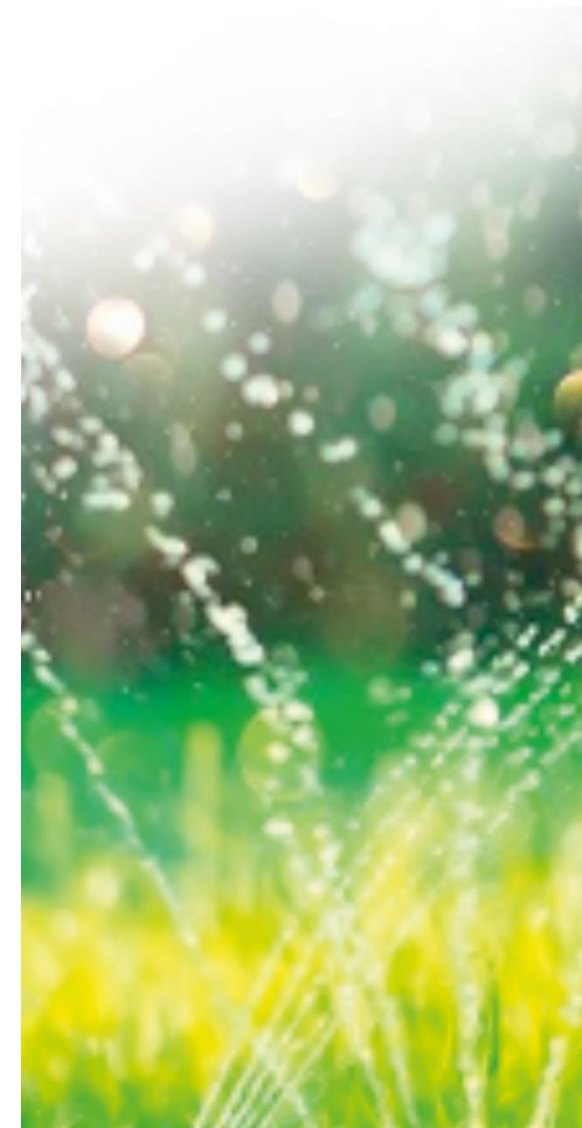


Thank you very much!

Agenda

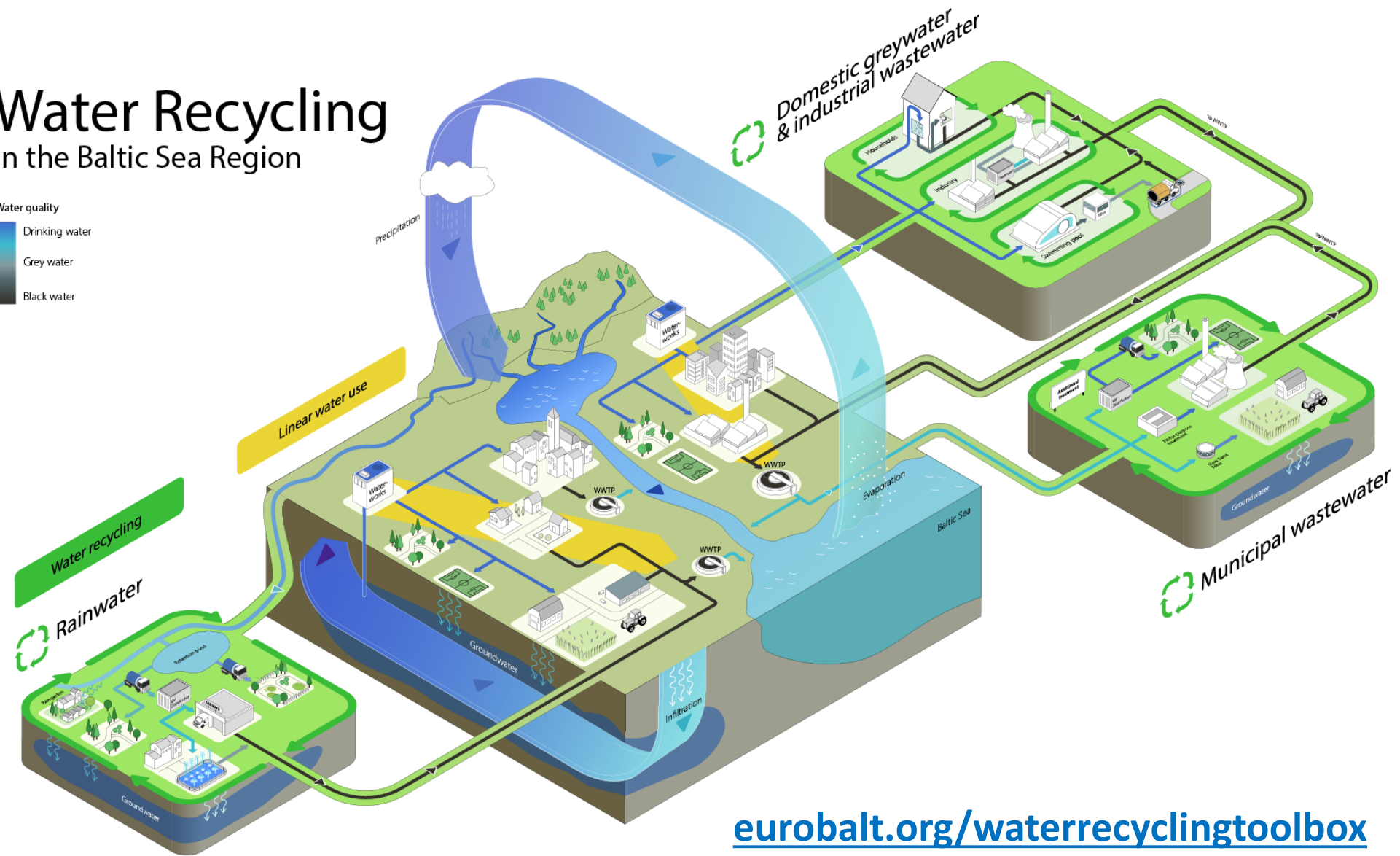
- Welcome & introduction
- Present & upcoming policy initiatives in the EU related to water resilience and water recycling
Loic Charpentier, Head of Advocacy, Water Europe
- Water recycling in humid regions: Practical experiences from the WaterMan project & inputs for future policies in the EU
Tobias Facchini, ERB Water Core Group & WaterMan Lead Partner
- **PANEL DISCUSSION:** What further support could help municipalities & local water companies in humid regions to start water recycling?
- Summing up & outlook

Networking coffee



Water Recycling in the Baltic Sea Region

Water quality
■ Drinking water
■ Grey water
■ Black water



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