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Two water innovations awarded at the Investors' café [1]



The project MASLOWATEN won the “best pitch” competition at EASME’s “Promoting market-ready water innovations – Investors’ café”, an event dedicated to exploitation, investment and market uptake of eco-innovative solutions in water and circular economy. The project is dealing with the market uptake of an innovative irrigation solution based on low water energy consumption.

Almost 100 attendees casted their vote to select the project that, out of ten contestants, delivered the best business pitch in front of a panel of investors.

The competition was tough as [MASLOWATEN](#) [2] got 17% of the votes and the second-place project, [REMEB](#) [3] (Eco-friendly ceramic membrane bioreactor based on recycled agricultural and industrial wastes for waste water reuse), got 16%. Third place went to [POWERSTEP](#) [4] (Full-scale demonstration of energy positive sewage treatment plant concepts towards market penetration), with 13% of the

votes.

MASLOWATEN won free-of-charge access for two people to one of the Masterclasses organised by the [EIT Climate KIC](#) [5] (European Institute for Innovation and Technology Knowledge and Innovation Community for a circular & zero-carbon economy) that kindly offered the award.

Additionally, a special prize was offered by the [EIT Raw Materials](#) [6] (Knowledge and Innovation Community that represents the largest and strongest consortium in the raw materials sector worldwide). It went to the project [REGROUND](#) [7] (Colloidal Iron Oxide Nanoparticles for the Reclamation of Toxic Metal Contaminated GROUNDwater Aquifers, Drinking Water Wells, and River Bank Filtrations) which has now been invited to join the EIT Raw materials' accelerator program.

Besides the ten pitching innovators, other 18 projects participated in the [Investors' café](#) [8]. They show-cased their innovation via a poster session, actively participated in investor tables where they could get valuable feedback on their queries about financing and market uptake plans, and finally had 1-to-1 meetings with investors, financial institutions, EU actors and relevant stakeholders in the water sector.

The Investors' café was an important occasion to bring together innovators and investors and contribute to building a bridge between these two communities. The event also showed that different EU services can further support innovators during the life cycle of the projects (e.g. [Enterprise Europe Network](#) [9], [IPR Helpdesk](#) [10], new dissemination Booster that will be delivered in 2019).

Key take aways

- The Investors' café was considered as one of the building blocks to increase confidence into making water an "investable" sector. This type of events contributes both to creating a new culture in the water sector and to increasing the chances for the innovations to be better and more quickly and widely deployed;
- There is a lack of innovations' deployment and their scale up on the market;
- Projects' beneficiaries lack information on how and when to seek private funding and how to speak the "investors' language";
- In Europe, a proper and structured "eco-system" for investments in water is missing. Existing institutions tend to work independently.

Investors shared with participants some of their "golden rules". When making an investment decision, investors look at the team (including management of a company); their understanding of the competition landscape and target markets; the maturity and bankability of the technological solution; and the soundness of the business plan.

Common mistakes made by companies often include:

- fairly low amount (< 500K) of funds sought ("constant fundraising mode"),
- lack of an appropriate and realistic go-to market strategy as well as revenues growth rate

- lack of understanding of the sale cycle, the possible rate of return on investment of the technology and a real valuation of the company

Pitching projects

- [CENTAUR](#) [11] - Cost Effective Neural Technique for Alleviation of Urban Flood Risk
- [CYTO-WATER](#) [12] - Integrated and portable image cytometer for rapid response to legionella and Escherichia coli in industrial and environmental waters
- [ECWRTI](#) [13] - Reuse of Waste Water from the Textile Industry
- [IMETLAND](#) [14] - A new generation of Microbial Electrochemical Wetland for effective decentralized wastewater treatment
- [MASLOWATEN](#) [2] - MARKET uptake of an innovative irrigation Solution based on LOW WATER-ENERGY consumption
- [MOSES](#) [15] - Managing crop water Saving with Enterprise Services
- [POWERSTEP](#) [4] - Full-scale demonstration of energy positive sewage treatment plant concepts towards market penetration
- [REGROUND](#) [7] - Colloidal Iron Oxide Nanoparticles for the REclamation of Toxic Metal Contaminated GROUNDwater Aquifers, Drinking Water Wells, and River Bank Filtrations
- [REMEB](#) [3] - Eco-friendly ceramic membrane bioreactor (MBR) based on recycled agricultural and industrial wastes for waste water reuse
- [SUBSOL](#) [16] - Bringing coastal SUBsurface SOLutions to the market

Participant projects

- [AquaNES](#) [17] - Demonstrating synergies in combined natural and engineered processes for water treatment systems
- [DEMOSOFC](#) [18] - DEMOnstration of large SOFC system fed with biogas from WWTP
- [ENERGYWATER](#) [19] - Improving energy efficiency in industrial water processes through benchmarking and benchlearning tools in Europe manufacturing industry
- [HYDROUSA](#) [20] - Demonstration of water loops with innovative regenerative business models for the Mediterranean region
- [INCOVER](#) [21] - Innovative Eco-Technologies for Resource Recovery from Wastewater
- [INNOQUA](#) [22] - Innovative Bio-based on-site Sanitation system for Water and Resource Savings
- [INTCATCH](#) [23] - Development and application of Novel, Integrated Tools for monitoring and managing Catchments
- [INTEGROIL](#) [24] - Demonstration of a Decision Support System for a Novel Integrated Solution aimed at Water Reuse in the Oil & Gas Industry
- [NEXTGEN](#) [25] - Circular Water Systems
- [Project O](#) [26] - Demonstration of planning and technology tools for a circular, integrated and symbiotic use of water
- [R2Pi](#) [27] - tRansition from linear 2 circular: Policy and Innovation
- [RUN4LIFE](#) [28] - Recovery and utilization of nutrients 4 low impact fertilizer

- [SCREEN](#) [29] - Synergic Circular Economy across European Regions
- [SMART-PLANT](#) [30] - Scale-up of low-carbon footprint material recovery techniques in existing wastewater treatment plants
- [SYSTEMIC](#) [31] - Systemic large scale eco-innovation to advance circular economy and mineral recovery from organic waste in Europe
- [WADI](#) [32] - Innovative Airborne Water Leak Detection Surveillance Service
- [Water2Return](#) [33] - REcovery and REcycling of nutrients TURNing wasteWATER into added-value products for a circular economy in agriculture
- [ZERO BRINE](#) [34] - Re-designing the value and supply chain of water and minerals: a circular economy approach for the recovery of resources from saline impaired effluent (brine) generated by process industries.



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Background information

- Previous EASME events dedicated to water innovation in [Helsinki](#) [39] and [Porto](#) [40].
- [EIT Climate KIC](#) [41] and the full list of Masterclasses it offers
- [EIT Raw Materials](#) [42] and the full list of Masterclasses it offers

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<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/two-water-innovations-awarded-investors-caf>

Links

[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/two-water-innovations-awarded-investors-caf>

[2] <http://maslowaten.eu/>

[3] <http://www.remeh-h2020.com/>

[4] <http://www.powerstep.eu/>

[5] <http://www.climate-kic.org/>

[6] <https://eitrawmaterials.eu/>

[7] <http://reground-project.eu/>

[8] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/promoting-market-ready-water-innovations-investors-caf>

[9] <https://een.ec.europa.eu/>

[10] <https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/>

[11] <http://sheffield.ac.uk/centaur>

[12] <http://www.cytowater.eu/>

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[16] <http://www.subsol.org/>

[17] <http://www.aquanesh2020.eu/>

[18] <http://www.demosofc.eu/>

[19] <http://www.energywater-project.eu/>

[20] <https://sc5.easme-web.eu/?p=776643>

[21] <http://incover-project.eu/>

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[26] <https://sc5.easme-web.eu/?p=776816>

[27] <http://www.r2pipproject.eu/>

[28] <http://run4life-project.eu/>

[29] <http://www.screen-lab.eu/>

[30] <http://smart-plant.eu/>

[31] <https://systemicproject.eu/>

[32] <http://www.waditech.eu/>

[33] <http://www.bioazul.com/en/portfolio/water2return/>

[34] <http://www.zerobrine.eu/>

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[38] https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/05_0.jpg

[39]

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/promoting-green-investments-innovators-meet-investors-world-circular-economy-forum>

[40] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/boosting-research-and-innovation-water-sector-impact-eu-funded-actions>

[41] <http://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/education/#masterclasses>

[42] <http://eit.europa.eu/activities/education>