

**UN-WORLD WATER QUALITY ALLIANCE**  
**PLAN FOR THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM**  
**2020-2023**  
**March the 25th, 2020**

**Social Engagement Platform**

DEC 2019- MAR 2020	Original action plan co-created by willing representatives prepared. Plan must provide a simple, realistic and economically modest roadmap, which ensures the following steps: a) Global problems find supranational, national, regional and local solutions engaging all members of society b) Complex systems to simplistic language c) Data to knowledge d) Knowledge to action. (underlying is the Quadruple/Quintuple Helix paradigm and system concept of multi actor engagement, knowledge sharing and production and capital generation <sup>1</sup> )
2020	EURECAT and JRC, together with UNEP, the SDC, WEF and the World Bank to convene a group of experts and scientists and artists to develop a joint concept for a workflow and initial pilots incl. a science storybook on water quality.

Initial Core Group members:

- Richard Elelman, Water Europe and EURECAT
- Bernd Gawlik, Joint Research Centre (JRC)
- Hartwig Kremer, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Andreas Steiner, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Richard Damania, World Bank
- Anna Huber, World Economic Forum
- Lesha Witmer, The Women for Water Partnership
- Richard Berman, University of South Florida
- Ioana Dobrescu, Expert in Youth for Water Programmes
- Paul Orengoh, African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW)
- Felipe Coelho Costa, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

<sup>1</sup> Carayannis et al. Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2012, 1:2 <http://www.innovation-entrepreneurship.com/content/1/1/2>

Work in this area will also serve as a basis for future actions concerning:

### Friends of Urban Health and Cities

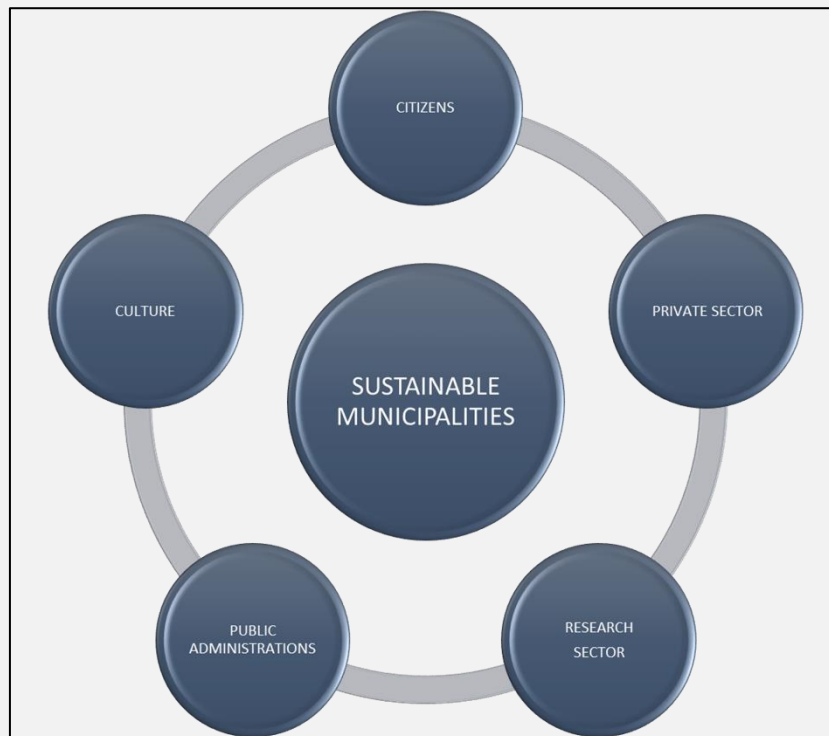
Q4 2020	Pilot to be developed around citizen engagement and low-tech, frugal monitoring alternatives.
	Link to UNEP's World Environment Situation Room to be established.

Implementing partners:

- UN Environment Programme (UNEP) – incl. GRID Geneva and other centres as appropriate
- EURECAT, Centre Technologic de Catalunya,
- Joint Research Centre (JRC)

### INTRODUCTION

During the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN-WWQA workshop held at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Ispra, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of September, 2019, the subject of the creation of a Social-Engagement Platform was raised. As has been clearly demonstrated since the beginning of the century, there exists a need to promote, disseminate and implement broad supranational policies through regional and perhaps even more importantly, municipal administrations in order to ensure tangible, practicable initiatives and results based on co-creation at a local level involving all elements of the so-called Quadruple/Quintuple Helix.



Furthermore, it is clear that complex scientific data must be translated into a language which can attract the attention and encourage the participation of the hitherto uniformed layman, politician and other social actors with whom the scientific community all-too-often find it difficult to establish a mutually beneficial dialogue.

In addition, it is clear that medium and long-term visions require continuity if such actions are to bear fruit. Continuity is the result of socio-political consensus, which in turn derives from a transparent and attractive approach to the process of social communication, creation of informed concern and a broad societal acceptance of co-creation and implementation. All the actions suggested here have been tested in real-life situations and what is proposed has been deliberately put forward taking into account the need for extremely low-cost, economic actions.

This third and revised version of the proposed plan of action takes into account the results of discussions held in Geneva on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 between Water Europe, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), together with contributions from the World Economic Forum (WEF). Furthermore, it incorporates additional suggestions advanced by the SDC and the JRC during the course of a virtual meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020.

## THE APPROACH

There are four principal mechanisms which can be established and coordinated in order to achieve the ambitions of the Social Engagement Platform which in turn permits said platform to satisfy the needs of the UN-WWQA whilst acting in perfect alignment with the **EU Green Deal**. ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)):

- 1) True inter-sectoral collaboration between all the elements of a sustainable community: Water, energy, food, waste, transport, ICT, health, social services, employment, etc.

Key word: Sustainable Inter-sectoral collaboration

- 2) In order to ensure, the viability of long-term awareness creation, policy co-creation and political continuity, supranational strategies must be implemented by regional and local stakeholders. It must be stressed that when suggesting local stakeholders, the action would be deemed sufficient if municipalities of all sizes be involved. Far too often, it is only the large urban agglomerations which attract the interest of supranational movements. The suggested Social Engagement Platform of the UN-WWQA would place an emphasis on recruiting the collaboration of stakeholders not only located in cities, but also towns and villages.

Key words: “**ConCensus**” and **fostering Local solutions for Global problems**

- 3) The public sector, private sector, research sector, citizens, and representatives of socio-cultural entities must be involved at all stages of policy creation and the implementation process of resulting actions. The incorporation of and dissemination to local schools, colleges and universities is also of great significance as is a general approach to youth, thus leading the platform to involve such initiatives as the European Junior Water Programme which could be easily replicated in other parts of the World. Strong links must be established between the Social Engagement Platform and the work of the other Alliance work flows especially, in this case with that entitled: **Private Sector Engagement**. Furthermore, the Social Engagement Platform must involve, collaborate with and establish beneficial synergies with the work of the Blue Peace Movement <https://www.thebluepeace.org/> in order to reinforce the concept of Science-Culture-Sustainability Diplomacy.

Key words: **The Quadruple/Quintuple Helix and Knowledge to Action.**

- 4) Communication and knowledge exchange must be implemented between municipalities, regions and river basin authorities. This will entail, among other actions, the establishment of an open-source Best Practice Repository (BPR) and the creation of a pamphlet making the objectives and actions of the UN-WWQA accessible to all social sectors and all age-groups no matter their geographical location.

Key words: **The RENAISSANCE approach to science-culture-sustainability diplomacy, Complex systems to simplistic language, Data to knowledge, Best Practice Repository.**

The RENAISSANCE approach is so named as it is inspired by the fact that both Italian and non-Italian city-states during the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries employed both artists and scientists as diplomats providing an effective cultural and technological exchange. This proven methodology can be employed incorporating the **TAP** mechanism:

**T** – The **T**echnologies to address the issues which fall under SDG6 and indeed the majority of other Sustainable Development Goals already exist. The purpose of the UN-WWQA is not only to analyse but to inform society of the developing water-based situations at a global scale and to communicate with society in order to promote an open, bi-directional, effective mechanism of solution exchange, trans-regional collaboration and the all-important capacity to ensure full policy completion.

**A** – International, regional and local **A**wareness is promoted by giving prominence to scientific imagery accompanied by the emotional capacity of culture through **A**rt. The objectives of the UN-WWQA must become mainstream, as were the ambitions of the 20-20-20 objectives of the European Commission through the creation of the highly successful Covenant of Mayors for Energy (Now, the Covenant of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy). Science must learn to interact with social and political communicators, whilst cultural and political stakeholders must seek interaction with the specialised experts. This philosophy underlies the creation of the Urban Water Atlas for Europe<sup>2</sup> and the WEF Nexus Atlas for the Mediterranean which is currently being prepared. The methodology employed to produce the aforementioned publications will be applied to prepare a science-story pamphlet introducing the UN-WWQA, to be published in 2022.

**P** – The collection of data will serve for nothing if it does not result in the identification of necessary solutions and lead directly to **P**oliticians creating policies supported by the **P**eople and translated into economic reality by **P**ractitioners in the field. By working in close collaboration with municipalities, supranational ambitions can be translated into regional and local facts. The employment of the co-creation and public implementation system named the Council of Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Urban Strategies (ConCensus)<sup>3</sup> has been tried and tested. For example, in Jerusalem both Jewish and Palestinian participants have joined together to create

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<sup>2</sup> Gawlik, B.M., Easton, P., Koop, S., Van Leeuwen, K. Elelman, R., (eds.), 2016, Urban Water Atlas for Europe. European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. 160 pp  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316553034\\_Urban\\_Water\\_Atlas\\_for\\_Europe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316553034_Urban_Water_Atlas_for_Europe)

<sup>3</sup> 1) Elelman, R, Feldman, D.L. (2018) The future of citizen engagement in cities—The council of citizen engagement in sustainable urban strategies (ConCensus). Futures Volume 101, August 2018, Pages 80-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.06.012>

the Jerusalem Water Forum. Ignoring nationalistic and religious obstacles, and with the support of the City Council, they have established the sustainable supply of water to 74 community gardens in both East and West Jerusalem and are now planning to disseminate their experience to surrounding Arab nations in the Near East and the Gulf by creating the Middle East Regional Water Organisation.

### **THE URGENT NEED FOR A CLEAR PLAN OF ACTION TO BE CO-CREATED**

The aforementioned approaches do work. They have been tried and tested. The process combined as a whole reflects supranational necessity based on international data converted into local policy, supported by local research institutions. Whilst the creation of the UN-WWQA SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM should not limit itself to one single approach, the general *modus operandi* described as TAP can offer a broad base for future action in any region of the World. Emphasis should be placed on a global approach which incorporates and benefits from the implication of cultural stakeholders, the engagement and involvement of youth, who are constantly demonstrating their capacity as agents of change and the establishment of a clear channel of communication with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises who are often not contacted successfully by supranational agencies.

The engagement of **city administrations, SMEs and other social sectors including schools and colleges, supported by local research institutes** should begin by the involvement of actors such as the Covenant of Mayors, the C40, and national organisations who represent municipal government interests within their individual nation states in all continents such as the *Deutschen Städte-und Gemeindebundes* in Germany or the *Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias* (FEMP) in Spain. Other initial actors (including institutions already involved in the WWQA, such as the World Bank and AMCOW) who should be involved in the planning of TAP between 2020 and 2023 must include DG DEVCO, DG REGIO, the EEAS, DG ENV and the cabinet of Frans Timmermans, who now leads the issue of climate change within the new European Commission. Further identified key players should be representatives of relevant NGOs, with special emphasis placed on gender equality. Thus, the original participants of the Social Engagement Platform seek to involve, from the outset a preferably non-European entity which gives a voice to women involved in the issue of water-based challenges.

A clear plan of action, co-created by willing representatives of the first recruited municipal and supranational institutions will be prepared before the end of Q2/2020.

If a) by creating a strong, high-profile link between global organisations and non-state political entities, supported by a network of interacting local research centres, local representatives of industry and SMEs and the citizens of the municipalities in question b) local traditions, identity and history are taken into account and c) the UN-WWQA as a whole demonstrate an inclusive attitude to non-water sectors such as those which constitute the WEF Nexus, the UN-WWQA will become an effective basis of global social action.

**SUGGESTED ACTIONS (See also Annex A) N.B. The timings quoted below are merely indicative of probable time scales pending approval by the SAC and dependent also on the limitations imposed by the current situation caused by COVID-19.**

#### **Stage 1 – M1-M8**

- 1) Creation of Municipal recruitment leaflet aimed at both local and regional politicians, representatives of inter-municipal and inter-regional communities such as national and

international municipal associations. **KPI: Leaflet distributed by e-mail to 100 associations and 500 identified cities before end of M6.**

- 2) Recruitment of first lead municipalities (5 municipalities from 5 continents). – Initial contacts have already been made and municipalities from Europe, the Middle East and Brazil have already expressed their interest in becoming involved pending the authorisation of the proposed actions by the SAC and TAC of the UN-WWQA. **KPI: 25 lead cities recruited by the platform before the end of M6**
- 3) Initial approach to relevant Supranational entities such as the European Commission. **KPI: AMCOW, DG DEVCO, DG REGIO, the EEAS, DG ENV DG NEAR and the cabinet of Frans Timmermans, (Stressing the contribution to the Green Deal) together with equivalent entities in South America, the United States, Asia and Australasia approached and informed of aims and objectives of the UN-WWQA before the end of M8.**

#### **Stage 2 – M8-M12 (SEE ALSO ANNEX B)**

- 1) Lead cities trained to engage the Quadruple Helix in their municipalities regarding the aims and objectives of the UN-WWQA. (ConCensus) Emphasis will also be placed on schools and colleges. Each city will be teamed with a **local research centre** in order to support their work which will be primarily **the creation of socio-political awareness regarding water quality**. The lead cities will be expected to act as regional catalysts and recruiters of neighbouring towns and cities. **KPI: 25 lead cities trained and a local ConCensus (The council of citizen engagement in sustainable urban strategies) established in each. These cities will be further engaged by the Friends of Urban Health and Cities work flow.**
- 2) An open-source Best Practice Repository (BPR) will be established on a suitable Digital Social Platform (DSP). This will offer participating municipalities the opportunity to disseminate their successes regarding water quality whilst also affording them the opportunity to seek external advice from entities who are capable of assisting said municipalities in addressing local water quality challenges. It will further reinforce the concept of a global water quality community aimed at providing mutual support and practical solutions. **KPI: The Best Practice Repository established by the end of M12.**

#### **Stage 3 – M13-M36**

- 1) Lead municipalities to recruit national and regional municipal partners. **KPI: 200 municipalities recruited by the end of M16**
- 2) The full RENAISSANCE approach is implemented (See ANNEX A) between the participating entities and they are encouraged to contribute to the creation of the science storybook on water quality before the end of **M16 KPI: A group of experts, scientists and artists convened by the JRC and EURECAT to develop a science storybook pamphlet on water quality to be published during 2022 (Approximately M24)**
- 3) Non-Water sectors WEF + Waste, Transport, Health, Social Services, ICT, etc. invited to join UN-WWQA Social Engagement Platform. Special attention will be paid to the engagement of **Health agencies, entities and stakeholders**. **KPI: 50 Non-Water entities recruited before the end of M16**

- 4) Further involvement of external stakeholders sought with the engagement of **River Basin Authorities**. KPI: **Principal River Basin Authorities identified and engaged by M20**

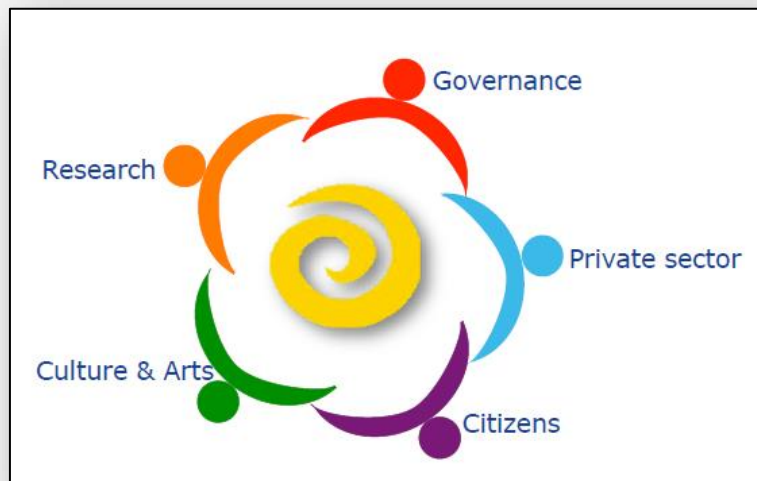
**ANNEX A – A SUGGESTED TIMELINE (may be subject to adjustment in response to 2020 pandemic) The timings quoted below are merely indicative of probable time scales pending approval by the SAC and TAC. M1 would be the month that the plan having been approved is officially commenced. Actions 3), 4), 5), 6), 7), 8) and 9) would continue to be implemented for the full lifespan of the Social Engagement Platform.**

TIME	M1	M6	M8	M12	M16	M20	M24
1) Creation of Municipal recruitment leaflet							
2) Recruitment of lead cities							
3) Supranational entities approached							
4) Lead cities create ConCensus							
5) Open-source Best Practice Repository created							
6) National and regional partner cities recruited							
7) RENAISSANCE fully commenced							
8) Recruitment of non-water sector stakeholders							
9) Recruitment of River Basin Authorities							

10) Science storybook  
editorial group created  
and published

## ANNEX B RENAISSANCE AND CONCENSUS

### The RENAISSANCE approach:



#### TAP Layers

- Technology
- Awareness and arts
- People, practitioners and politics – **ConCensus**
  
- **Approaches to truth**
- Absolute - Sciences
- Individual – Arts
  
- **Cultural factors in common**
- Emphasis on local identities (food, traditions, history)
- Overcome nation-state thinking
- Engagement and empowerment – **ConCensus**

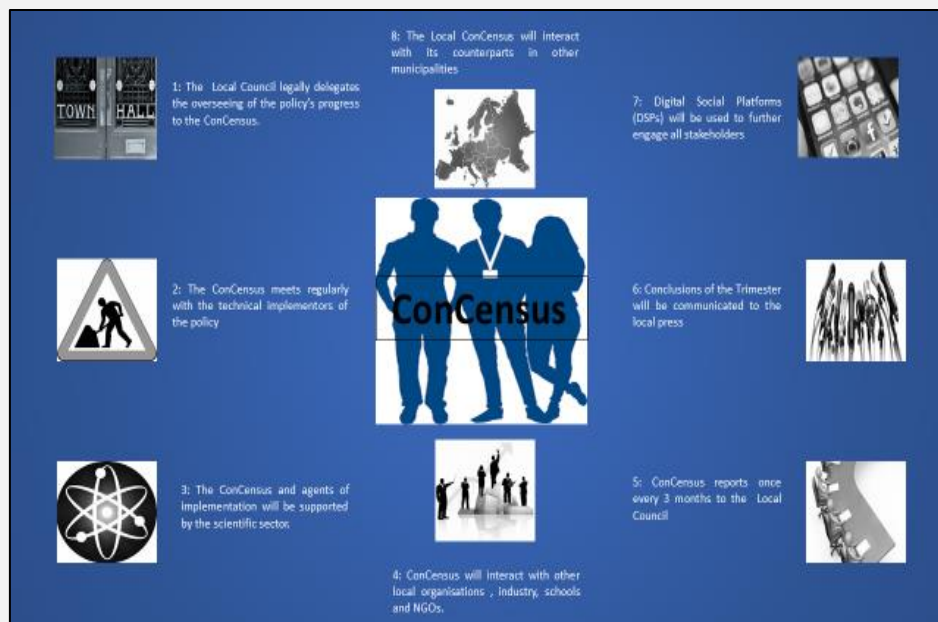


- **Supranational – local link - ConCensus**
- Non-state actors
- Network of local research centres
- Science Embassies

### Step by Step: The Creation of a ConCensus

1. All interested local stakeholders of the Quadruple Helix are invited to form part of the Council of Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Urban Strategies by the local administration.
2. The participants will number between 5 and 15. In large urban communities, the approach should be implemented at district or borough level. Each member will be expected to serve on the ConCensus for the duration of the awareness-creation policy implementation. However, a list of substitutes should be maintained.
3. Participants should elect by unanimous decision a leader who will coordinate and preside virtual and face-face meetings, supervise the content of the ConCensus Section of the municipal website, liaise with the local press and act as spokesperson when the need arises.

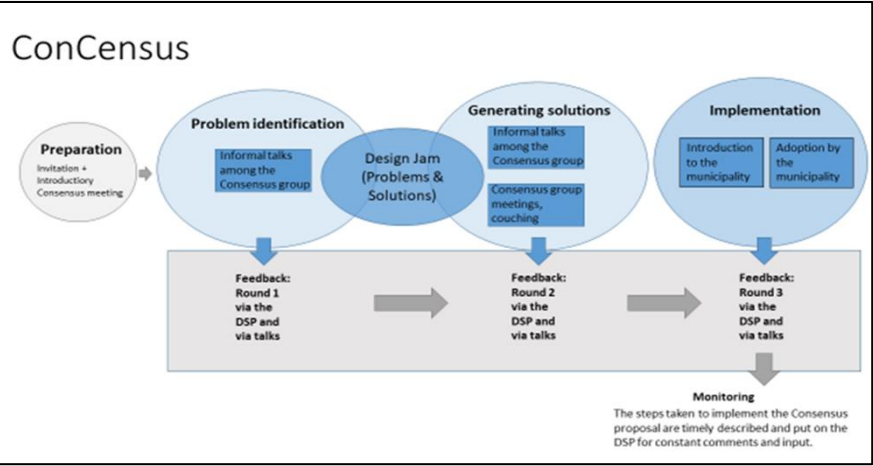
Local Government must supply the ConCensus with the necessary logistical and administrative support. It must maintain the members of the ConCensus fully informed regarding all matters pertaining to the awareness – creation policy in question at all times. It must provide the ConCensus with full access to the local media and be supported by the municipal press officer.



1. The municipal council will delegate the responsibility for overseeing the UN-WWQA's water awareness creation policy's progress to the ConCensus, while ensuring that the ConCensus receives the necessary resource and manpower support if and when

required. This can be effected in various ways; a) by approval of the plenary of the local council with the members of the ConCensus or the existence of a ConCensus forming part of the official policy proposal or b) by written acceptance on the part of the relevant councillor and/or mayor being made public but without the action being presented to the plenary. The different ways of broaching this step will often depend on the amount of money which is required for the policy itself and the country where the municipal action is taking place.

2. The ConCensus will have regular meetings with a) municipal political and technical representatives and local water researchers. The active support of local research experts is important in that 'scientific information is likely to be effective in influencing the evolution of social responses to issues suggested by the UN-WWQA to the extent that the information is perceived by relevant stakeholders to be not only credible, but also salient and legitimate'.
3. ConCensus, employing the municipal website as the focal point of its external communication will ensure that other civic entities such as neighbourhood councils, industry and SMEs, schools and colleges and relevant NGOs will be fully informed of the policy's objectives, progress and conclusions.
4. Individual ConCensus members would take responsibility for informing defined external stakeholder groups.
5. Members of ConCensus will publicly report to the municipal council once every three months in order to discuss its concerns and recommendations regarding the advance of the policy. This can constitute a written report which can be published on the municipal website and disseminated to the local press as well as at face-to-face meetings.
6. If the ConCensus perceives that implementation of the awareness creation campaign is not being undertaken satisfactorily the members of the ConCensus have the obligation to make this situation known first to the city council itself and, only in extreme cases, such as for example, the unilateral abandonment of the policy by the administration without prior warning and good reason, publicly employing other means such as a press release and/or a press conference.
7. The ConCensus supported by a presence in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn must be maintained to a high-standard. The use of the municipal website will signify that all stakeholders may continue to contribute data, access additional information from other actors.
8. A local ConCensus is also the perfect representative, accompanied by the municipal government to interact with its counterparts in other municipalities in different regions and countries. This will enhance the RENAISSANCE approach to the full.
9. A ConCensus would be deemed to have concluded its purpose when a) the UN-WWQA awareness creation strategy is deemed to have been satisfactorily completed and b) when it has contributed to a post-implementation analysis of the policy. This may lead to new initiatives which would in turn, possibly prolong the open, transparent governance approach originally adopted, converting such a process into a more regular feature of local political life.



**Dr Richard Elelman**

**Member of the Board of Directors of Water Europe and Head of Politics, EURECAT.**