

PRESS RELEASE

Pilot PoVE Water scales up to a sustainable PoVE Water network

With the award of 4 million euros of European money the PoVE Water consortium can continue to build on the vocational education/training of future water professionals in the coming 4 years. Following the pilot project, parties in Europe and South Africa will work towards a strong integration of VET knowledge networks, such as within the Water Campus in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. In these next four years, junior college students from each of the partner locations will have plenty of opportunities to go on an international voyage of discovery.

The project, called Platform of Vocational Excellence Water (PoVE Water), is a transnational project that draws on the needs of existing and emerging vocational competences and skills. It is a joint initiative by a total of 23 partners, including vocational schools, universities and companies in the water sector from the Netherlands, Malta, Czech Republic, Latvia, and South Africa. The European Commission recognised that working on a theme such as Water requires an intercontinental approach, not just a European one. That is why South Africa's participation in the project was also approved.

The starting point of PoVE Water is to train VET students to become agile, digitally proficient and sustainably oriented water sector professionals. The partners will do this by further integrating the vocational training into the water sector. Virtual Reality teaching materials will be developed and students will work on assignments from the professional field in an international context. Furthermore, the water company partners, each bring a network including hundreds of partnerships between education and business.

Pieter Hoekstra, programme manager of CIV Water (NL), is one of the founders of the initiative. Together with Erna van der Werff, co-initiator of Learning Hub Friesland, they have seen the pilot project grow from 2018 to what it is today: an example of excellent vocational education in the water sector for the whole of Europe.

"Whereas international mobility is a given for students of higher education (research universities and universities of applied sciences), an international experience is not standard in junior colleges. We have found that when VET students work together in international groups, competences such as agility, a proactive attitude, openness to new experiences, entrepreneurialism and intercultural sensitivity are strengthened. These are competences that are extremely important for young people in this rapidly changing world" says Erna van der Werff.

Pieter Hoekstra adds: *"Vocational Excellence can contribute to innovation in the water sector. With its mostly local base and practical attitude, vocational trainers/educators/colleges/VET can understand like no other what is needed on the ground to realise green and sustainable growth. The water professionals being trained are in a unique position to act as linking pins between different parties. Innovation often stems from the intrinsic need to address emerging problems and not necessarily from scientific research."*

The four-year project has the ambition of building EU and global recognition for PoVE Water as a worldwide point of reference for VET in the water sector.

Background

The PoVE Water project builds on a successful foundation that was prepared, tested and implemented in 2020-2021 in the Erasmus+ project *Pilot Platform of Vocational Excellence Water* ([Pilot PoVE Water](#)).

About the partners

PoVE Water Scale-up is a joint initiative of 8 VET schools, 7 water industry professionals, 4 academic partners and 4 support partners in Europe and beyond. Cooperation with Vocational Institutions are crucial as they are the linking pin between innovation and research and the water industry.

Project partners form autonomous regional teams (Centres of Vocational Excellence, CoVE) in West Europe, Central Europe, the Baltics, the Mediterranean, and South Africa. They are united in their vision and ambitions under the umbrella of PoVE Water. Each CoVE expands by including neighbouring countries in the partnership.



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- **CoVE Water West-EU:** involving as core beneficiaries two VET providers, a University, a Water supply company and an industry representative with international scope. Multiple scientific research partners, the mbo raad, waterboards, utility companies, water tech companies and the Regional government are part of the CoVE in the role of Triple helix stakeholder. Friesland College – CIV Water, Learning Hub Friesland, PBT Katapult, Vitens, Wellant College Yuverta, Maastricht School of Management, Hanse-Parlament, European Forum of Technical and vocational education and training BE (EfVET)
- **CoVE Water Mediterranean:** involving as core beneficiaries one VET and HE provider and a Water supply company. Several sector representatives, companies, governmental institutions, Environmental protection organisations and the Centre for Mediterranean cooperation are committed to the CoVE in the role of Triple helix stakeholders. The CoVE also includes CIFEV VET school from Murcia and the University of Ljubljana. Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST), Water Services Corporation (WSC),

- **CoVE Water Baltics:** involving as core beneficiaries four VET providers, two water and wastewater industry representatives and 1 scientific research partner. Multiple sector representatives, water companies and regional and local governments are part of the CoVE in the role of Triple helix stakeholder. Riga Technical University (RTU), Riga Technical University Olaine College of Technology, Daugavpils Construction Technical School”(DCTS), Vidzeme Technology and design vocational school (VTDT), Latvian water and wastewater works association, Jarva County Vocational Training Centre (JKHK), Estonian Waterworks Association(EVEL), LUKA LWWWWA,
- **CoVE Water Central EU:** involving as core beneficiaries a VET providers, an Industry representative, a scientific research partner and 3 informal educational partners. The Regional government is connected to the CoVE Water in the role of Triple helix stakeholder. Mendel University, CREA Hydro&Energy, Stredni prumyslova skola stavebni Brno(VET college SPSS), Lipka, Women Engage for a Common Future (WESC),
- *A first step towards a fifth and new **CoVE Water** will be established in **South Africa**. As part of the CoVE West EU, collaboration with South Africa will be established. The Dutch government previously funded a project of Maastricht School of Management and Stellenbosch University, creating an online platform with learning materials in the water agriculture sector. This project includes 6 VET schools in South Africa and disseminates the digital learning materials across the continent. By including MSM and SU into this project, we join forces from the previous projects to make a larger impact in terms of reach and focus areas. This fifth CoVE Water will ensure exchange and mobility of people and knowledge between EU and the South. Stellenbosch University*

About CIV Water

[CIV Water](#) was established in 2013 as one of the first Centres for Innovative Craftsmanship in the Netherlands and, under the leadership of Friesland College, is a joint initiative of education partners, the business community and government and semi-government in the water sector in Friesland. The rapidly changing water sector requires skilled, educated and proactive professionals with a mindset that encourages innovation. CIV Water focuses on training professionals and students in the water sector in Friesland and beyond.

About Learning Hub Friesland

[Learning Hub Friesland](#) helps educational institutions in Friesland with internationalisation. Learning Hub Friesland sees internationalisation as a driver for innovative, high quality education that prepares young people for a globalising society. The core task of Learning Hub is therefore to strengthen education in the region by connecting educational institutions with other parties in Friesland and Europe.

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