The 3 winners of the European Innovation and Technology Competition on Water Scarcity, InnoWise Scale Competition: Utilities' sector

Organised by the Sustainable Development Unit of ATHENA RC and EIT Climate-KIC and supported by EIT Food, EIT Raw Materials, EIT Manufacturing, and BioAzul

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With prize funds from 10 to 30 thousand euros, the 2nd InnoWise Scale Competition in the utilities' sector offers the possibility to six solution providers – with already developed or close-to-market solutions – to compete to win the contest. The competition took place on 27th of September and it was organized by the Sustainable Development Unit of ATHENA RC and EIT Climate-KIC.

The **first prize** worth of 12 thousand euros was awarded to Shayp coming from Belgium for the development of an innovative platform for detecting water leakages or system discrepancies in buildings using machine learning and real-time data. Shayp's prized technology helps operators effortlessly eradicate leakages and track water consumption remotely.

The **second prize** of 10 thousand euros was given to the young company Enging - Make Solutions coming from Portugal for the development of disruptive, non-invasive, and real-time monitoring solutions, that allow for an extremely precocious and accurate online fault detection through a user-friendly web platform, ePreditMntc®. Its customers can effectively manage the performance, anticipate failures in their assets and to prevent unintentional stoppages, to avoid large costs.

The **special prize** of 30 thousand euros for the pilot implementation of the solution in the Municipal Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Pylaia - Chortiatis (problem holder) was given to the scale-ups Fibsen Monitoring coming from Spain, which developed a water controller that provides real-time data by analyzing water status indicators for better decision making. The solution transforms standard fiber-optic into a sensor network that monitor large areas at low cost.

The Water Scarcity project aims to ease the transition to a water saving economy across Southern Europe and to contribute, in the long run, to reduce Europe's water consumption, wastage and pollution. This is achieved by targeting different stakeholders, from policy makers to business, industry leaders and citizens through different actions. The project is supported by the following partners: EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Food, EIT Raw Materials, EIT Manufacturing, ATHENA RC and BioAzul.

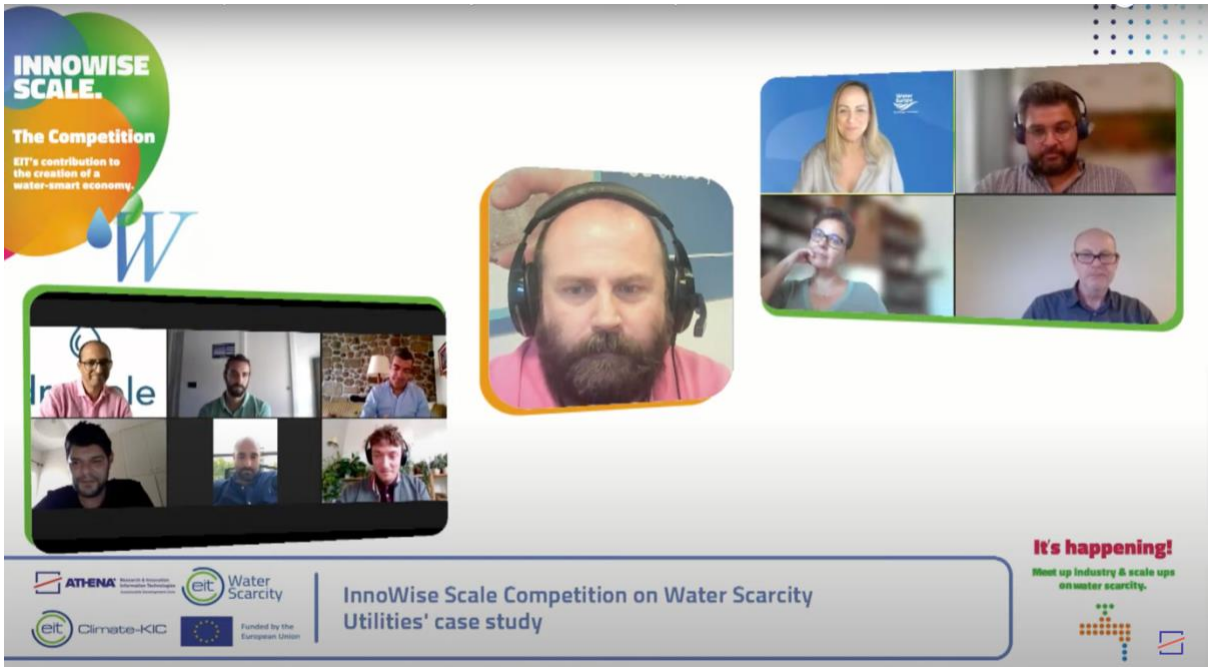

Figure 1 - Innowise Scale Competition on Water Scarcity - Utilities' case study - From the left to the right: Ramzi Bouzerda, Founder & CEO at Droople, Alexandre McCormack, Co-founder & CEO at Shayp, Constantinos Loizou, Founder and CEO at Embio Diagnostics, Javier Sanz, Co-founder & CEO at Fibsen, Gualter Sampaio, Chief Security Officer at Enging, Kosmas Ellinas, Co-founder and Managing Director at Nanoplasmas, Thomas Seitaridis, chemical engineer at the Municipal Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Pylaia – Chortiatis, Professor Chrysi Laspidou, Professor at the University of Thessaly and Vice President of Research and Technology at Water Europe in Brussels, Dr. Gianluigi Busico, researcher at "Applied Hydrogeology", University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, Mr. Ortwin Deroo, Business Development Manager of the Belgian company De Watergroep, Mrs. Eleni Toli, Research Associate and Project Manager at the Athena Center for Research and Innovation.

About the competition

This competition is part of a series of three contests, each of which targets a separate sector (utilities, infrastructure, and agriculture). The competition for the utilities' sector was organized by the Sustainable Development Unit of ATHENA RC and EIT Climate-KIC on September 27 and was broadcasted live on YouTube. There were 6 solution providers, with already developed solutions that contribute to the better management of water resources in the field of utilities. The winners of the competition received prizes of 12,000 euros (1st prize), 10,000 euros (2nd prize) - which will be used to escalate their business and a special prize of 30,000 euros for testing purposes at the premises of the Municipal Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Pylaia - Chortiatis – DEYA (problem holder). Thomas Seitaridis, chemical engineer, representing the problem holder DEYA posed the following challenges to the contestants:

A. Standardization of digital tools for quality analysis
B. Safety and water quality detection tools
C. Traceability and removal of pollutants
D. Asset management

The 3 winning companies were awarded cash prizes with a total value of € 52,000. The start-ups that won the prize funds of the "InnoWise Scale: Competition On Water Scarcity: Utilities case study" are as follows:

- 1st prize: SHAYP (Belgium) - 12,000 EUR cash prize (by EIT Climate-KIC)

- 2nd prize: ENGING - MAKE SOLUTIONS (Portugal) - 10,000 EUR cash prize (by EIT Climate-KIC)
- 3rd prize: FIBSEN MONITORING (Spain) - 30,000 EUR for demo-purposes (by EIT Climate-KIC)

At the end of the competition, the winning scale-up Shayp stated the following: “Our goal with this solution is to reduce water use by 20% in every household and business. Using machine learning, we monitor the flow of water to detect leaks and water losses in the water supply system and to prevent damage and combat water scarcity.

Lydia Papadaki, Manager of EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece, stressed that the goal is to transfer knowledge from research centers, universities and start-ups to the real economy to solve an issue that concerns us all, water scarcity. EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece is now the benchmark for supporting innovation and start-ups in Greece.

Professor Phoebe Koundouri, Professor School of Economics and Director of ReSEES Research Laboratory, Athens University of Economics and Business; Director of Sustainable Development Unit and EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece , Athena RC; President-Elect of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists; Fellow World Academy of Art and Science; Co-chair SDSN Europe & SDSN Greece, presented in her speech the European policies (European Climate Agreement, the Recovery Fund, the Climate Law, the Fit for 55 package, etc.) that push the transition to Sustainability. She also stressed the role of systems innovation, Sustainable Development Solution Networks (SDSNs), and accelerators in finding solutions related to water scarcity.

Professor Chrysi Laspidou, Professor at the University of Thessaly and Vice President of Research and Technology at Water Europe in Brussels. She referred to a serious ecological problem on the island of Skiathos, where high amounts of mercury are found in the water. Mercury comes from the rocks of the aquifer (cinnabarite) and has no anthropogenic origin but is the result of over-pumping. This study is the result of the ISS-EWATUS and Water4Cities projects.

Members of the jury were Professor Chrysi Laspidou, Professor at the University of Thessaly and Vice President of Research and Technology at Water Europe in Brussels, Dr. Gianluigi Busico, researcher at "Applied Hydrogeology", University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, Mr. Ortwin Deroo, Business Development Manager of the Belgian company De Watergroep, as well as Mrs. Eleni Toli, Research Associate and Project Manager at the Athena Center for Research and Innovation . Finally, responsible for the competition were Lydia Papadaki, Manager of EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece and Eva Enyedi, Project Manager at EIT Climate-KIC.

The InnoWise Scale competition is now an essential tool through which Europe provides incentives for innovative solutions to connect with the market and combat the water shortage crisis.