



WATERVILL

Interreg
Euro-MED

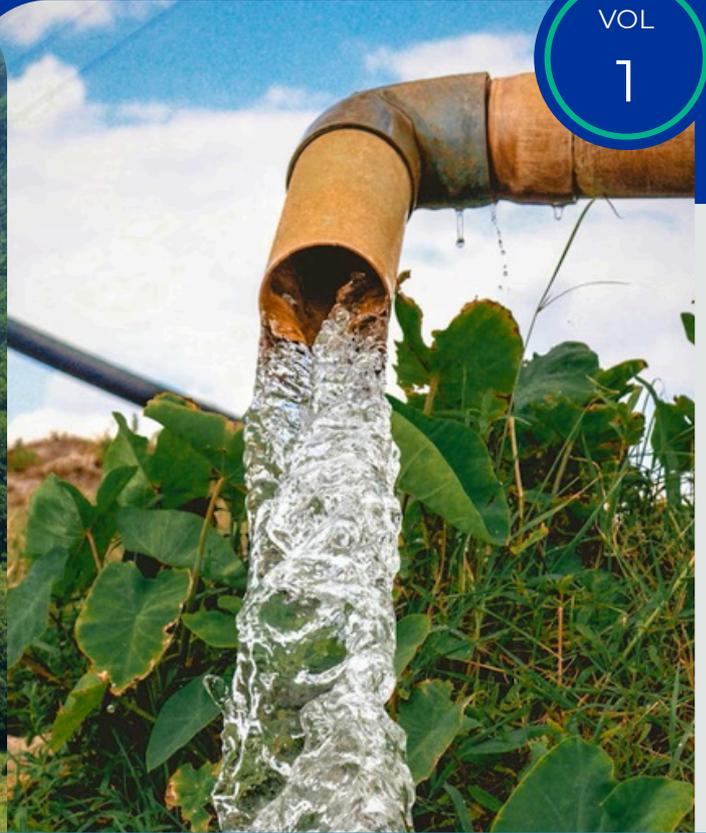
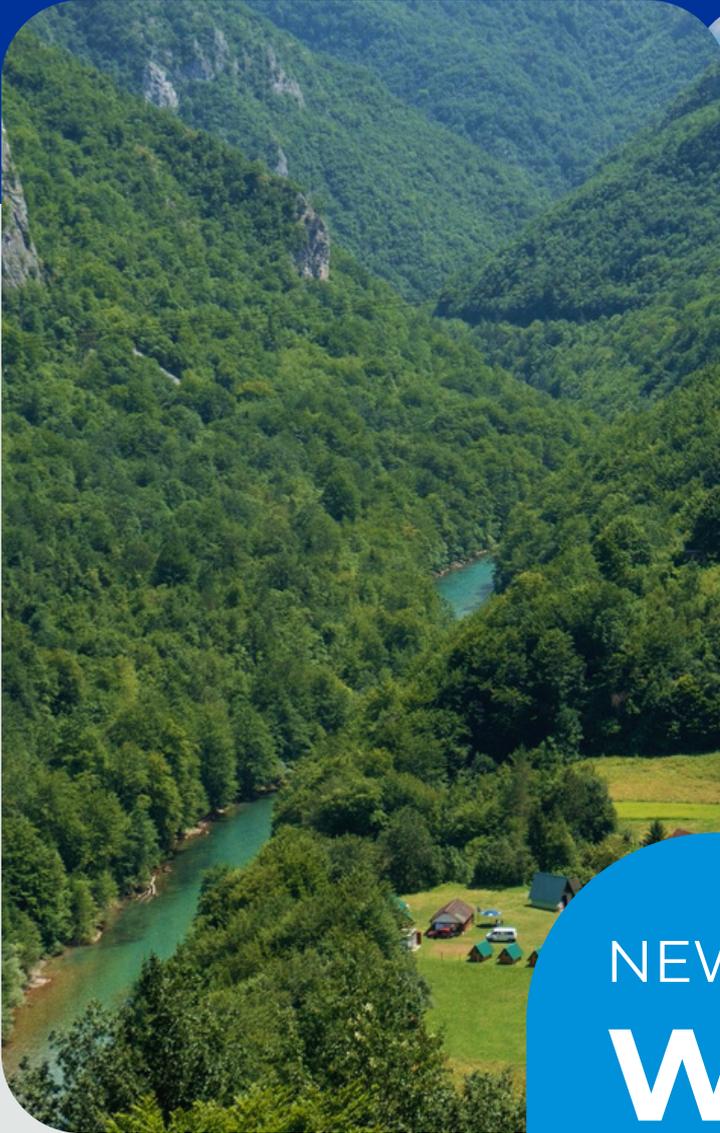


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MARCH
2026

VOL

1



NEWSLETTER

WATERVILL

Stories of water from the rural Mediterranean

“Innovative solutions for enhancing village water supply and addressing water scarcity in resilient rural and mountainous areas.”

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The project in a few words

WATERVILL is an Interreg Euro-MED Programme-funded project aiming to improve and climate-proof water management in rural and mountain areas of the Mediterranean.

<https://watervill.interreg-euro-med.eu/>



Water in Europe is under increasing pressure. Every year, 30% of the European population is affected by water stress and 180 000 people in the Mediterranean region face water poverty. Climate change is one of the main factors exacerbating water scarcity, especially in the southern regions of Europe.

The WATERVILL project was developed in recognition that many rural and mountainous areas of the Mediterranean also face growing water scarcity. Moreover, these territories often rely on outdated and climate-vulnerable water supply systems. As droughts intensify and infrastructure deteriorates, communities experience frequent shortages, declining water quality, and unreliable services.

WATERVILL addresses these challenges by modernising small, independent water supply systems through smart technologies, such as leak detection systems, nature-based solutions and community-led governance approaches. By reducing water losses, improving distribution efficiency and strengthening climate resilience, the project aims to benefit thousands of citizens across the Mediterranean region.



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WATERVILL Consortium

WATERVILL brings together a consortium of 12 partners from 9 Mediterranean countries, along with two associated partners, including municipalities, universities, associations of local government, and water associations.

The WATERVILL consortium combines solid field experience, scientific expertise and strong links with communities.

The partnership includes **pilot municipalities** - **Žabljak** (Montenegro) also the lead partner, **Bitola** (North Macedonia), **Ilirska Bistrica** (Slovenia), **Teslić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - which act as pilot territories - , as well as **universities, local government associations and water associations.**

Each contributes a specific strength:

- Pilot municipalities provide real environments to test smarter and more resilient water solutions;
- Universities bring expertise in water technologies, decision-support tools, climate-proof planning and monitoring;
- Associations of local government and water associations ensure that lessons learned reach many more communities, supporting knowledge transfer, capacity building and long-term replication.

Partners' **work is structured into three phases: (1)** assessing local needs to plan innovative solutions, **(2)** testing them in pilot municipalities, **(3)** sharing knowledge to replicate results widely across the Mediterranean.

PROJECT PARTNERS



University of Zagreb
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
and Naval Architecture



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΔΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA



ASSOCIATED PARTNERS



Zajednica opština Crne Gore



Focus on pilot municipalities

At the core of WATERVILL's mission is field testing in four rural and mountainous pilot municipalities located in the Balkans. These territories, which have different water contexts but share similar challenges, provide real environments where the project will test and demonstrate smart water management solutions.

The pilot phase of the project, the second major area of work following the situation analysis phase, responds to the need to modernise ageing and climate-vulnerable water infrastructure in the testing territories. Growing seasonal shortages and inefficient distribution systems threaten reliable access for households, agriculture and local industry.

Four municipalities act as pilot territories: Žabljak in Montenegro, (lead partner), Bitola in North Macedonia, Ilirska Bistrica in Slovenia and Teslić in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each faces specific water management challenges but frequent in many Mediterranean rural territories.

From mountainous systems under seasonal pressure due to peak tourism demand in Žabljak, to outdated infrastructure and water losses in Bitola, dispersed rural supply networks in Ilirska Bistrica, and multiple village water systems in Teslić, these municipalities provide real-life testing grounds for improving efficiency, resilience and governance in local water management.

Through these pilots, WATERVILL will develop and demonstrate practical solutions that can be replicated across other rural communities in the Mediterranean region.

A glimpse into past / ongoing water-related activities in the pilot municipalities



[Read more on this topic in our news section](#)

Looking back at the project's first months

Only a few months but much has already been happening within WATERVILL. Since its start in September 2025, partners have engaged in building collaboration, establishing governance structures, and representing the project within the Interreg Euro-MED community.

“Bridging the Seas” event

In November 2025, WATERVILL was presented at the “Bridging the sea” conference in Varna, Bulgaria, an event organised by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme and the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.



The conference brought together programme stakeholders, national authorities, municipalities and project leads to reflect on territorial cooperation and share experiences.

WATERVILL was represented by the Mayor of Žabljak, Radoš Žugić, on behalf of the project's lead partner. He highlighted the project's ambition to address local water challenges while contributing to Mediterranean-wide resilience through strengthened partnerships and innovative solutions.

Project first Steering Committee

25 November 2025 also marked a milestone for the project. WATERVILL held its first Steering Committee meeting online, hosted by the Municipality of Žabljak.



Representatives from all partner organisations participated, together with the Euro-MED Joint Secretariat. During the meeting, the Steering Committee was formally established, adopting its Rules of Procedure and governance structure.

Meeting on a regular basis, the Steering Committee will ensure efficient and consistent project implementation throughout its lifecycle focusing on strategic decision-making.

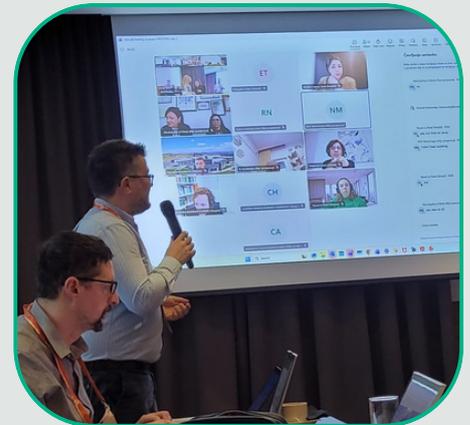
Project kick-off meeting



On 4-5 February, WATERVILL partners gathered for the project's kick-off meeting, held in a hybrid format and hosted by the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture (FSB).

This milestone event marked the formal launch of project collaboration and allowed partners to align on roles, responsibilities, the project timeline and the first planned actions, including the assessment of water supply systems in the pilot municipalities.

The meeting also welcomed representatives from the Interreg Euro-MED Joint Secretariat and the Innovative Sustainable Economy Mission, strengthening strategic guidance.



The monitoring station is configured to measure water level and surface velocity every 15 minutes, while an attached camera captures an image every hour.

A highlight of the two-day agenda was a field visit to the HydroStation monitoring system in Lazina, near Zagreb, a solar-powered water monitoring station providing real-time data.

[Read more here](#)

What's next?



Partners will meet in person in Valencia in September for the next Steering Committee meeting, hosted by the Polytechnic University of Valencia.

WATERVILL is now moving forward with concrete implementation, launching the assessment of water supply systems in the pilot municipalities as part of the project's first major phase.

This work will be carried out by the project partner universities in their role as technical experts in developing climate-proof and sustainable water management solutions.

It represents an essential step in identifying the specific water management challenges municipalities face, ensuring that the tools developed truly respond to their needs.



From words to action

If you are interested in sustainable water management and would like to stay updated on WATERVILL's activities, follow us on our social media channels.

And if you have any questions or comments, we would be happy to hear from you!



<https://watervill.interreg-euro-med.eu/>



<https://bit.ly/4smiMCq>



<https://bit.ly/4skT8Oa>



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