

Spanish town showcases a smarter way to manage water

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The city of Almería in Spain is set to pioneer efficient new water management methods as part of an EU-funded project. Scheduled for completion in May 2015, the URBANWATER initiative will enable consumers to use water more responsibly; help water utilities meet increased demand at reduced costs; and establish the European water sector as a global leader in resource efficiency.

Central to the project will be the installation of thousands of smart meters, which will enable customers to assess their [water consumption](#) in real time and make necessary adjustments to their [consumption habits](#) if necessary. The technology will also allow consumers to test and validate innovations such as automatic billing.

Mobile notifications concerning consumption, as well as alerts and

messages, are also being developed, to help users achieve greater control over their use of utilities like water. A website containing games and simple tips to help customers save water at home is being created.

The project, which is receiving some EUR 3 million in EU funding, aims to demonstrate that the application of ICT can improve water management in urban areas, at all levels of the supply chain. For example, new solutions are being developed to help authorities predict [water demand](#), along with better data management systems and improved detection of internal leakage to ensure that wastage is kept to a minimum. This is an important consideration, given that cities account for some 17 % of freshwater consumption in the EU.

Achieving higher levels of water efficiency has been recognised by the EU as essential for overcoming increasing water scarcity and droughts. These problems are no longer limited to Mediterranean countries; apart from some sparsely-populated northern regions with abundant water resources, this is a growing issue that affects almost everyone in the EU.

Integrated urban water management is a key strategy in this battle, and EU-funded projects such as URBANWATER are crucial to helping shift urban water management away from ad hoc solutions to a more integrated approach that involves users as well as suppliers. The URBANWATER consortium includes ICT companies, research organisations, [water utilities](#) and authorities with complementary capacities necessary to oversee the successful completion of this innovative, and vital, project.

The implementation of URBANWATER in Almería will begin in March 2015, with the assistance of water service FCC Aqualia. Once the results of the Almería installation are collected, the consortium, which includes 11 organisations from eight European countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal and the UK) will

disseminate the results at European level.

It is expected that the project's findings will have relevance for energy management as well as [water](#) management, and thus positively impact the overall usage of natural resources across Europe. This could lead to enhanced collaboration between energy and [water management](#) schemes in the future.

More information: For further information, see URBANWATER: urbanwater-ict.eu/

Provided by CORDIS

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