



Community research

Recommendations for research strategies and suggestions for use to policy makers



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What influences the choice of an EU research programme manager?

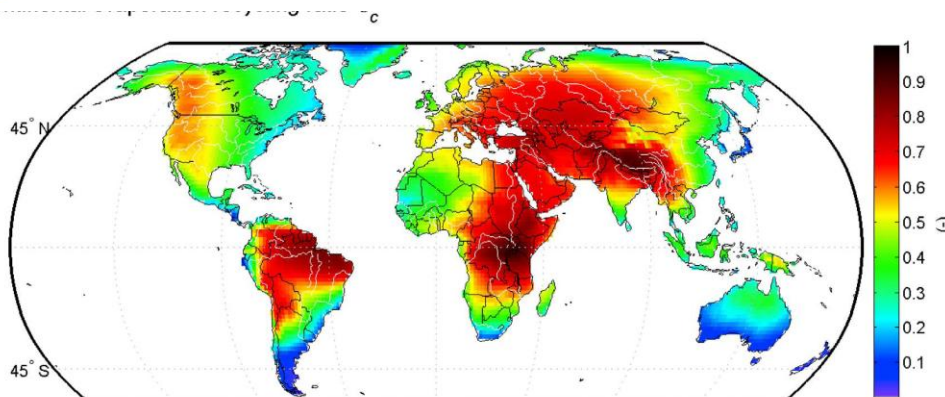
- **Research funding prioritisation: a highly non-linear process**
- **Multi-annual framework articulated in annual WPs**
- **Scientific priorities as wished by scientific communities represent just one input**
- **Priorities from industry**
- **EU policy needs, e.g.:**
 - **Implementation of WFD**
 - **Response to critical events (see the recent summer and fall floods in Poland, Hungary, Italy, etc.)**
 - **New policies (e.g.: Resource Efficiency flagship initiative - Europe 2020; Innovation Partnership on Water)**
- **All this is elaborated by the European Commission and filtered through long discussions with Member States and FP Associated Countries**



Would virtual water (trade) research be of use for EU policy needs?

- At EU level, it may be of use in designing water efficiency improvement policies;
- At global level, it may be of use for global water cycle assessment,
providing that:
 - It is complemented by research activities exploring and valuating the negative (environmental and resource costs) and positive externalities (e.g. ecosystem services, social and territorial benefits) linked to different water uses in different parts of Europe, which may lead to transparent water pricing
 - Research explores more in depth the hydrological cycle processes from local to global scale and their feedback mechanisms in order to be capable of predicting the impact of and the impact on climate change and variability

Average continental evaporation recycling ratio (1999–2008). (from Van der Ent et al, 2010)





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Methodological improvements

- **Those research issues, together with a much better knowledge of the socio-economic processes linked to various water uses, may allow to improve the VW and water footprinting methodology**
 - **Time and scale factors**
 - **Return flows**
 - **Greywater assessment**



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Policy makers and VWT

- **Virtual water trade and water footprint is a very powerful concept for the impression it may generate on the man of the street**
- **If this is a great potential, however it makes very easy that policy-makers may misuse it , with the risk of wrong decision-making**
- **VW should help the debate, but should not distort it**
- **We have to put it in a basket of indicators spanning from product, to sector, to country/region, to global level, adding the economic, social, health, ecosystem quality dimensions**





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Possible future research activities

- **The EC is now in the starting process for developing the FP7 Work Programme for 2012**
- **The aspects of resource efficiency and related methodologies are part of the discussion**
- **Trend of the FP towards filling the gap between research and innovation, e.g. through more support to demonstration of technological and non-technological innovation**
- **A Joint Programming initiative among Member States (ES+NL leading) is being launched, and will become operational at the end of next year; VWT mentioned in the draft vision document**
- **EIT Climate KIC**



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Thanks for your attention!

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